



Youth Engagement and Empowerment

In Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia



MENA - OECD
Governance Programme



OECD

BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Introduction

Youth have been at the forefront of the various calls witnessed in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) over the past seven years. While these calls have wide-ranging objectives, the message echoed throughout the region is the urgent need to ensure opportunities to assume their role in society and that public services respond to their needs adequately.

The circumstances in the MENA region have not always been propitious for young people to contribute to shaping their own futures. Young men and women in the region often express lower levels of trust in government than their parents and the majority of young adults have largely disengaged from formal political participation. Moreover, youth in the MENA region are facing higher unemployment levels than young people in any other region in the world¹. While around 15% of young people aged 15-29 in OECD countries are not in education, employment or training (NEET), inactivity levels in the MENA region exceeds those in all regions of the world.² In addition, young people whose formal educational background is poor face greater difficulty in accessing channels for civic participation. Where civic engagement channels are more accessible, they rarely address or represent the needs of youth in neglected neighbourhoods and isolated rural communities. As the share of working-age population in the 15-29 age range represent 32%, 27% and 29% in Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco respectively,³ there is an urgent need to develop and implement strategies that fully engage youth in the economy, society and public life. By and large, today's global youth are more likely to be in school than their parents were and they are more connected to the world than any generation before them. Developing and implementing appropriate strategies, policies and programmes to mitigate the risks and challenges youth face must hence be a priority for government.

Youth engagement in public life has direct economic, political, social, and cultural implications. Recent evidence shows positive interrelationship between active citizen engagement and economic outcomes, particularly for young people who are not in education, employment, or training⁴. It is estimated that greater opportunities for participation in community and political processes at local and national levels in the MENA region are likely to reduce youth inactivity by more than half. Without the establishment of inclusive institutions, formal institutions for political engagement will continue to marginalise youth from participating in civic engagement and discourage young people from actively engaging and participating in their communities.

Further expanding and broadening the base of youth civic engagement in MENA is a major priority of the mandate of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme, as expressed in the 2016 Tunis Declaration. Greater civic engagement is a pathway towards public governance reform and more equitable development in the region as it is believed to decrease the likelihood of involvement in violent and extremist movements, build stronger social and civic values that are essential foundations for good governance and peaceful co-existence, and increase youth employability⁵. It is against this backdrop that the OECD has been working with MENA countries to strengthen youth engagement in public life. Under its project "Youth in Public Life: Towards Open and Inclusive Youth Engagement", financed by the MENA Transition Fund of the G7 Deauville Partnership (2016-19), the MENA-OECD Governance Programme supports Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia in strengthening public governance arrangements for young men and women to engage in public life.

In collaboration with the Ministries of Youth, line ministries, parliament, local governments, universities, civil society and youth associations, the OECD is supporting efforts to strengthen the legal, institutional and policy frameworks for youth engagement in public life, to improve horizontal and vertical co-ordination of youth policies, and to better mainstream youth concerns across public policies and services. This report is part of this project and consolidates the discussion papers prepared for Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia as presented in the regional conference on youth engagement on 3-4 October 2017 in Rabat.

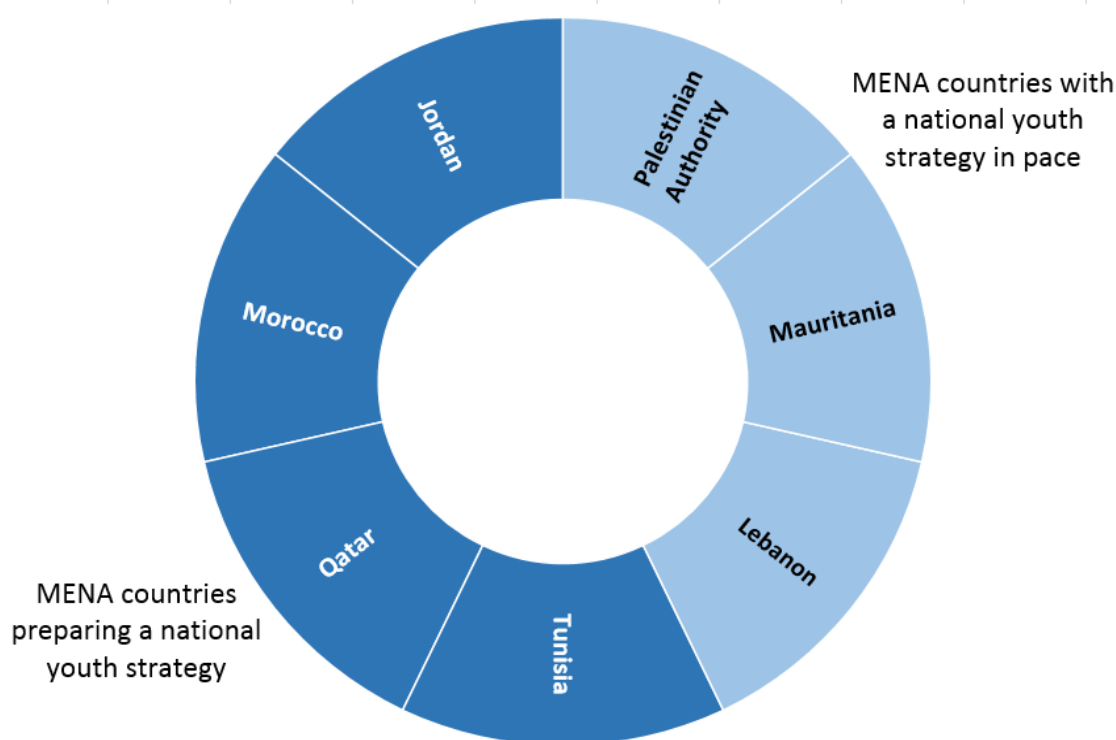
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3. Ibid.
4. World Bank (2014), “Tunisia: Breaking the Barriers to Youth Inclusion”, Chapter 2: Youth Participation, Voice, and Active Citizenship,
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Chapter 1. Towards national integrated youth strategies

As the challenges facing youth in the region are multi-fold and inter-woven, governments need to establish integrated youth strategies that provide youth with the necessary capacities and opportunities to participate actively in social, economic and political activities. Developing an overarching strategy for addressing youth outcomes is fundamental to ensure that roles and responsibilities are assigned clearly and that ministries, civil society organizations and the private sector are jointly working towards a common vision.

Figure 1.1. National Youth Strategies in MENA countries



Note: Replies to the question “Do you have a national youth strategy/policy in place?” N = 7 countries.
Source: MENA Youth Governance Survey.

Jordan

In Jordan, the Ministry of Youth (MoY), the successor of the Higher Council for Youth, co-ordinated the formulation of the National Youth Empowerment Strategy. It is expected that the implementation of the Strategy will be facilitated by multi-annual Action Plans.

The formulation of the Strategy was initially facilitated by an inter-ministerial committee with representatives from the Ministries of Health, Labour, Parliamentary and Political Affairs, ICT, Education and Higher Education on 11 May 2017. Until August 2017, the formulation of the thematic chapters was led by UNDP in collaboration with two local consultants and United Nations (UN) agencies covering the following thematic areas: education (UNESCO, UNICEF), economic empowerment (ILO, UN Women), health (UNFPA, WHO), active citizenship (UNICEF, UNESCO), and security and peace (UNDP). The draft chapters were shared with the ministerial focal points for each thematic area for feedback and were discussed in a joint meeting, before being consolidated into a single document. In meetings with the ministerial focal points, the Action Plan for each thematic area was discussed together with the local consultants. However, the collaboration with UNDP was stopped in late 2017 and a new Strategy prepared in early 2018. The Strategy still awaits final approval by the Council of Ministers.

Youth consultations took place at subnational levels covering the Northern, Central and Southern regions of the country. These consultations were combined with an online research campaign and consultation meetings between youth and staff from local youth centres to reflect on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the Ministry of Planning and International Co-operation.

The formulation of the National Youth Strategy comes at a timely moment as it resonates with King Abdullah's 6th discussion paper in which he calls for empowering youth by developing state administration and enhancing the rule of law. Backed by the Royal Court, the Strategy enjoys a strong political commitment to put youth concerns at the forefront of the government's agenda.

Young people's ownership of the Strategy will be a key determinant for its success. Their involvement in all stages of its formulation and implementation is critical, including in the identification of the priority areas. Interviews with members in two local youth centres suggest, for instance, that young people expect concrete commitments to facilitate young people's participation in all spheres of public life, including the political sphere. With the involvement of relevant line ministries in the formulation process (i.e. health, labour, parliamentary and political affairs, ICT, education and higher education), the Strategy goes beyond a narrow definition of youth interests. It acknowledges that collaboration across administrative silos and departments is essential and that different ministries and non-governmental stakeholders need to work hand in hand for young people to benefit from more coherent public policies and services.

For the effective implementation of the Strategy, it will be critical to identify a mechanism through which inter-ministerial co-ordination can be facilitated in the long term. The limited involvement of line ministries in previous attempts to integrate policies and services for youth in Jordan into a coherent strategy was seen as a major shortcoming. The absence of the Ministry of Finance in the process so far risks having the activities and programmes unfunded and without the buy-in from the Ministry, it would be difficult to turn these commitments into tangible outcomes. Moreover, it would be important to further clarify the responsibilities and duties of the Ministry of Youth, especially with regards to who will oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategy. Ownership and clear accountability mechanisms could be enhanced by creating a dedicated office inside MoY (which will also strengthen the capacities of public officials in MoY in relevant areas such as M&E, strategy development/strategic planning).

The collection of data and information revealed that age-disaggregated data is lacking in key sectors. A culture of openness and information sharing among all stakeholders involved

is critical to ensure that the final version responds to what young people themselves identify as the main obstacles to thrive in economic, social and political life. Evidence was collected through a review of relevant studies and databases (e.g. Population and Housing Survey 2015; UNESCO study on youth policies, descriptive analysis undertaken for the National Youth Survey, national strategies and policies, country briefs), field visits and social media-based research.

Morocco

In Morocco there is a clear recognition of the need to put youth at the forefront of public policies and enable them to champion their own interests. This shift was reflected in the 2011 new Moroccan Constitution, which states that governments should take all appropriate measures to extend and broaden the participation of young people in the social, economic, cultural and political activities of the country (Art. 33). The reforms introduced by the new Constitution came in response to the social, economic and political demands vocalized by young people in Morocco. This call for action was reiterated during the speech of His Majesty the King of Morocco on 20 August 2012 marking the 59th anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People. In the words of His Majesty, “[Young people] ... must be treated as a dynamic force for development. It is therefore imperative to develop a comprehensive strategy that ends the fragmentation of government benefits and social assistance provided to our youth, and adopts an integrated framework consolidating such services”.

In this framework, the Moroccan Government had developed a National Integrated Strategy for Youth (SNIJ), led by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MJS) but has recently shifted its focus towards the development of a national policy on youth instead. The SNIJ had aimed to consolidate youth-related policies in Morocco in order to promote better coherence and co-ordination. Although Morocco had several youth-related strategies in different government sectors, the country did not have a national framework for youth policies before the development of the SNIJ. Given continued challenges facing youth, the SNIJ aimed to serve as a reference document to guide public policies and direct the intervention and efforts of stakeholders towards an integrated youth policy. The added value of the strategy lied in its definition of a global vision and provision of practical ways to enact change, however, and while many Ministries moved forward in the implementation of specific initiatives aimed at youth, the implementation of the strategy itself was lacking.

As such, with the new Government formed in 2017, updates of the SNIJ as well as efforts to develop a related action plan were kick-started. However, the political context in the country as well as the agreed need to relaunch and update the SNIJ have shifted the focus towards a revamping of youth policies in the country through a new national youth policy. Such a policy, if backed by political will, and if given the needed human and financial resources, can act as a lever for increased youth initiatives and can help stakeholders in achieving short-term goals while keeping sight of the long term vision for the country. It can help ensure an integrated, cross-sectoral and coherent youth policy approach and can be a useful tool to monitor, evaluate and benchmark youth-related activities. Moreover, it can form an ideal framework for collaboration between the government, civil society and youth.

The new policy will build on the consultation process led for the SNIJ development and is aimed to promote youth inclusion more effectively. It is thus a key opportunity to foster greater trust between the government and youth, which is likely to translate in greater buy-in for the policy. In this light, it is essential to include youth during the different phases for

developing the policy, going beyond initial consultations and ensuring participation throughout. It is also essential that this policy be led by an inter-ministerial committee placed at the Centre of Government, with representatives of all relevant Ministries, as well as youth associations.

Tunisia

Similar efforts to place youth at the forefront of reforms have been undertaken by the Tunisian government. Since the 2011 Revolution, largely led by young Tunisians, efforts have been made in the country to establish a youth policy that meets the expectations and needs of young people. In the past, Tunisia had put in place various youth strategies; however, the formulation and implementation of cross-sectional policies have been conducted in a scattered and uncoordinated manner. The multiplicity of actors and administrative burden has significantly reduced the effectiveness of youth policies. Moreover, the lack of consultation of young people has led to the implementation of less youth-responsive policies that are not fully adapted to their needs. This absence of youth consultation in policy-making has further alienated youth from public life.

According to the interviews, there is also a lack of data disaggregated by ages well as indicators to measure the impact of policies and services on youth. The absence of age-disaggregated evidence is of particular concern in the current process to setting up a national youth strategy. This lack of data reduces the quality of public policy and thus reduces its expected impact.

To bridge these two gaps, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport conducted in October and December 2016 an open dialogue across the country to discuss with young people, families and all relevant stakeholders the current situation of young people and draw a diagnostic that sheds light on the challenges facing youth. With almost 40,000 participants ranging in age from 15 to 60, the dialogue addressed several key issues such as employment, health, citizenship and high-risk behaviours that many young people may conduct. In parallel, a survey was conducted among more than 1,200 households to collect evidence. The analysis of this data collection exercise has informed the formulation of the strategic youth vision of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport for 2016-2030, and a short-term operational Plan.

In parallel, an initial analysis of collected opinions and requests was conducted to identify major trends. A commission of experts will be in charge of the development of the National Integrated Youth Strategy around the nine priority themes identified in the national dialogue, which include equal access to information, the restructuring of dedicated youth areas and access through mobility.

To ensure the success of any strategy, it is important to identify its scope by defining the main characteristics of the populations it targets (e.g. age-range, in-school vs. not-in-school). It is also necessary to define the needs and targets that will be addressed by the strategy and understand the difference between the multiple terminology in place (strategy, program, action plan).

The initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport to establish a national dialogue with young people, families, and the main authorities working on youth-related policies and services was the first of its kind in the country. The national dialogue aimed to establish a first diagnosis of the status of youth in the country and collect data on which the future strategy will be based. The formulation of the youth strategy must be followed by the creation of an action plan, which includes local pilots.

Regarding the implementation of the strategy, it is important to identify the skills required to carry out the priorities, and to perform a “360° analysis” to leave no actor or potential beneficiary outside the scope of the strategy. It will also be important to establish a steering committee to provide guidance, advice and direction over the course of the strategy and coordinate all actions between the different key players. Similarly, it will be important to set up a monitoring team within the ministry or body with the formal authority (the centre of responsibility) to steer the design and implementation of the strategy, oversee its implementation, and ensure the necessary human and financial resources are provided to carry out its activities. This “centre of responsibility” will also need to ensure dynamic and interactive communication in the different implementation stages of the strategy to keep the public informed of the ongoing progress and to offer people the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the course of events.

Overall, the design and implementation of this strategy must be inclusive and involve all relevant stakeholders including youth. The strategy should clearly identify the roles, responsibilities, and budgets for each target to ensure timely and effective implementation. Finally, it will be important to set time frames and performance indicators for each objective to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

Good practices from OECD countries

Recent years have seen an upsurge in international efforts to identify guiding principles and indicators for formulating national youth policies and measuring progress over its implementation phase. Examples of such undertaken by the international community include the [2014 Baku Principles](#) for Youth Policy defined during the First Global Forum on Youth Policies and the [8 standards](#) for a quality youth policy developed by the European Youth Forum.

In Ireland, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs was in charge of drafting the National Youth Strategy 2015-20. The principle of inclusiveness drove the consultation process from December 2014 to March 2015 and included various key stakeholders, namely young people, youth workers as well as other governmental agencies and departments. The Department used mainly online surveys, targeting specific actors, to reach out to a maximum number of stakeholders and make a variety of voices heard. The priorities set in the strategy emerged directly from the consultations. The strategy recognises a shared responsibility between government, state agencies and other stakeholders to deliver on its commitments. To oversee the implementation of the strategy, a “Children and Young People’s Policy Consortium” was created composed of high-level representatives from government departments and agencies, experts and representatives from a wide range of sectors working with children and youth.

In Quebec, the youth policy extends over a 15-year period (up to 2030) and aims to guide the development and implementation of public policies and programs. The most recent 2016-2021 Youth Action Strategy focuses on the priorities and measures that should complement the provision of services by the government. This document contains more than 90 measures, 60 of which are new. The Youth Secretariat is investing more than USD 200 million over five years into this framework.

Chapter 2. Strengthening the formal body responsible for co-ordinating youth policy and inter-ministerial co-ordination

Youth strategies require interventions from stakeholders across different ministerial portfolios and departments to meet the complex needs of young people. The transversal nature of youth policies can be addressed by defining a ministry or unit to ensure the different stakeholders involved are working towards joint objectives and targets. Some OECD countries have chosen another approach and co-ordinate youth issues at the centre of government (CoG) to facilitate cross-sectoral co-ordination (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. OECD countries in which formal responsibility for youth affairs is organised at the CoG

Formal responsibility for youth affairs	
Austria	Federal level: Federal Ministry on Women, Families and Youth within the Federal Chancellery State level(Länder): Departments for youth affairs and youth welfare in each federal government
Canada	Federal level: Prime Minister is also Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth Provincial/territorial level: Departments and ministries relating specifically to youth exist at the provincial and municipal levels
Italy	Prime Minister's Office, the Department of Youth and National Civic Service
Japan	Cabinet Office-DG for Policy planning for policies on cohesive society covers policy of Youth Affairs

Source: OECD (forthcoming), *Engaging and empowering OECD youth - How to bridge the "governance gap"*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Cross-sectoral strategies need enhanced co-ordination and it is therefore fundamental to clearly identify which body is officially in charge of overseeing and monitoring the implementation of youth strategies and policies. OECD countries have chosen different forms of organising youth policies across the whole of government such as a dedicated Ministry of Youth, youth departments within a ministry with a combined thematic portfolio (e.g. education, women, family, sports) or inter-ministerial committees under the supervision of the Head of Government, among others.

Jordan

Avoiding the duplication of efforts and costs is one of the key challenges Jordan is facing. As different governmental and various non-governmental stakeholders are involved, mandates and responsibilities need to be clearly identified and regular communication channels need to be established to align programmes and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

Horizontal and vertical co-ordination across state institutions and non-governmental bodies are critical to ensure that all stakeholders are working in harmony towards a shared vision for youth in Jordan. Establishing a new organisational structure is necessary to break down silos between the different stakeholders and units and strengthen cross-departmental and cross-stakeholder collaboration. Effective tools and mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the National Youth Empowerment Strategy and its programmes and objectives are cascaded down to subnational levels of government.

The former Higher Council of Youth (now the MoY) had established a board that brought together different youth stakeholders in Jordan. The current structure does not feature such an arrangement to facilitate a synchronised approach. Moreover, a limited flow of information across administrative units is likely to hamper effective co-ordination. According to the interviews, collaboration efforts are largely taking place on an ad hoc basis and rely on personal commitments and relationships. The absence of a more institutionalised structure for dialogue and co-ordination is of particular concern in the context of Jordan where youth heavily rely on the training and awareness raising activities conducted by a variety of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), societies, foundations and private stakeholders.

The absence of a platform for co-ordinating youth-related activities has resulted in fragmented coverage of young men and women throughout the 12 governorates. Youth programmes and initiatives have had limited coverage outside big cities and governorates. Moreover, the lack of a structure or mechanisms for co-ordination has increased the risk of parallel structures which, in some cases, operate under limited democratic legitimacy and oversight. Among others, this is a concern in the education sector in which ministries (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Higher Education) work side-by-side with universities, schools, training institutes, NGOs and foundations which provide different forms of non-formal education.

The fragmentation of the youth sector in Jordan has resulted in the absence of a clear strategic framework that sets out the direction, purpose, and allocated resources to steer and implement youth policy and deliver services of particular relevance to young people. For instance, guiding principles used in OECD countries for youth policy-making (e.g. life cycle approach) do not seem to be applied in a systematic way in Jordan.

Finally, the parliament is not perceived as a vocal advocate for young people's concerns - with the exception of individual efforts by some parliamentarians. According to the interviews, capacities among its members to act as ambassadors of youth concerns are weak. Moreover, it has played a limited role in policy-making and overseeing government action.

Morocco

An ambitious youth policy requires high-level leadership, effective co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation, and adequate and sustainable financial and human resources. Furthermore, the capacity of the body in charge of co-ordinating youth policy to monitor and evaluate the strategy and its programmes and activities is essential. Indeed, a sound monitoring and evaluation system is needed to ensure that progress is monitored and effective action is undertaken to address potential bottlenecks which may hamper its implementation.

To address the co-ordination challenges that arise from cross-sectoral policies and effectively co-ordinate the implementation of youth strategies, Morocco had planned to create an inter-ministerial committee. As part of the SNIJ, such a Committee was envisaged to "enable the heads of all relevant ministries to meet quarterly to ensure interdepartmental, sectoral and interdisciplinary co-operation with regards to the monitoring and execution of the strategy and plan of action". It would be key to ensure the existence of a related body to co-ordinate the new national youth policy. In addition, making sure that such a committee includes all departments working on youth policy as well as young people is essential. An adequate representation of young people, youth associations and civil society

in this committee is critical to gain young people's trust and ensure ownership for its implementation. Youth associations that are part of UNESCO's NET-MED initiative can act as key players in this regard and ensure a more constructive dialogue with youth. In addition, special meetings could be organised between representatives of the committee and youth associations, among others, to facilitate communication and consultation on specific areas covered by the policy. Finally, ensuring that this committee produces related progress reports is key.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, similar challenges prevail. While the country has put in place various policies to improve the conditions for youth, such efforts remain scattered. In addition, there is a lack of consulting of young people in the implementation and monitoring of the policies that affect them.

The legislative and regulatory frameworks seem to restrict and limit the scope of work of the different stakeholders. According to the interviews conducted, public officials, especially those in direct contact with youth, believe that the multiplicity of actors and complexity of administrative procedures are complicating their tasks and preventing the free flow of information. Interviewees revealed that the complicated and lengthy administrative procedures have often delayed or prevented youth-related activities from taking place. Various stakeholders also reiterated the need to develop a comprehensive legal framework that reinforces their roles. For instance, interviewees stressed that the trainings for young professionals provided by the National Youth Executive and Sport Training Centre (CNAFOR) could be multiplied would the regulatory framework allow it.

The co-ordination of youth-related public policies also remains a challenge. According to the interviews conducted and the survey replies received, a steering committee comprised of representatives from various ministries working on youth-related projects was created in 2009, but was considered to lack effectiveness. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport is still lacking the power and capacity to lead the inter-ministerial work on youth, especially considering that its scope of work remains mostly focused on the sports sector. As such, the ministry is struggling to assert itself as the first point of contact for all youth-related activities and projects.

The network of youth centres, managed by the Ministry of Youth affairs and Sport, provides a solid foundation that can support the implementation of youth strategy and policies. Indeed, these meeting places for young Tunisians are scattered throughout the country and can be used to identify social development challenges, test new and innovative ideas in selected areas and nurture cross-sector collaborations. It would be therefore useful to improve their management and to strengthen co-ordination with the different regional directorates and local authorities.

It is essential to develop a framework specifying the prerogatives of each governmental and non-governmental organisation and facilitate horizontal and vertical co-ordination. Improving co-ordination should not be limited to information sharing only but include the simplification of decision-making processes. In line with the approaches chosen by OECD countries to foster co-ordination, an inter-ministerial committee could be established under the Office of the President or representatives from the Ministry of Youth could be assigned as focal points for youth-related issues in each ministry.

It is also necessary to map the existing youth services in Tunisia. Currently, various entities are collaborating on youth-related projects under formal agreements (for example, the

agreement between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Ministry of Culture or Ministry of Education). While such agreements can facilitate co-ordination, they often occur on an ad-hoc basis. As such, a comprehensive mapping of services provided for young people by different stakeholders would increase transparency and facilitate more harmonised design and delivery.

Moreover, it would be useful to restructure the youth portfolio in Tunisia to better assign the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. Indeed, it is necessary to determine whether the Ministry of Youth would centralise all relevant resources or whether such resources would be distributed across ministries, according to areas of work and specialities. There should be clarity as to which institution is in charge of co-ordinating youth policy across the whole of government. Greater co-ordination between stakeholders will also make it easier for the Directorate General in charge of youth, within the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport, to align the existing programmes and activities with the future National Integrated Youth Strategy and its objectives. The National Youth Observatory (ONJ) should also be engaged in policy design, implementation and monitoring, especially that it has the capacities and skills needed to conduct and exploit surveys and opinion polls to inform the decision making process.

Furthermore, the interviews conducted by the OECD team revealed a shared concern: youth trainers in youth houses are often required to manage all kinds of activities by themselves regardless of whether they have the needed skills and competencies. It is therefore important for youth houses to invest in training and have specialised human resources, in particular considering that the new strategy might give youth trainers more responsibilities.

Good practices from OECD countries

In Canada, the Prime Minister is also the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth placing young people's concerns at the top of government's priorities. In Quebec, the administrative unit responsible for youth is the Youth Secretariat, which falls under the Executive Council Office of the Prime Minister. This is an inter-ministerial committee, co-ordinated by the Secretariat, which works on priority areas and promotes better interdepartmental collaboration.

In Slovenia, the co-ordination of youth policies is facilitated by 17 youth co-ordinators. The youth co-ordinators are based in line ministries and act as accelerators of information and focal points for the country's youth office. Moreover, the Slovenian Act on Public Interest in Youth Sector (2010) lists the different "interest holders" in the youth sector, from the central government to the self-governing local communities (Article 7). It stipulates the prerogatives of each institutional body to avoid an overlap of responsibilities.

In Finland, the Youth Act (72/2006) identifies the main stakeholders and areas of intervention for youth-related work at national and local levels. It allocates government funding between the different stakeholders and lays out the local and national youth policies. The Act also includes provisions on the role of the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs and the transfer of state subsidies to local levels to carry out youth activities with the support of various organisations and youth centres.

Chapter 3. Tools for integrating a youth perspective in policy formulation and service design

Policy outcomes affect young people's opportunities to find a job, afford decent housing, found a family and successfully transit towards adulthood in various other respects. By integrating youth's perspectives into policy formulation and service design and by recognising that youth are a heterogeneous group with diverse needs and priorities, governments can work towards policy outcomes that are responsive to their demands. Governments have a variety of "tools" at their disposal to mainstream a youth perspective in the formulation of new laws, regulations, policies and the delivery of public services.

Jordan

In Jordan, the following tools are applied by different stakeholders to apply a "youth lens" to the formulation of policies and design of public services.

- **Policy guidelines:** The Ministry of Public Sector Development (MoPSD) developed a user guide for policy-makers to foster the participation of CSOs and citizens in the policy-making process. The guide stresses the importance of involving different segments of society, in particular marginalised groups such as women and the disabled but does not mention youth in particular.
- **Public budget:** In partnership with UNICEF, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) conducted child-sensitive budget analyses for eight ministries. Following a pilot phase with assessments being conducted for the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour in 2009, a second phase covered the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Islamic Affairs. In a third phase, the assessment was conducted for the former Higher Council for Youth and the Ministry of Housing. The summary of the General Budget for the Fiscal Year 2017 lists the estimated allocation for children (aged 0-18) by ministry for the years 2015-19 (<https://goo.gl/f1Xuot>, Table 24) which represents a key step by the government to increase transparency and accountability in policy areas affecting children.
- **Public human resource management:** In light of tight fiscal space, the number of graduates joining the public sector each year decreased from around 9,000-12,000 to 4,000 since 2013, despite an uninterrupted popularity of the public sector among recent graduates whereby around 70% of those queuing for a public sector job are less than 35 years old. Some are queuing for 10 years according to the Ministry of Public Sector Development, MoPSD). According to the MoPSD, two years ago, a new by-law to the civil service regulation decreased the weight of age in applying for higher positions in the public sector.

The examples of tools used to assess and improve the performance of government in delivering on the demands of young people are encouraging. In particular, the rights-based

approach applied to children (e.g. Jordan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) has led to promising initiatives such as the analysis of child-sensitive budgeting practices and the publication of children-related expenditures in the summary of the General Budget. Similar efforts could be replicated for the youth population.

Existing policy guidelines for engaging stakeholders in the policy cycle could be reviewed and amended such as to acknowledge the productive role young people can play in this process. This is timely as, according to the interviews, neither the current health nor the housing strategy acknowledges the specific challenges faced by youth.

Morocco

In Morocco, the High Commissioner for Planning (HCP) and the National Observatory of Human Development are leading institutions in the area of economic, demographic and social information and statistics in Morocco, namely on youth. Having aggregated data on the 15-29 youth cohort will draw a clearer picture of the living conditions, aspirations and needs of young people, and will enable policy-makers to better identify priority areas for future work. With aggregated data on youth, it will also be easier to assess the impact of public policies, which will promote evidence-based decision-making and more responsive public policies.

Regarding the collection of aggregated data on youth, several steps have been initiated in this regard such as the 2011 HCP survey and the “CAP Health” surveys undertaken in the country. HCP also conducted studies on the unemployment rate and the rural population, taking into account gender and age groups. The creation of a youth observatory or the use of organisations such as the National Institute for Youth and Democracy, or partnerships with universities, would be critical in the implementation of youth policies.

The Moroccan government could also build on its rich experience in gender budgeting to ensure that youth projects have allocated funds in the national budget. Indeed, youth-sensitive budgeting could look at the resources allocated by the government to young women and men, and whether they adequately reflect the needs of young people. This budgeting could well take advantage of the new regional budget nomenclature in the framework of the advanced regionalisation process.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, citizen consultation mechanisms are becoming more prevalent at local level. In fact, many municipalities organise open consultation meetings about their annual budget, in order to explain the main items and trade-offs in terms of allocation. The budget is a key tool to transform political priorities into concrete results for young people. Youth-sensitive budgeting can examine whether the resources allocated by government for the benefit of young women and men adequately reflect the needs of young people.

Another way to include the youth perspective in public policies is to establish a youth representation structure (council or youth forum, for example). Such a structure could act as space for young people to raise their voice in the public space and express their demands vis-à-vis government. Under the former regime, Tunisia had established a National Youth Council but given the connection of the Council to

the old regime, it was deemed by many young people as illegitimate and unattractive.

The ability of officials to communicate with young people, to understand their concerns and address their demands is another condition to effectively integrate youth concerns in policy making and service design. For instance, this concerns the ability of the public human resources (HR) systems to professionalise staff working with and for young people.

Another tool that could be explored in Tunisia are “youth checks” which are used by some OECD countries to assess the expected impact of draft regulation on young people’s lives (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. OECD countries with “Youth Checks” in place

Country	Material scope	Personal scope	Criteria of application	Legal basis
AUSTRIA JUGENDCHECK	All new legislative and regulatory proposals	Children, adolescents and young adults(0-30)	“The potential consequences they could have” “Only if at least 10,000 children are affected”	Entered into force with the new budget law (2013)
FLANDERS,BELGIUM JOKER	Draft decrees initiated by the Flemish Government	Individuals under the age of 25	“Directly influences the interests of young”	Decree establishing the child impact report and the scrutiny of government policy on its respect for the rights of the child, 15July 1997.Decreeonconducting a Flemish youth and children’s rights policy, 18July 2008
FRANCE LA CLAUSE D’IMPACT JEUNESSE	Draft laws and regulations	Young people between 16-25years	When the draft text is not specifically aimed at young people : use of general Impact sheet, to which a section dedicated to the impact on youth was added. Specifically targets youth : use “Impact sheet of a draft regulation on young people”	OrganicLaw2009-403 of April15 th (2009) on the general impact assessment Circular from 2 May 2016 on the impact assessment focused on youth
GERMANY JUGENDCHECK	Draft regulations of all federal ministries	Young people between 12-27years	“Potential impact of planned legislation” 10-15 guiding questions (e.g. Does the action increase or alter the participation of young people to social benefits?)	
IRELAND	Any new policy or legislation	Children and young people up to the age of 24	“Relevant to children and young people”	
NEW ZEALAND CHILD IMPACT ASSESSMENT: BEST PRACTICES GUIDELINES	Not applicable	Children and young people (no age limits)	Application is not obligatory but recommended by the Ministry for Social Development and Office of the Children’s Commissioner	Not applicable

Source: Austria: www.bjv.at/requirements/bjv-zum-jugendcheck/; Flanders, Belgium: nmd.bg/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/WG2_2804_JoKER.ppt; France: http://jeunes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/ClauseImpactJeunesse2016_v5.pdf; Germany: www.jugend-check.de/; New Zealand: www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-resources/monitoring/uncroc/uncroc-guideline-a3-.pdf.

In order to build confidence between government and youth, public authorities need to overcome the culture of “confidentiality” that has been shaping the administration in the

past. In 2016, the website “consultations publiques.tn” was created to promote a more participatory approach in policy-design. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport is also making similar steps to open up government work: For instance, the Ministry expressed its intention to establish a National Youth Council and during a seminar organised by the OECD, Tunisian people from all backgrounds were able to comment on the future structure and role of this council. Participants emphasised that this council should operate independently and freely and should primarily be an advisory body that helps in identifying youth needs and target areas for government action. Young people stressed that the council should also be able to make proposals of its own, without being restricted to the role of a “commentator”. In terms of its composition, participants emphasized that the council should represent the diverse backgrounds of the youth population in the country. Indeed, for them the council should not only represent civically engaged youth who may be registered in youth clubs or be members of some kind of association for example. Accordingly, it should also be open to independent young students and representatives from civil society. The political affiliation of the future members of the council remains a divisive issue as some expressed their preference for an apolitical council while others highlighted that this may exclude a large number of Tunisian youth from becoming a member. Finally, young people insisted that the council should have a presence in all regions to ensure representation of all areas. Participants also stressed that the council should provide the same chances for young women and young men to become active members and pay special attention to allow for the inclusion of young people with disabilities. At the local level, 5 pilot experiences are being conducted to create 5 local youth councils, each working in close relationship with the municipality and the youth house.

Besides this, the design and delivery of public services would benefit greatly from a better integration of young people’s contributions. Indeed ongoing consultation with young Tunisian citizens would provide better public services and utilities that would better meet the needs of this segment of the population. This would clearly occur through a better integration of young people into public administration, creating job opportunities for their future.

Good practices from OECD countries

Youth-responsive budgeting and genuine youth engagement, such as through dedicated councils, are some of the many tools that can be used to mainstream youth issues across government. In fact, youth-responsive budgeting examines the resources that the government is allocating to youth-related programmes, and assesses whether these programmes adequately address their needs. Youth councils on the other hand provide a mechanism to support dialogue between young people and the central authorities.

In the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015 stipulates that all sectors and ministries must allocate at least 25% of their total annual budget in support of youth development.

In France, the signing of a memorandum has allowed the introduction of a systematic assessment of the impact of legislation and regulations on young people. Supported by each draft, this assessment will accurately anticipate the consequences of actions for the situation of young people today and in the future. If a draft should create inequalities to the detriment of younger generation of today or tomorrow, compensatory mechanisms are considered. Long demanded by youth organisations, the “impact clause” can go a long way to bringing the situation of young people to the heart of work by state services on future drafts, whether

explicitly dedicated to young people or not. This breakthrough strengthens youth priorities within Government in its daily work. In addition, the country has a National Institute of Youth and Popular Education (INJEP), which is a hub for resources and expertise to promote evidence-based policy-making. INJEP is a national service within the Ministry of Education that includes the Ministerial Statistics Service (MSS), which produces programs and statistical studies to inform public policy in the areas of youth, community life and sport.

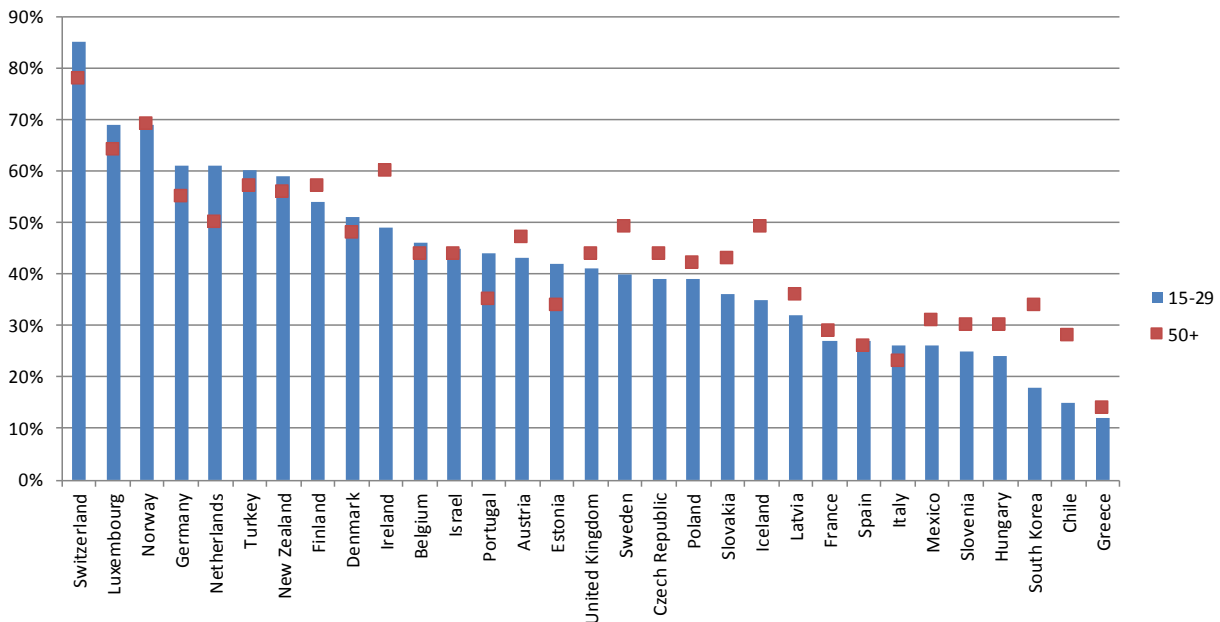
In French-speaking Belgium, the Youth Council is the organ of formal notice and youth representation. Its main mission is to help young people to speak at a national and international level. It defends the interest of young people by negotiating directly with politicians in the country. The Council harvesting youth speak on the field with the French Community, and then relayed to the community, national, European or international. The Council intended to be accessed by different political bodies, mainly by the Minister of Youth of the French Community, on everything related to youth. The opinions of the Youth Council are not binding. However, in case of soliciting the opinion of the Council of Youth by a Minister, it must justify in writing, within 60 days of receipt of the opinion, the reasons for the possible failure to take account of the latter.

In Canada, the Youth Council of the Prime Minister is a group of young Canadians who provide non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada on issues important to them and to all Canadians. The Youth Council of the Prime Minister is a mechanism to support dialogue between young people and the central authorities including the Office of the Prime Minister. Members of the Youth Council meet both online and in person several times a year to discuss issues of interest to their peers, their community and their country. They can also interact with each other outside of meetings to discuss ideas and upcoming activities. Finally they can be brought to engage with local and national organisations, meet with decision makers such as cabinet ministers, and attend public events. In Quebec, when a major project is presented to the Council of Ministers, minutes are presented to the Council on the impact of these youth projects. These “minutes” are the subject of an analysis by the Executive Council and the Youth Secretariat can comment on the minutes when a subject is considered important and timely.

Chapter 4. Youth engagement in public and political life

The OECD report, “Young people in the region: How to bring them in” finds that young people in the MENA region express less trust in government than their parents. As illustrated by Figure 4.1 in 17 of the 35 member countries, young people express less trust in government than their parents.

Figure 4.1. Young people’s trust in government across OECD countries, 2016



Note: % of “yes” answers to the question “Do you have confidence in national government?” Results for OECD countries by age group, 2016 or latest available (Finland and Iceland: 2015; Italy and Spain: 2017).

Source: Gallup World Poll

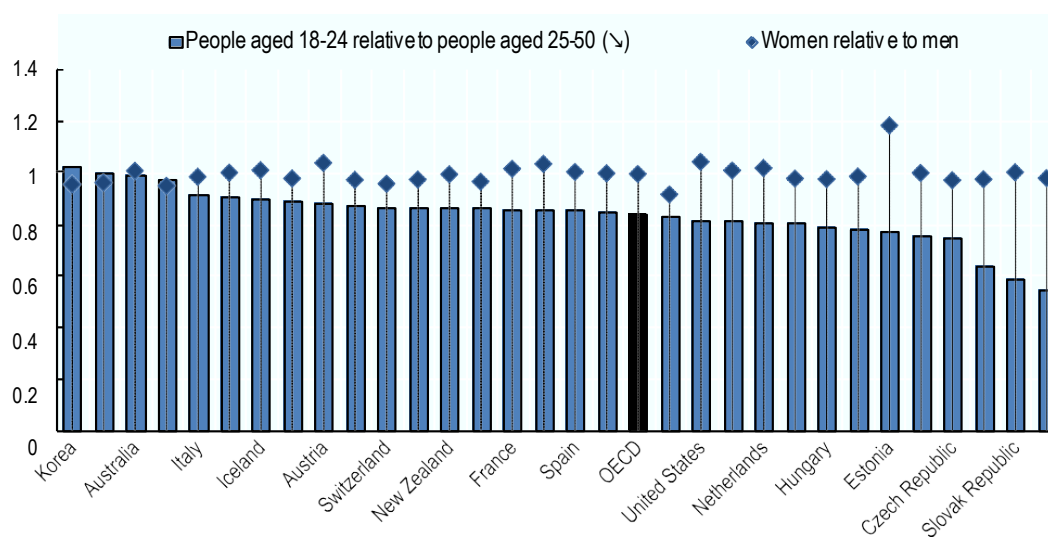
Recent figures show a lack of interest in politics among young people in OECD countries. In fact, one in four young people aged 15-29 in OECD countries is not at all interested in politics. Surveys undertaken in the MENA region confirm this trend. Youth voter turnout in the latest local elections in Tunisia amounted to 32.6%. In Jordan, the participation rate of 17-30 year olds in the latest parliamentary elections did not exceed 35%, and in Morocco, only 36% of youth regularly participate in elections.

In many OECD countries, the share of 15-29 year olds who express no interest is larger than that of the total population. Furthermore, young people continue to be under-represented in state and decision-making bodies. These findings suggest that the current opportunities for youth to shape decisions that affect their future fall short of their expectations. Giving young people the opportunity to be seen as equal partners, to be heard

and be able to make decisions is critical and is likely to have positive effects on their confidence in government.

Youth engagement in public life can take various forms such as volunteering and political participation (e.g. voting, campaigning, submitting petitions, participation in public consultations, membership in a political party, active participation in decision making procedures, social movement, etc.). The abstention of young people is a concern across many OECD countries as illustrated in Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2. Voter turnout ratios for different population groups across OECD countries, around 2012/23



Note: Data for Chile, Latvia, Luxembourg and Turkey are not available.

Source: Module 4 of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES 2011- 2016) and 2012 European Social Survey for other countries.

Moreover, it is important to improve civic education to encourage a culture of youth engagement and participation from an early age. It is recognised that engaging youth in both civic and political activities can enhance their personal skills (e.g. communication, consensus- seeking, problem-solving, leadership), make an important contribution to national development, ensure that results are responsive to their needs and demands, and ultimately strengthen the legitimacy of political decisions, democratic culture and trust in public institutions.

Jordan

The new Law on Political Parties (Law No. 39 of 2015) specifies that party founders must be at least 18 years old. However, with few exceptions, political parties are weak and hence do provide little incentives for youth to enter the public and political sphere. In many aspects of social, economic and political life, tribal affiliations still exercise significant influence. Opportunities for young people to learn about political procedures are provided by the Ministry of Education's organisation of school parliaments. Programmes run by the All Jordan Youth Commission aim at encouraging youth to become active citizens and start initiatives with their local community (For Jordan we develop), offer debate trainings and competition (Jordan Youth Voice) and organise brainstorming sessions with politicians and university teachers to make young people's voice heard and disseminated via media (A role

waiting for us). Numerous NGOs affiliated to the Royal Court, in particular the Crown Prince Foundation, INGOs and other stakeholders provide similar training activities.

There is no institutionalised mechanism that allows youth (associations) in Jordan to systematically represent their interests vis-à-vis the government, such as in the form of a national youth council. Activities to bring young people and decision-makers together and raise awareness for government work rely on the programmes of individual CSOs (e.g. Diwaneh debate by Leaders of Tomorrow; My citizenship and my participation by Al Hayat Centre, the approach to share success stories among youth by New think). Moreover, an umbrella organisation or network of youth associations that could act as an independent mouthpiece does not exist. This finding reflects a more general challenge for civil society work in Jordan as only two CSO alliances are registered overall.

Civil society activity in Jordan is rooted within the tribal system and originally focused on charity and aid activities. CSOs focusing on human rights and democracy only started to emerge following Jordan's accession to international conventions. Civil society organisations acting as watchdog of government performance exist but are rather limited in number. According to the Law 51 of 2008 as amended by Law 22 of 2009, civil society organisations can work under three legal forms: societies (i.e. at least seven members, service provision/voluntary work, may benefit from tax exemptions/charitable status), closed societies (i.e. foundations: at least one member, financial resources are limited to the funds paid by the founding members) and private societies (i.e. 3-20 members, no open membership scheme). As of 2016, 5108 societies were registered with the Ministry of Social Development. Independent of their legal form, all CSOs are supervised by the competent ministry (e.g. societies specialised in providing health services are supervised by the Ministry of Health) and shall not have any "political goals". Societies can target youth directly or indirectly through their programmes. According to the interviews, the registration of youth associations is subject to an ongoing debate between Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Social Development.

Young people are underrepresented in Jordan's state bodies. In the absence of a dedicated institution to represent youth concerns vis-à-vis the government, engagement remains largely orchestrated by the latter and linked to selected projects. Forms of engagement that go beyond providing information and targeted involvement, such as initiatives in which final decisions are shared between government and youth stakeholders or in the hands of youth, do not seem to exist. Led by the Ministry of Youth, the Al Hussein Youth Camps allow an annual 25,000 young men and women (2016) to engage in awareness raising, training, educational and voluntary activities aimed at strengthening and enhancing national identity values, spreading the culture of volunteerism, and developing their abilities and skills (e.g. leadership empowerment, promoting tolerance and rejecting extremism and violence). Dedicated programmes to encourage young people to become politically active, however, do not seem to exist.

Among the major obstacles to foster civic engagement and political participation, CSOs and representatives from local youth centres first refer to the lack of job opportunities. For many, economic inclusion is a precondition to become more active in public life. Moreover, interviewees reported a certain fear among youth to become engaged politically due to traditional norms. In this respect, the norms represented by the family and society provide the key reference for what is perceived as acceptable behaviour. Moral support and recognition from the family can make a big difference in encouraging young people to engage. Joint activities for young people and family members, such as the Mother's and Daughter's Day in Al Tafileh, hence serve an important purpose. In the field of civic

engagement and volunteering, notable initiatives were created by Jordanian youth themselves, such as the independent volunteering network Jeel 962. The network, which is composed of young people aged 10-24, plans and implements activities for community development and hence engages young people in finding practical solutions to challenges in their society.

Among the obstacles to CSO activity, interviewees referred to cases of self-censorship, slow bureaucracy (and, in some cases, the cancellation of activities without justification) and increasingly strict regulations for registration and acceptance of funding from international donors. Finally, capacities among youth themselves need to be strengthened. School and university curricula could be reviewed with a view to teaching the skills that are required for students from Jordan to compete in an increasingly globalised labour market, renewing the focus on the value of active citizenship and increasing young people's autonomy (e.g. critical judgment, teamwork, assume responsibility within the community, etc.). Such an approach relies on the joint commitment and shared understanding among government officials, teachers and students.

In the interviews, youth associations deplored the lack of opportunities to develop dialogue and debate skills and to practice critical thinking and engage in decision making processes. They also stressed that decision-makers showed little enthusiasm to engage youth in a genuine dialogue and take into consideration their ideas and requests.

According to data from the Independent Election Commission, the participation rate of youth between 17-30 years old (35.5%) figured below the average (37%) in the 2016 elections of the national parliament.

The first local elections conducted under a new legal framework (i.e. 2015 Decentralisation Law and Municipality Law) took place on 15 August 2017. The creation of elected councils at governorate and local (district) level has created high expectations to result in new opportunities for citizens, including youth, and CSOs to participate in local decision-making. More specifically, the reform is expected to allow citizens to participate in the identification of local needs and priorities that will feed into the national planning and development process. A series of awareness raising activities has been conducted with youth at governorate level by the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MoPPA) as well as by the Independent Election Commission (IEC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

The minimum age to run in Jordan's local elections stands at 25 years. While the minimum age is still considerably higher than in OECD countries, it figures below the minimum age required to run for national parliament (30 years, Senate: 40 years). According to the RASED programme run by Al Hayat Center for Civil Society Development, the average age of elected members to the governorate councils in the 2017 elections is 49.7 years. While the candidates in the age group 50-59 represent the highest share of elected members in the governorate councils (41.7%), only around 10.5% of elected officials are between 26-34 years old. Among the most notable success stories of young contenders, a 27-year old candidate was elected mayor in Mo'ab Municipality and 26-year old women got elected the nation's youngest female member in the Governorate Council of Aqaba.

In Jordan, the relation between youth, political parties and parliamentarians is characterised by low levels of trust and dissatisfaction with performance. In a 2016 survey conducted by the International Republican Institute, 65% of the respondents stressed that they have little or no confidence in political parties, 54% expressed no confidence in Parliament. Moreover, despite lowering the minimum age required to vote to 17 years and 90 days,

voting decisions continue to be dominated by tribal affiliations. Especially young people from the big cities such as Amman, in which tribal affiliations play less of a role, largely abstain from voting. Yet, promising initiatives exist to encourage young people to vote: such as the initiative “Your vote is decisive” in Aqaba governorate which made extensive use of social media prior to the 2016 parliamentary elections.

Young Jordanian wishing to compete in national and local elections are facing various challenges related to the cultural context (e.g. dominance of authorities/elderly; service culture/wasta) which can discourage them from becoming politically active and diminish their chances to be perceived as serious contenders. Lowering the minimum age required to run for governorate and local councils below the criteria for the national parliament is an important step to encourage their political participation. Although there seems to be little support to further reduce the minimum age, especially in a context of limited competition among political parties, it must be noted that this system still excludes a considerable share of the adult population (aged 18-24). Moreover, the costs associated with running a campaign may deter young people who have typically less financial assets at their disposal. Awareness and training raising activities, such as the mock elections with 23 young men and women and over 2250 voters in Madaba on 22-23 May 2017, could be scaled up.

Morocco

According to a survey run by the High Commissioner for Planning, a third of Moroccan young people have no confidence in their government. 42% express no trust in Parliament and 55% have no confidence in political parties. At the local level, 60% of young Moroccans do not trust local authorities.

This lack of confidence undermines the willingness of youth to involve themselves in public policies. Similar to the low levels of trust expressed by youth in Jordan and Tunisia, greater transparency, genuine opportunities to shape policy outcomes and improved communication with young people are critical to address the trust crisis. While evidence on the abstention rate of young people in the most recent elections does not exist, the general abstention rate in Morocco is relatively high, with a participation rate of 43% in the parliamentary elections in October 2016. Besides the lack of trust among young people, there are other reasons for the current Moroccan youth crisis, as highlighted by the results of field experience in the political participation of young people in Morocco organised by the Moroccan Centre for Youth and Democratic transition in partnership with the Moroccan Centre for Civic Education Associations at the Local level. Indeed, despite the advances of the 2011 Constitution, low political participation among young people is also explained by the weak role of the media in encouraging young people toward political participation; the lack of realistic programmes geared toward young people and the negative image held by the young regarding elected representatives.

The HCP survey also demonstrated that only 1% of Moroccan young people at the time of the investigation were members to a political party and that 4% attended political or union meetings. Moreover, young people seem to be under-represented in state bodies, especially in senior management and within Parliament. Some efforts have been undertaken to address this issue. A quota was introduced for young Moroccans in Parliament in 2011 for example. 30 Seats are now reserved for young people under the age of 40 years. These seats are then shared equally, i.e. 15 seats for young men and 15 for young women. These 30 seats are featured on a national “Youth” list, in addition to the Women list with 60 seats.

The 2011 Moroccan Constitution provides for an “Advisory Council for Youth and community action” (AALCC) “charged with studying and monitoring issues in these areas and making proposals on any topic of economic, social and cultural interest aimed directly at youth and community action, and the development of the creative efforts of young people, and encouraging participation in national life, in a spirit of responsible citizenship”. In this regard, bill number 89-15 of the Council (AALCC) was adopted by the House of Representatives in July 2017, following several discussions particularly around the composition and operation of the Council. As noted in the interviews and the overview of OECD member countries practices, ensuring a greater representation of youth and civil society in the Council is crucial. Since the Council advises on matters involving young people directly, it is young people themselves who are best equipped to talk about their situation. Moreover, the choice of members appointed to the Council must also ensure genuine representativeness of the actors involved in the field of youth, both at central and local levels. A key element of the success of the AALCC is also based on the scope of the opinion that the Council would issue and how they ensure these opinions are reactive and responsive to identified needs. It is therefore appropriate to clarify the role to be played by these opinions, their publication and the level of accountability for the monitoring of these opinions. The diversity of those consulted must also be ensured when gathering opinions: political, ideological trends, different sectors represented, gender parity, social status. The Council should have suitable means for the effective implementation of its mandate. This particularly involves the allocation of a detailed budget established according to the activities. The Council’s reports and conclusions must also be published and presented to the public and young people through appropriate communication channels, and also Parliament on a regular basis.

In addition, youth groups or institutions are key to strengthening the participation of Moroccan young people in public life. Indeed, it is necessary to give Moroccan youth a way to come together via networks or a Youth Forum to interact constructively with the state. Also, to be inclusive of young people necessarily entails a consideration of the interests of the “unorganised” youth.

The strengthening of youth capacity to participate fully in public life could also be carried out as part of civic education activities at school, a cornerstone to inculcate the culture of youth participation. This also results from ensuring the training of teachers in this regard. The implementation of youth training programs for young people or youth capacity building could also be carried out via Youth Centres, which could play a major role in this context. Co-ordination between the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development and the Ministry of Education could bear fruit in the medium and long term.

Furthermore, governmental and non-governmental institutions stress the importance of strengthening a culture of participation and the essential prior existence of government structures adapted to allow the development of mechanisms and initiatives promoting the participation of young Moroccan men and women in public life. Indeed, while several initiatives from civil society and international organisations exist, it seems appropriate to strengthen the government’s role in this context. The role of youth associations and the National Institute of Youth and Democracy in this context is crucial. Indeed, it would seem appropriate to explore the potential role of the Institute of Youth and Democracy to make young people heard through youth associations, to train youth leaders and to support youth organisations in the implementation of their projects. The capacity and resources needed by the Institute for this purpose should also be identified.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, the current youth crisis (i.e. unemployment, lack of confidence, low participation) is linked to the general context of strained economic growth and the need to further consolidate political stability. Indeed, Tunisian young people (aged 15 to 29) have less confidence in their government than the age group 50+. Encouraging young people to engage in public life is therefore of critical importance. Indeed, there is a lack of continuously monitoring developments taking place in Tunisian public life with the media scene having remained for many years monopolised by a single party which made it a platform for propaganda and discredited it due to the lack of objectivity. It is therefore necessary to restore a culture of engagement in public life and strengthen the spirit of engagement among Tunisian young people through all available communication channels, but also and especially through spaces and tools dedicated to children, such as schools, children's clubs, educational materials and school recreation targeting children.

The ministry in charge of youth affairs has led efforts in this direction through various activities in the youth centres, one such example being the “integrity clubs” organised by youth centres in Beja. Through trainings, and field visits, these clubs familiarise young people with the principles of integrity to better understand the role and means of action of the local authorities as well as of citizens. In the youth centres in Nabeul, activities target young people to raise awareness for the principles of democracy, participation and accountability, through trainings and artistic activities. The Ministry of Education supports cultural, social and sports activities organised by youth houses in schools, organised youth houses.

The culture of engagement and civic participation is not yet fully rooted in the mentality of young Tunisians in spite of the efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport. It is therefore necessary first to reinforce civic education modules throughout schooling (primary and secondary). Indeed, this would familiarise Tunisian young people and children with the principles of democracy, to have a better understanding of their institutions and their functioning from a young age. It also requires that these modules address the culture of passivity that has prevailed in the past. Young people must be familiarised, from childhood, with the spirit of engagement, commitment and entrepreneurship, and encouraged to be proactive, claim their rights and needs and partner with authorities in identifying solutions to common challenges.

The culture of involvement must also be present in extra-curricular activities, in particular in the youth centres and cultural centres across the country. In many regions, these centres provide the only public spaces for meetings and exchanges between young people. In fact, better co-ordination and joint activities between these centres, schools and high schools would help strengthening youth education in citizenship-related subjects and would reach a wider audience among youth (i.e. activities no longer being restricted to those young people present at youth or culture centres).

To achieve these objectives, it is essential to strengthen co-ordination between the Ministry for Youth and other ministries including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood. It is also necessary to strengthen co-ordination with the Department in charge of Open Government to ensure the necessary synergies between youth initiatives that are undertaken by these departments and those of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport. Finally, youth associations should be involved in these exchanges to ensure their involvement in the promotion of a culture of commitment.

After the revolution, Tunisia experienced exponential growth in a number of associations operating in various thematic areas. This profusion of associations has been encouraged by the establishment of a new legal framework governing associations and unprecedented levels of freedom of expression. Decree No. 88 of 24 November 2011 was enacted to dissolve the law of 1959 and especially the system of necessary prior approval and inquiries. It guarantees the free formation of associations and abandons any approval and prior authorisation system. Article 36 of the decree states that the “State shall ensure the allocation of the budget to support it and give support to the activities of associations.” Later, in 2013, this decree was supplemented by Ordinance No. 5133 which sets out the criteria, procedures and conditions for the allocation of public funds to associations to ensure greater transparency.

The Constitution of 27 January 2014 also strengthened the role of associations in Tunisian public life, particularly through the provisions of Article 35, which guarantees the “freedom to create political parties, unions and associations” provided that they comply with the provisions of the Constitution, the most important of which are financial transparency and a rejection of violence.

In 2018, the Ministry in charge of Relations with the constitutional bodies, civil and human rights society initiated a consultation process to reform Decree 88. It aims to alleviate the administrative burdens faced by associations, and strengthen the institutional framework for public financing of associations and the administrative and financial management thereof. The possibility of extending the status of “association” to encompass larger structures was also discussed. Within the Ministry of Affairs of Youth and Sport, the Relations Department alongside the Events Management and Communication and Interaction with Youth associations manages, as its name suggests, relationships with the associations. This service is responsible for public funding and the programming of summer activities.

According to statistics from the National Institute of Statistics, of a total of 20,698 associations, nearly 364 are considered youth associations representing around 1,8% of all registered associative bodies. Most of the associations are active in the cultural and sports fields. To obtain funding as stipulated by Decree 88, youth associations can apply to the Commissioner of Youth and Sport at the regional level; or to the Directorate General of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport within central government. Applications are reviewed in a dedicated committee which determines the allocation of funds.

Despite considerable progress achieved by Tunisia in encouraging a culture of engagement, such as shown by their membership in the Open Government Partnership and a new consultation platform, the overall engagement of citizens in Tunisia is still limited. This is also true for young people, and low participation is not due solely to the absence of a culture of commitment at home but also in public administration.

In line with a global phenomenon, young people are under-represented in State bodies in Tunisia. In the absence of a national youth council or similar body dedicated to give voice to the concerns of young people, engagement is still, in most cases, organised and controlled by government institutions and linked to specific projects.

The forms of engagement that go beyond information sharing and targeted involvement do not seem to exist. There are programmes to encourage young people to become politically active; however, their impact has remained limited according to the interviews.

The claim that Tunisian youth are uninterested in public life is unfounded. Work done by the Tunisian NGO Al Bawsala with parliaments, local communities and youth, such as the

mobilisation of the “Menich msemah” movement has shown this repeatedly. It must be noted, however, that much of this mobilisation takes place occasionally, and often depends on the intensity of communication around a particular news item. On many occasions, engagement is also taking the form of protests rather than dialogue and collaboration. Moreover, the interviews conducted in several regions of Tunisia show that young Tunisians trust civil society organisations more than political parties.

One of the key challenges to encourage genuine youth engagement concerns the way public policies are formulated and implemented and how they are communicated. Such efforts should focus on changing the often critical and negative attitude to a more constructive approach with opportunities for dialogue and the exchange of opposing views. There is great potential to provide more youth-responsive policies and public services by creating an institutionalised mechanism which would facilitate the access of the younger generation to political decision-making.

It appears that the majority of initiatives that encourage young people to engage in public life emanates from international associations and organisations. Indeed, it is quite rare to see government taking the lead and proposing activities to associations and young people, which has led young people to ask whether the authorities are reluctant to provide opportunities for genuine engagement. Furthermore, good practices implemented by youth associations and the broader civil society at local level are not reported back to the central level. A better exchange of existing good practices and lessons learned would benefit other regions and municipalities and could be facilitated by creating a national network.

Moreover, the difficulty of creating an association has been regularly raised in the discussions. Indeed, the creation of an association remains an unintuitive business and requires a number of supporting documents which - for many - are not easy to obtain. The complexity and administrative burden can sometimes be daunting for young people who are more familiar with direct and interactive communication through networks. The process of creating associations could be simplified by reducing the paperwork and creating an online support service to support young people in their efforts. Moreover, the access to grants, such as state grants to associations, could be simplified to ensure the sustainable financing of youth associations and their agendas. This is particularly important as the validation of an application for funding may take several months.

Good practices from OECD countries

The design and purpose of representative bodies for youth vary greatly across OECD member countries. In fact, youth councils offer only one among various formats to represent young people’s interests vis-à-vis the government and considerable differences exist with regard to their institutional architecture (e.g. composition, function and influence in decision-making).

The Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU) is an umbrella organisation uniting 96 nationwide non-governmental organisations for children and youth. The LNU organises a children and youth parliament and acts as representative of young people vis-à-vis public authorities.

In France, the Youth Policy Advisory Council (Conseil d’Orientation des Politiques de la Jeunesse, COJ), created in 2016, acts as administrative advisory committee to the Prime Minister’s Office. The COJ is responsible for creating coherent and transversal public policies concerning young people. It may be consulted on legislative proposals of relevance to young people and can examine any question of general interest in the field of youth

policy. The Council can present proposals to the government in order to improve the situation of young people. An annual report of its activities is published and sent to the government. It must be noted that these platforms tend to attract youth who already express a certain interest in political affairs and public life. Tailored efforts are therefore necessary to reach out to the most disengaged and marginalised youth groups.

In order to encourage youth participation in the democratic process from an early age, the Government of the United Kingdom launched the national initiative “Rock the Ballot” aimed at promoting education in schools and youth organisations on registering to vote. This initiative is the result of collaboration between the government and “Bite the Ballot,” a civil society organisation seeking to encourage young people to vote. The initiative invites teachers and youth to download online material to improve their political knowledge, conduct democratic debates and encourage people to register to vote.

In the United States, the “Run for something” initiative led by former Democratic campaign leaders encourages young millennials to run for office. Young people can register online and the most promising candidates are invited to participate in trainings which will prepare them for the election campaign. The association also helps young candidates in the process of collecting funding and hiring professional staff for the campaign.

In Norway, mock elections date back to 1946. During election year, schools invite young politicians from the main parties and youth representatives to debate with young student. In 2011, the process evolved into an “election square” – a market place where young people can gather and meet with members of political youth organisations, pick up campaign brochures and engage in discussions followed by the actual mock elections. The results of the election are later published by the media.

Chapter 5. Addressing the double challenge faced by young women

Young women worldwide can face a two-fold form of discrimination based on their age and sex. In MENA countries, in addition to existing discrimination against women in access to employment and positions of senior responsibility in the public sector, women are sometimes reluctant to integrate employment due to social norms or family pressures.

Jordan

2016 data from the World Bank estimates that more than half of young women (15-24) in Jordan are unemployed (56%) compared to 29% of young men despite outnumbering their male fellows in both tertiary (47% vs. 43%, 2015) and secondary school enrolment (85% vs. 80%, 2014). In fact, Jordan displays one of the lowest female labour force participation in the world (16% compared to 22% in MENA countries and 57% in upper middle income countries). Programmes by different line ministries attempt to challenge this status quo, such as programmes run by the Ministry of Labour to foster self-employment among women working from home.

A quota system guarantees a minimum share of seats for women in the national parliament (i.e. 15 out of 130 seats), the elected governorate councils (10%, in addition, one third of the 15% of appointed members must be women) and in the municipal (25%) councils. Institutional networks to foster women candidates are supported by the Jordan National Commission for Women; in addition, the parliament features a women caucus. The King Hussein Information and Research Centre supports parliamentary research to mainstream gender in its activities. According to the Ministry of Public Sector Development, current reform efforts target the civil service by-law with a view to empowering young women in the public service through the extension of maternity leave to one year and the introduction of more flexible working hours and teleworking.

However, despite these initiatives, the low degree of young women's economic inclusion translates into an overall low participation in public life. It must be noted that young women are not the only group in society facing a particular risk of exclusion from economic, social and public life (e.g. rural, disabled, minorities). In Aqaba Governorate, a team of 15-20 youth volunteers, in co-operation with Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, is reaching out to youth from less fortunate socio-economic neighbourhoods to collect evidence and prepare studies on their situation and allow for more targeted service delivery in areas figuring outside of government attention.

Despite significant progress in recent years to fight legal discrimination (e.g. removal of Article 308 of the Penal Code in April 2017), predominant gender bias and gender stereotypes continue to perpetuate unequal opportunities for young women in accessing health, mobility, justice and other service areas. The separation of youth centres by sex was welcomed by female representatives during the interviews as it provides an opportunity to leave parental home and participate in public life, especially for young women from more conservative backgrounds. For (young) women with an ambition to run as candidates in

national or local elections, economic dependency can be a major obstacle due to the associated costs. Therefore, female candidates rely to an even greater degree on family/tribal support. Advocates for a more equal representation of men and women in the public sphere praise the quota system and express their hope that the decentralisation reform will provide new opportunities for women to assume local leadership roles. Mentorship programmes designed to bring together women in leadership roles and aspirational young women could be established to overcome the existing barriers for the latter to fully participate in public life.

Morocco

In Morocco, significant efforts were deployed for greater gender equality and women empowerment. This is due to the convergence of two key factors: political will and the dynamism of civil society. The reformed Family Code (“Moudawana”) which entered into force in 2004, laid the foundation for a society ensuring greater parity between man and woman. This legal framework has allowed many initiatives to flourish.

In terms of public life, Moroccan women have been part of certain governments and occupied some senior positions in political parties. Following the legislative elections of October 2016, the new lower house of parliament comprises 21% women, or 81 elected women out of 395 MP seats. Of these MPs, 71 have been designated by a quota system and a further 10 were elected in local districts. This is an improvement compared to the outgoing Parliament which after the parliamentary elections of saw 67 MPs, or 17% women.

However, the political representation of women in Morocco in general and young women in particular remains relatively low. Moroccan women are often limited in their ability to exercise their rights as voters and candidates in view of social, economic and political barriers. In the public sector, women only represent 16% of middle managers and 11% senior management. While the new 2011 Constitution guarantees Moroccan woman several civil liberties and allows them to participate in political life, a lack of access to information and resources has a direct impact on their capacities to do so. In 2016, 20% of women aged 15-24 were unemployed even though young Moroccan women represent 47% of tertiary education, while the total rate of unemployed women was 10%. Moreover, although the illiteracy rate has decreased, it remains relatively high among women (about 38% of Moroccan women were illiterate in 2015), particularly in rural areas. It should however be noted that the illiteracy rate is much lower in women aged 15-24, at 6.5% in 2015.

Women are sometimes reluctant to become active in the labour market due to social norms or family pressures. To overcome inequalities, it is important to focus on the elimination of gender stereotypes in order to improve public perception of women in the public and political sphere. An important step would also be to improve the visibility of women in the media by taking female politicians as role models for young women who are still reluctant to participate. Furthermore, to enable women to participate actively and without constraints in public life but also as a way to enable them to occupy positions of responsibility, it is necessary to formulate policies and actions that allow them to find a balance between work and family life. These initiatives may include building on the 2015

OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life. The Recommendation promotes the establishment of a strategy across government to reform equality between men and women, establish strong mechanisms to ensure accountability and sustainability of initiatives in this direction, as well as tools to facilitate the formulation of appropriate public policies. Finally, it is essential to improve the situation of young women in rural areas who face more obstacles than in urban areas, by offering education and literacy programs to avoid school dropout for example.

Tunisia

Tunisia has long been the women's rights flag bearer in the Arab world; and in 1956 under the Bourguiba era, the Personal Status Code granted more rights to women. More recently, the 2014 Tunisian Constitution further consolidated these achievements, notably through Article 21 which states that "all citizens bear the same rights and the same duties. They are equal before the law without discrimination." Similarly, Article 46 of the Constitution introduces the concept of equality of opportunity (*égalité des chances*) between men and women.

In addition, the law against gender based violence adopted in July 2017 has reinforced the legal framework protecting women's rights. Indeed, the text strengthens the protection of victims, provides legal and psychological assistance to victims and establishes specific programs to anchor "the principles of human rights and gender equality" in school programs. The law also amends Article 227 bis of the Penal Code by deleting the provision that made it possible that charges against the perpetrator of a sexual act "without violence" on a minor (below 15) were dropped should they marry their victim.

In 2016, Tunisia also created a Peers Council for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. This Council's primary mission is to integrate a gender lense in the development of policies and plans in Tunisia (planning, programming, evaluation and budgeting). It is also empowered to give opinions on draft legislation related to women's rights.

Just like their male compatriots, young Tunisian women engage in the activities provided by the local youth centres. They are sometimes even more numerous in these institutions, taking part in training and seminars but also directing projects on their own. It must be noted, however, that disparities exist between urban and more rural areas. While young Tunisian women living in urban areas are facing fewer difficulties to participate in this type of activity or engaging in civil society, young women from rural areas are confronted with considerable obstacles. Indeed, traditional stereotypes continue to be widespread, in particular in rural and remote areas, where parents are more reluctant to let their young daughters take part in extracurricular activities. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the efforts of communication and dialogue with families and young women to overcome the existing obstacles for young women to engage in public life.

Despite government efforts encouraging the participation of women in the labour market and public life, Tunisian women are still struggling to be fairly represented in the public and private spheres. Indeed, the report of the National Institute of Statistics states that women represent only 50.2% of the working age population and 28.2% of the active population with little changes since 2006 (a plus of only 1.8% over nine years). This pattern has not only weakened the economic empowerment of Tunisian women but is also a concern for a more sustainable and inclusive economic development in Tunisia.

Moreover, women are more affected by unemployment than men (22.5% according to official statistics compared to 12.4% for men). This problem affects young people with a

graduate degree in particular, with 68% of female university graduate being unemployed which represents about double the unemployment rate for male university graduates. It is therefore necessary that public authorities take into account this important dimension and that public policies address the inequalities in employment for young Tunisian women, such as by collecting and using data disaggregated by gender and age.

The situation is slightly more positive when it comes to the share of women in parliament. Indeed, Tunisia has received the prize of the Global Forum of Women Parliamentarians for 2015, as the country with the highest share of women in parliament across the Arab world and Africa. This trend is confirmed by figures from the World Bank, with a growing trend of women's participation in parliamentary life from 11.5% in 2000 to 31.3% today. Indeed, 68 out of 217 members of parliament are women. This rate was achieved by the imposed requirement of respecting parity in the preparation of electoral lists.

It should be noted that the principle of horizontal and vertical parity was adopted by the Assembly of People's Representatives for the next municipal elections, which should be held on 6 May 2018, in order to ensure proper participation of women in decision making at the local level, and to create elected councils that fully reflect the central place held by Tunisian women.

Good practices from OECD countries

In London, the "Us Programme" led by civil society targets young girls mainly from disadvantaged social backgrounds to help them break boundaries and achieve their goals. The programme encourages self-development and offers continuous support to ambitious female students. It also provides special access to a network of successful women in industry and business, dedicated to sharing their knowledge. Aimed at female students aged 14 to 19, an annual conference is organised to present case studies, engage in panel discussions, group presentations and interactive workshops and provide networking opportunities and mentoring schemes.

The Youth Network for Gender Equality in Portugal (REDE) conducted a project called "Woman to Woman" to help young women, including ethnic minorities, to participate in politics. It aimed to train young women in female politicians in order for them to develop the skills necessary for their engagement, such as leadership or public speaking.

Chapter 6. Reinforcing co-ordination across central and subnational levels and leveraging decentralisation reform

The local level is the proximity level that allows young people to interact more regularly and directly with public authorities and the administration. The needs of young people at the local level are often very different from one region to another and expectations may differ from those aggregated nationally. Indeed, while discussions at the national level may focus on policies and strategies at the local level, interaction often hinges on requests from such municipalities that are more specific (setting up of a local centre or sports ground, for example). In addition to this, the results of policy are more concrete for citizens at the local level. Vertical co-ordination of youth policies is therefore crucial.

Jordan

The ongoing decentralisation reform in Jordan is expected to impact the relation between the central and subnational levels of government (i.e. governorates and municipalities) also impacting on the way youth-related policies and services are formulated, designed and delivered. At the core of the reform stands the objective to empower local authorities, in collaboration with non-governmental stakeholders, to identify local needs and priorities in the framework of the national planning and development process, share the benefits from economic development more equally across regions and redirect the attention of the national parliament away from a service orientation towards policy-making and oversight. As analysed in greater detail in the OECD Review “Towards a New Partnership with Citizens: Jordan’s Decentralisation Reform”, the National Committee for the Decentralisation Reform and its Executive Committee is charged with the implementation of the 2015 Decentralisation Law and Municipality Law.

Jordan is a highly centralised state in which the central level assumes strong influence over subnational affairs. Governorates are headed by a governor who is appointed by the King and who acts, together with the deconcentrated directorates of line ministries, as an extension of the central government (e.g. the staff of the youth directorates is delegated by the Ministry of Youth). Under the previous legal framework, the vertical relation between the Ministry of Youth and youth directors has been characterised by a top-down approach. Reportedly, the Secretary General at the ministry sends general policy instructions to youth directors who liaise with other directorates inside the governorate, youth centres and other partners in the formulation of annual programmes and supervise their implementation. Annual meetings of the SG with the deconcentrated agencies offer a rare opportunity for the latter to raise local needs and demands. In fact, the around 200 youth centres across the country provide the main infrastructure at subnational level to organise seminars, trainings and workshops for youth in collaboration with other deconcentrated entities, foundations, local NGOs, INGOs, universities and other partners. Where operational, elected administrative committees/councils inside youth centres participate in the programming of the annual Action Plan with the youth directorate (e.g. Karag, Aqaba, Tafileh). These ideas are then forwarded to the Ministry of Youth hence allowing for some degree of bottom-up

programming. Monthly reports are prepared by the youth centres to report on their activities and sent back to the Ministry. According to the Ministry of Youth, the key objectives of the youth centres are to empower young people, provide safe environments, promote youth participation in public life, honour young talents and innovations, and promote values of loyalty to the nation.

The Ministry of Youth approves and allocates the annual budget which amounts to 6000 JD (previously 4000 JD) following a decision by the Minister of Youth in early 2017. Additional funding is allocated for the maintenance of youth centres and facilities and the work of the youth directorate. In early 2017, the Minister of Youth delegated administrative and financial autonomy to the youth directorates with the objective to facilitate procedures and reduce approval stages. In 2016, 431 employees were registered in the youth centres supported by around 200 volunteers.

At the municipality level, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs reportedly transfers youth demands to the Ministry of Youth. However, it is unclear whether a clear procedure exists to regulate the day-to-day interaction between the two ministries. In some municipalities such as in Al Tafileh governorate, young people are involved in voluntary work (e.g. street cleaning) under the supervision of the youth directorate.

The recent increase in financial contributions to youth centres along with the decentralisation of autonomy in favour of the youth directors has been highly welcomed by the subnational authorities. According to the interviews, it has facilitated decision-making procedures and hence provide for a more timely response to local demands. Interviewees stressed the need to further increase the financial transfers from central level to deliver on local demands and modernise youth centres which largely suffer from outdated equipment. Additionally, the unconditional transfer of an equal amount to each centre could be reviewed and, if necessary, be restructured to ensure that resources are invested where they are needed and used most efficiently.

There is a clear need to organise additional activities to raise awareness for the implications of the new legal framework and clarify the future role of elected subnational authorities. The future mechanisms to establish dialogue and exchange between local authorities and youth associations, activists and CSOs, are yet to be defined. And yet, the reform has raised hopes that it will allow for a bottom-up approach to strategic planning and development, in particular through the identification of policy and service priorities with the involvement of youth in their communities. It must be noted that these priorities can vary considerably between the centre, northern and southern region, and between governorate centres and remote and rural areas. As of today, the channels offered to raise complaints to local development units at governorate (GLDUs) and municipal level (MLDUs) and public relation units for citizens do not seem to satisfy the expectations of local communities. As stressed in the OECD report “Towards a new partnership with citizens: Jordan’s decentralisation reform”, local development units often suffer from limited administrative and human resource capacities. Two municipalities in Ajloun Governorate have played a pioneering role as they have opened a youth unit headed by staff from the municipality and supported by a 9-member steering committee which is composed of local young men and women from different socio-economic backgrounds. Among others, the youth committee has contributed to a survey about the demands of local youth and received funding for small projects from the municipality.

Communication and co-ordination across the deconcentrated entities (i.e. through the Executive Council) remain behind the hopes of interviewees. Moreover, some concerns were raised as to the future interaction between the elected governorate councils, the

governor and the Executive Council in light of the genuine democratic legitimacy enjoyed by the first. A similar issue of credibility has, in some cases, affected the interaction between elected members of municipal councils and the delegated youth directors. According to the interviews, in some cases, the youth director had to involve the governor to co-ordinate with elected members from the municipality councils.

The establishment of institutionalised communication structures between youth directorates across the 12 governorates could provide an impetus to share good practices across the country. As most municipalities suffer from serious capacity shortages, unsustainable debt levels and increasing demands for access to public services due to the refugee crisis, it remains to be seen whether the creation of elected local councils will indeed result in more youth-responsive policy outcomes and better access to quality services.

Morocco

As provided by the 2011 Constitution, Morocco has embarked on a vast project of “advanced regionalisation” to contribute to economic and social development by strengthening local government.

Alongside organic laws of July 2015 which provide for Regional Development Program (RDP) to be adopted for each region in the first year of the mandate of the Regional Council, a new national institutional and administrative organisation is being set up. Each region is responsible for developing and monitoring the implementation of the RDP following a participatory approach. Besides this, Article 117 of Dahir No. 1-15-83 of 20 Ramadan 1436 (July 7, 2015) promulgating organic law on regions No. 111-14, provides for the creation of three advisory bodies, including one specific to youth interests:

- an advisory body, in partnership with civil society, responsible for the study of regional affairs for the implementation of the principles of equity, equal exchange and gender;
- an advisory body responsible for studying issues relating to youth interests;
- an advisory body, in partnership with the economic players in the region, responsible for the study of regional economic affairs.

These are participatory mechanisms for dialogue and co-operation to encourage the involvement of citizens and associations in the development and monitoring of the RDP in the manner prescribed in regional procedural regulations. This is coupled with initiatives at the municipal level to support young people, many of which are done in co-operation with international organisations.

Local governance reforms must allow the institutional, managerial and financial capacity of collectives to be strengthened. The soon to be set up advisory bodies on youth interests can play a key role in ensuring young people and youth associations are represented and can identify the needs of young people at the local level. Some regions are in addition establishing requirements on the composition of these bodies, taking into account, for example, association members working at the provincial level, to guarantee a certain adaptability in the regional context. Bodies would be composed of members of civil society and experts. To allow these bodies to be real engines for civic participation by young people, the following issues need to be considered:

- The criteria for establishing youth bodies; their composition and mandate

- Their potential role of in terms of development, implementation and monitoring of the RDP and national strategy
- Ways to strengthen the representation of young people and youth associations in regional bodies and more specifically the body representing the interests of young people
- Ways to promote the exchange of practices among regional bodies and between the regional level and the national level
- The role of the National Institute of Youth and Democracy which is intended to work on regions in this context

Furthermore, exchange around the youth initiatives planned in the RDP and their complementarity with a national policy on youth is essential. Under the RDP, the Marrakech-Safi region is planning the establishment of an observatory to evaluate data from all areas under its jurisdiction, as well as its own regional monitoring and performance indicators.

Effective co-ordination with municipalities must also be ensured, given their mandate and specific skills directly related to the youth interests (cultural and sports policy, local transport). Integrating the needs of young Moroccans into communal action plans (through participatory diagnosis) and their involvement in actions under open government at the local level, as well as youth participation in monitoring and evaluation, could indeed be effective ways to achieve this goal.

Tunisia

Although the 2014 Constitution states that the local level is chiefly responsible for local development, Tunisia remains a highly centralised state with important regional disparities. The Constitution provides a general framework and lays out broad principles for decentralisation. The code on local authorities was adopted in 2018, but specific application decrees are still needed to implement decentralisation in practice.

The decentralisation reform process responds to popular demands for a better and more equal distribution of national wealth, resources and public services throughout the territory and a readjustment of the benefits of public development policies between cities and coastal regions. In that spirit, Tunisia has prepared its new Plan for Economic and Social Development 2016-2020 which emphasises the causal relationship between good local governance and regional development, and which will form the basis for regional development programmes. The draft code on local has been adopted by the parliament in 2018 and the first local elections since the revolution of 2011 were held in May 2018.

Youth-related services and programmes are mainly delivered locally. Indeed, youth centres, youth commissioners and other local offices constitute the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport's window at the local level. The proximity of these services to the citizens, and especially young people, is therefore of particular importance. In fact, youth policy is decided centrally by the state and implemented at the regional and local level by the regional commissioner, the regional inspector who works with youth centre managers and representatives of other departments who roll out the strategic instructions received from the Ministry in the respective local context. It is then implemented by the directors and employees of youth centres at the local level.

Until the measures taken by the Tunisian government to strengthen the role of local government come into force, it still enjoys little autonomy from central government. The current top-down approach leaves little room for local authorities to influence the decision making process and limits their role in the implementation and the introduction of initiatives. In an effort to bring policies and services closer to citizens and youth, this approach should be reviewed and replaced by mechanisms which would allow local officials to identify urgent regional or local issues and propose solutions adapted to their specific context.

The decentralisation process currently underway in Tunisia represents an opportunity to introduce mechanisms for participatory and inclusive decision-making, to engage citizens with the different levels of governments. In particular, Article 139 of the Tunisian Constitution stresses the necessity for local authorities to adopt “participatory mechanisms of democracy and principles of Open Government to ensure a better engagement of citizens and civil society.”

It will also be important to provide opportunities for young people to engage at the local level through the creation of local councils or forums. Unlike national councils, local councils give priority to local issues, which concern the city or region of residence of young members. Provided that these structures are open to all youth and representative of young people in their diversity (i.e. beyond young professionals and volunteers), they could become a space for discussion and debate. The draft Code of Local Government provides for support measures in favour of youth engagement (such as the creation of a specific youth commission).

During the dialogue organised by the OECD in Tunisia on the issues of local youth, young people expressed their enthusiasm for this idea. They emphasised that the councils should work in a transparent and independent way and that both young men and women should be represented equally. Young participants are open to the idea of including other actors of youth within local councils, although most prefer that the board will be composed of young people aged between 15 and 30. Applications should be open to all young people and available on several platforms (on municipal websites or addressed directly to young people). The councils could be established within youth centres, while organising from time to time meetings within local offices with representatives of different administrations to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Good practices from OECD countries

Examples from OECD countries illustrate that both local governments and youth can benefit from “teaming up” at subnational level. In the region of Atlanta (United States), youth were invited to act as “civic leaders” and advisors to the Atlanta Region Plan 2015. A checklist featuring seven key points was developed to encourage the continuous participation of youth throughout the process stressing, among others, the importance of: a) partnering with other organisations and agencies to maximise participation; b) offering a complementary mix of both smaller, community-based forums, large-scale public forums and online opportunities for engagement; and c) evaluating the effectiveness of activities and projects developed in collaboration with city planners, policymakers and elected officials.

In Quebec, the “Youth Action Strategy” focuses on reinforcing local autonomy to support local councils and organisations in their actions with youth across their territory. This includes the development of local strategies, the implementation of a youth advisory

committee or the completion of consultations. Organisations such as the Youth-Employment Crossroads Network (RCJEQ) specifically target young people, particularly in the process of social and economic integration.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in collaboration with eight European partners has developed a project which aims to enhance youth involvement in the European Union at the subnational levels. Through this project, the capacities of young local and regional representatives have been strengthened to empower them to increase their engagement in the European Union's democratic life.

Chapter 7. Restructuring and building capacities across local youth centres

In many MENA countries, youth centres offer young people the opportunity to grow and develop through a variety of socio-cultural activities. They provide a space for social and democratic exchange and learning. Thus, they are structures that can play a key role in strengthening youth involvement in public life, not only, but primarily at the local level. Youth centres are in place in Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia, but they often need restructuring and capacity building to fully deliver on their potential.

Jordan

The Ministry of Youth in Jordan oversees 200 youth centres (110 for young men aged 12-24 years; 90 for young women aged 12-30 years) which carry out specific activities for its male or female members. Some youth centres are owned by the Ministry of Youth, others are rented from private persons or established by Royal Decree. Each centre has been allocated an annual financial contribution of 6000 JD to conduct activities since 2017 (up from 4000 JD). Since June 2016, efforts have been undertaken to connect the centres to the Internet and increase security measures. Where operational, members of the centres are involved in formulation of the annual Action Plans through elected committees.

Different ministries are running centres at community level, however, many are suffering from a lack of capacities to operate and establish programmes targeting youth. In the spirit of fostering a participatory approach, the Ministry of Health, through the deconcentrated health directorate and in collaboration with universities and schools, has formed committees at community level in 10 governorates and 64 villages/municipalities to raise awareness among youth for health-threatening products and behaviour. Youth elect its members (5-6 people) from the local community for a period of six months. The committees meet at least once a month to identify local health challenges which are then forwarded to the ministry to co-ordinate support in collaboration with international donors and charity organisations.

The Ministry of Social Development has set up 65 local community centres 33 of which are owned by the ministry and 32 are managed by charity organisations. Activities through these centres target the most vulnerable segments of society. While not specialised on youth issues, they are open to address the demands of vulnerable youth (e.g. women, disabled, juvenile) and their programmes shall, according to the Ministry of Social Development, become better directed towards their needs. As services are delivered free of fees, running costs of the community centres leave limited resources for programmes. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development targets youth indirectly through microfinance projects for families covering around 3000 households. In collaboration with the Ministry of Telecommunication, shared service centres will be created in governorates (e.g. personal services, licenses, ID, transport). Five pilot services are expected to be accessible through the centres by October 2018 based on a feasibility study conducted with the European Union.

The All Jordan Youth Commission (AJYC), which was established in 2006 as one of the initiatives of King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein and which is implemented by the King Abdullah II Fund for Development, is represented in each governorate since 2007 with an office and staff (5 per governorate). The AJYC runs six main programmes to strengthen young people's role in public, social and economic life (i.e. Education Awareness Programme, Jordan Program for Volunteering, Our Youth Program, the Jordanian Youth Voice Program, and the Middle East Media and Social Media Program), in particular by offering trainings to youth in which they can strengthen basic life skills such as negotiation and persuasion skills, dialogue and acceptance of the other and problem solving skills.

Through the local family counselling centres (e.g. programmes are implemented by local NGOs, peer-to-peer coaching), the National Council for Family Affairs targets young people indirectly. The work of Al Hassan Youth Award at local level and in small villages aims at minimising violence and addressing environmental issues, among others.

Beyond the institutional infrastructure provided by different line ministries and non-governmental stakeholders, youth parliaments and children/youth municipality councils exist in some governorates. Youth parliaments with elected representatives provide a mechanism through which young people can get familiar with democratic principles and proceedings and, in some cases, transmit their recommendations to local authorities. In Irbid Governorate, the youth directorate attends the sessions of the youth parliament and submits its recommendations to the Ministry of Youth. However, not all youth parliaments are operational. For instance, despite enthusiasm among young people, the work of the youth parliament recently stopped in Al Tafileh.

The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) hosts children municipality councils with young people (aged 12-15) since 2005. What initially started with four districts and 44 schools to make children participate in assessing local needs, build skills, vote upon projects, understand the rights of the child and contribute to a child-friendly city, took place for the fifth time in 2017. Since 2011, all 22 districts participate. In each district, a specialised representative from GAM works with the young members of the local community committees as a mentor. Local community committees, who meet once a week, are composed of three boys and three girls and elect one among them to participate in the children municipality council. The 22 members include one disabled member and drop-out from school. In Karak, a youth municipality council exists which is composed of 24 members from school parliaments, students from Mu'ta University and Balqa University and youth organisations. The council meets once per week, can attend public municipality council meetings and reports recommendations to the Head of the municipality.

In collaboration with the education directorates at governorate level, the Haqiq Initiative "Do it", supported by Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II is a national leadership program which is directed to enhance, develop, enrich and help youth reach their full potential as productive leaders and caring citizens. It includes a variety of volunteering, cultural and artistic activities aimed specifically at ninth and tenth grade students in public and private schools.

In light of the serious capacity shortages faced by governorates and municipalities, most initiatives and related expenditures such as for transportation are covered and implemented by NGOs and international donors. The example of Al Tafileh suggests that municipalities do not allocate a specific budget for youth-related issues but cover relevant activities (e.g. sports, culture) through the local community development programme.

The youth centres spread across the 12 governorates provide a rich infrastructure for young men and women to gather, develop joint initiatives and get engaged in the development of their community. Especially for young women living in more conservative regions, the centres provide a safe space to express themselves and participate in local public life. However, many centres suffer from outdated equipment (e.g. ICT, library, sports facilities) and limited space (e.g. some rented centres are not fit for activities as they only provide 1-2 apartment rooms); some are located in areas that are difficult for young people to reach. The lack of specialised supervising staff is another issue of concern. The system of allocating an equal budget to each centre could be reviewed based on a needs assessment and performance review. In collaboration with UNDP, the Ministry of Youth is conducting an assessment of youth centres, initially starting with 9 pilot centres in 6 governorates, which aims at rehabilitating infrastructure, programming and staff capacities. This could be expanded to identify operations and programmes inside the youth centres that could be entirely run by youth to increase their autonomy and sense of accountability.

The members of female youth centres met in Al Karag and Al Tafileh express a feeling of being disconnected from opportunities in Amman but show strong energy and enthusiasm to have a positive impact on the development of their communities. There is a desire to better link the activities of the centres to community life and youth stakeholders outside Jordan. In the absence of a structured dialogue between local authorities and youth, the centres could develop, among other activities, into a venue for political dialogue and exchange. Empowered with adequate financial means, and with local CSOs and CBOs on board, the centres could become a space for structured dialogue between local authorities, youth (associations) and the broader civil society, a training hub for young people living outside big cities and the governorate centre and result in co- designed and delivered activities.

In terms of programming, there is a need for more specialised and long-term initiatives and trainings to empower young men and women (e.g. language courses for youth in remote areas). The focus of the curriculum at addressing poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, security, PVE, religious education and citizenship/patriotism could be accompanied by activities to increase young people's understanding of political processes and engagement to create a culture of local activism acknowledging that today's youth will assume increasing responsibilities and leadership roles in all spheres of life. Peer-to-peer coaching models could be one way to encourage youth in this respect.

Line ministries with local service centres, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, could better link their planning and activities in order to exploit synergies from the existing institutional infrastructure and reach a higher number of youth. The existing centres attached to the different line ministries could join forces to provide programmes for youth at shared costs and based on streamlined procedures.

Examples provided above (Ajloun, Irbid, GAM) illustrate that good practices of mutually beneficial partnerships between youth and local authorities in Jordan exist. Establishing a link between youth and local decision-making is timely, in particular in the aftermath of the first local elections held on 15 August 2017 under the 2015 Decentralisation Law and Municipality Law.

Morocco

There are currently over 650 ("Dar Shabab") youth centres, women's centres and shelters in Morocco, distributed throughout the territory which play an essential role for youth.

Their budget, allocated according to their activities, represents 50% of that of the Ministry of Youth and Sports according to interviews conducted.

The houses play a central role by facilitating several dimensions of social integration; and constituting a resilience mechanism that would help youth avoid the harmful consequences of inactivity and disengagement. Some youth centres offer training on the dangers young people may face in particular (drugs, violence and crime or radicalisation, etc.). For young students, these structures offer educational support through volunteer professional language assistance or orientation courses. For young people who are not in education, employment or training, youth centres could represent platforms for structuring free-time through technical vocational courses for example.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has demonstrated its willingness to reform certain aspects of youth centres. A standardisation of the centres' operating modes could guarantee the complementarity of programs offered and optimise their impact. Beyond issues related to facilities, equipment and infrastructure, extending the mandate and competence of youth centres greater civic engagement projects could be beneficial. Moreover, an overhaul of the system would include pooling with other departments, such as the creation of "youth information" points for young people to learn about any kind of service or public law, or the creation of a link with the health services provided for youth.

Tunisia

Visits to youth houses in Rades, Nabeul and Beja, conducted as part of the OECD peer review, allowed a better understanding of the essential role that such structures can play. The youth institutions network in Tunisia consists of 519 entities (i.e. youth centres, youth activity centres, youth tourism buses, camping centres). Spread across the country and especially in rural and remote areas, these structures are close to local youth. In some places, in particular in rural areas, they are the only public spaces providing opportunities for leisure activities and interaction which are specifically dedicated to young people.

These institutions are run by directors who, in turn, supervise a number of youth workers. Youth workers are important interlocutors because they work with and for young people in the fields of arts, sport, and other areas and thus understand their needs and expectations. Recently, youth centres have also hosted events focused on issues of public life, for example "integrity clubs" which helped raise awareness among young people on the issues of integrity and corruption, and introduced them to current reforms in this area.

The link between the youth centres and central government is the youth commissioner (who is the regional director attached to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport). Indeed, the budget for youth centres is distributed among the 24 regional commissions that each allocate the funding received between the various youth centres under its authority. Moreover, the regional commissioner reports on the activities of youth institutions in the governorate to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport on a semi-annual and annual basis. These reports are solely for informational purposes, since the guidelines defining the objectives of the youth commissioner (and therefore youth centres) come directly from central government. Moreover, they present particular activity indicators (number of participants, location, and others) and do not analyse the impact of the activities carried out.

Youth centres are sometimes outdated and require special maintenance. The budget allocated to them does not cover the majority of expenditures, which reduces the flexibility of these spaces to provide activities targeting the needs of young people. Moreover, youth

workers do not receive continuous training, even though they are often required to organise awareness raising activities on topics in which they lack specific knowledge, and use their personal networks to identify experts to lead activities in certain technical or artistic topics.

Despite a relatively low number of members (about 100,000 members), Tunisian youth centres represent a true capital upon which the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport may rely. However, there is a need to implement certain reforms. The qualifications of youth centre animators should be strengthened so that they can intervene on issues of greatest concern to young people in their local communities. It would also be useful for youth centres to strengthen their links with local and national associations, on which they could rely to organise certain activities that require specialised leaders in a particular field. Youth centre opening hours should also be reconsidered to enable young people to take full advantage of them as the current opening hours do not always coincide with young people's free time. It is also important to involve young people more significantly in the management of youth clubs. Good practices exist in the youth centre in Beja, where occasionally, a reversal of roles between members and management personnel takes place and allows young people to assume responsibility for the management of the youth centre.

Within the Strategic vision of the Ministry of youth affairs and sports, a new initiative has been conducted in 2018 to transform 5 Youth houses, located in disadvantaged regions, into modern youth houses, called "youth houses 2.0". In these new youth houses, young men and women will be part of the management directorate and will have a say on planned activities. Furthermore, partnerships with civil society organisations and young entrepreneurs will allow the development of new activities conducted with experts. The Ministry aims at extending this experience to 100 youth houses by the end of 2020

Good practices from OECD countries

In Quebec, youth centres which are members of the Coalition of Youth Centers of Quebec (RMJQ) are associations of young people aged 12-17 and adults who meet on a voluntary basis and provide opportunities for youth to develop their citizenship skills and knowledge. Moreover, the centres offer young people the opportunity to take responsibility and engage in cultural, educational and sports projects and activities, among others.

Youth Information (Info-jeunes) was created in France in 1967 as a "necessity to respond to the critical need for youth information". This is a network of 1,300 structures designated by the state which offer a free, anonymous and quality space where young people can find general information on topics such as education, vocational training, jobs, employment, housing, law, health, recreation, culture and international mobility. The information provided is updated, verified and sourced. It is adapted to the needs of young audiences in view of their autonomy and respect for their anonymity. It consists of a network of national and regional structures and regional infrastructures, allowing full coverage of the metropolitan and ultra-marine territory. These structures are subject to designation by the State, whose terms and conditions are defined by Article 54 of the "Citizenship Equality" Act of 27 January 2017, and other associated regulations.

In Belgium, "Youth Centers" are locally established organisations that aim to promote the development of a critical, active, responsible society based on solidarity, especially among young people aged 12 to 26. The centres reinforce the awareness and knowledge among youth of social issues and hence foster attitudes of responsibility and participation in social, economic and cultural life. The centres are involved in developing a local youth policy and

encourage the implementation and promotion of socio-cultural and creative practices including artistic practices, workshops related to the question of equal opportunities, new technology, alternative sports practices, etc. Some youth centres are responsible for local development action initiatives such as organising municipal youth councils and providing homework assistance.

The San Francisco Youth Commission in the United States is composed of 17 youth between the ages of 12 and 23 and was created in 1995 to advise the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors on young people's needs and questions related to the impact of regulations, programs, and budget decisions. The Board of Supervisors, which is in charge of establishing city policies and adopts ordinances and resolutions, is requested to consult the Youth Commission before a final decision on relevant matters is taken. The work of the Youth Commission is organised in thematic committees (e.g. youth justice, public health, recreation, housing and homelessness, and education).

Recent experiences in OECD and MENA (e.g. Tunisia) have shown the added value of involving young people in the allocation of public budgets to make them familiar with deliberative processes and consensus-building. In 2013, Boston became the first American city to create a youth-led participatory budgeting process. Now in its fourth year, Boston's Participatory Budgeting Project engages over 2,000 Boston youth aged 12-25 to determine how to spend one million dollars of the city's capital budget. Young people from across the city were asked to suggest ideas for projects that will bring long-term improvements to parks, streets, schools, and neighbourhoods on city-owned property. Youth volunteers, called Change Agents, reviewed the ideas and turned them into proposals based on pre-set criteria (e.g. should benefit the public, cost at least 25,000 USD, and have a lifespan of at least five years). Proposals with the highest votes received from the young participants were implemented.

Chapter 8. Open government tools and mechanisms to support youth engagement

Youth engagement in public life does not take place in a vacuum. On the contrary, their participation and involvement will be shaped by the opportunities provided by the broader ecosystem of rules, laws, institutions, policies and practices and stakeholders which together form the environment in which citizen participation in general, and youth engagement in particular, can be encouraged. Most fundamentally, young people's basic civil rights and liberties must be guaranteed. Open Government strategies and initiatives form key opportunities to strengthen youth participation and ensure that their voices are heard. More particularly, Open Government National Action plans as part of countries' memberships to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) are also key platforms for youth participation and can form a key factor of success for their implementation. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government calls upon countries 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 (provision 8). This includes identifying policy priorities; drafting the actual policy document; policy implementation; and monitoring implementation and evaluation of the policy's impacts. In addition, the Recommendation underlines the need to "proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information that is free of cost, available in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable format, easy to find, understand, use and reuse, and disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders".

Jordan and Tunisia joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2012 and 2014 respectively and have used this mechanism to implement reform institutional and policy reform for greater transparency, citizen participation and accountability. Among others, after Jordan was the first country in the region to adopt an access to information (ATI) law, Tunisia approved one of the most progressive ATI laws in 2016 and established an ATI Commission. Morocco approved an ATI law in 2018 and is on its way to joining the OGP. These steps acknowledge that providing access to information is a key element of open government agendas and important for youth to exercise their rights and duties and increase scrutiny over government action. In addition, communication should be tailored to young people's communication habits and language, be proactive, timely, relevant and made available proactively. This is even more important in the era of digitalisation, in which many young men and women in the MENA region and elsewhere are growing up as "digital natives".

Jordan

Jordan was the first Arab country to join the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2012 and has since published three National Action Plans with concrete commitments to foster openness, transparency, accountability and citizen participation in policy-making. The 4th Action Plan is expected to be published shortly with an unprecedented participation of the

Ministry of Youth in the formulation process. Before, the All Jordan Youth Commission was involved in formulating the 3rd Action Plan (2016-2018) which, however, did not result in the inclusion of youth-specific commitments.

As stressed in the OECD report *Youth in the MENA region: How to bring them in* (2016), in 2013, the International Telecommunication Union estimated that around 40% of the youth population in Jordan (15-24) could be classified as “digitally natives” (using the Internet for at least five years). The OECD report *Benchmarking Digital Government Strategies in MENA countries* (2017) also points to the fact that, in line with many other MENA countries, Jordan has a higher number of mobile subscriptions per capita than the OECD average (148/100 people in 2014).

The Ministry of Youth has undertaken significant efforts to open up new information and communication channels, for instance by creating a twitter account, Facebook and Instagram profile. This is replicated in some governorates, such as in Aqaba, where the youth directorate and youth centres use social media to reach out to young people. Despite the rapid progress in connecting less populated and impoverished areas to the Internet, such as through the 196 knowledge stations that are distributed throughout Jordan’s territory and managed by the National Information Technology Centre, access to digital technologies is not universal. Therefore, activities to inform and communicate with the offline youth population are critical to ensure that their needs and concerns are also taken into account.

One of the functions social media networks fulfil for young people in Jordan is to provide a forum to discuss more sensitive issues. On the downside, exposure to unlawful content (e.g. violence) and phenomena such as “hate speech” are causing concerns as they risk proliferating more easily due to the alleged anonymity of Internet users.

Jordan’s membership in the OGP has been a driver to foster democratic reform and development. So far, however, despite young people’s innovative potential and, in some cases, leading role in calling for more open, transparent and participatory policy-making, they have been given few opportunities to participate in shaping or implementing the commitments stipulated by the National Action Plans. The participation of the All Jordan Youth Commission in the formulation of the 3rd Action Plan and the declaration by Ministry of Planning and International Co-operation that youth should become engaged in the implementation process present first and important steps ahead. In principle, all 12 commitments of the Plan provide possible entry points for the government to partner with youth. For instance, according to the Ministry of Public Sector Development, Commitment 4 (“launch and enhance the complaints registration system and follow-up mechanisms”) aims at extending the web- based system by making available a smartphone application and hotline by July 2018 in order to increase young people’s uptake of the complaint system. Statistics show that the number of complaints submitted through the system has decreased continuously from 2641 cases in 2013 to 1491 cases in 2016 (94% of the complaints were classified “solved” in 2016). It must be noted, however, that these statistics do not allow for an assessment of the satisfaction among the initiators of complaints with how their cases were dealt with. As today’s youth in Jordan belong to the most tech-savvy generation of all times, they could also play an active role in “developing an interactive observatory for citizens” (commitment 7) and “implementing an open data sources policy” (commitment 10).

The Ministry of Youth’s efforts to use digital channels to reach out to young people have been recognised by various youth stakeholders and young people. As of March 2018, the Ministry of Youth’s facebook profile, which is updated with information about activities on a daily basis, counts around 83,000 friends. The twitter account around 1935 followers

(created in June 2016). The Ministry of Youth's website provides general information about the ministry, youth cities and sport facilities as well as youth clubs. It features a platform for young people to submit their ideas and initiatives. The significant efforts invested by the ministry into sharing information with youth through social media are remarkable. Building on this positive example, the objective of moving from simply providing information to offering a space for genuine dialogue and interaction between government and youth (associations) could be envisaged.

Morocco

Morocco has undertaken important Open Government reforms and, with the recent adoption of the access to information law, joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in April 2018. A National Action Plan for 2018-2020 has been agreed by the Moroccan government covering initiatives for more transparency, accountability, integrity and greater citizen participation in the decision-making process, particularly through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). To this end, a steering committee consisting of public institutions and CSOs has been set up.

Governmental and non-governmental institutions stress the importance of fostering a culture of participation and the essential existence of adapted structures to allow the development of mechanisms and initiatives promoting participation. Indeed, while several initiatives from civil society and international organisations exist, the Government's role in this regard can be strengthened. The role of youth associations and the National Institute of Youth and Democracy in this context is crucial.

Open Government initiatives implemented by the Moroccan government are excellent channels to engage youth. The OGP action plan and other efforts of the Moroccan Government toward budget transparency, the overhaul of the institutional communication system, and the national strategy against corruption (2015-2025) for example could greatly benefit from the support of young Moroccans. Furthermore, the addition of a commitment to young people in the current action plan on Open Government would be an opportunity to ensure more visibility for efforts already made for young people, and to allow the pooling of efforts of different actors around youth policy, stressing Morocco's efforts as an actor in open government internationally.

Tunisia

The 2014 Tunisian Constitution anchored the principles of Open Government in Tunisian public life through Articles 35 to 37 (i.e. on the creation of political parties, unions and associations, emphasising adherence to the principle of budget transparency) and Article 139 stipulating that local governments should adopt the instruments of participatory democracy and the principles of open governance in order to ensure the broadest participation of citizens and civil society in the preparation of development and planning projects and the monitoring of their implementation.

Tunisia joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2014, and has implemented 2 Action Plans and has conducted a consultation for the 3rd one, to achieve greater transparency, citizen participation, and integrity in the public sector. The second Action Plan included two commitments dedicated to improve the situation for Tunisian youth. Indeed, the Government committed on i) the creation of an integrated electronic platform facilitating communication with young people, and ii) the creation of local youth councils.

The Action plan includes also commitments on transparency, access to information, open data, petitions.

During a dialogue and consultation session organised by the OECD and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport, which brought together young people and government, both sides found there was a lack of communication and access to information. Participants suggested to establish an electronic platform which could serve as a genuine space for communication allowing them to make every voice heard. The project of the electronic youth platform is underway and technical specifications are currently being prepared.

Efforts have been made to adapt and tailor public communication to the target audience of “digital natives”, through the creation of a Youth information division in Rades by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport, with the aim to replicate this throughout the rest of the territory (with the creation of 7 Divisions). This centre has a studio for web-radio and WebTV, and leaves young people the freedom to define the editorial line. Moreover, the Ministry provides training in audio-visual technology at the Youth Audio-Visual Training Academy, for young people who want to develop their talents and abilities. Similarly, some youth centres have information units and a relationship with the media, who act as an intermediary to broadcast the activities of the youth centres.

In addition, a pilot scheme is being implemented at the Rades Centre, namely the establishment of an information and referral centre to facilitate youth access to information on services that pertain to them. If the information requested by the young person is available it is communicated to them by the operator (there are 22 operators in the centre), if not, the young person will be contacted subsequently to give a final answer, or redirected to the services of the ministry concerned. This project also includes the creation of a series of databases: a first step in creating a database of “Doc-Info”, which would be fed by services and information provided by various ministries (information on the ministries’ websites or information provided by representatives of ministries acting as points of contact for youth operators) as well as the results of the youth activities of youth institutions, organisations and associations.

The third step is to create a National Youth Information Network: the aim of creating “Youth Info” points in each youth centre as well as “Youth Info” relays at the regional level. However, this experience remains at an early stage. Main obstacles include the lack of funds in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the need to strengthen co-ordination with the various departments and services.

Despite the considerable efforts made by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport, the majority of young Tunisians are dissatisfied with the communication from the Ministry for Youth and the government more generally. The issue of access to information remains one of the major challenges for young people in the country. For example, during the consultation process regarding the creation of the electronic youth platform, a majority of young people shared their lack of knowledge and information concerning the functions of labour offices, while these offices are largely intended to help them. They also stressed that many of the administrative procedures lack transparency.

In terms of access to information, Tunisia promulgated Organic Law No. 2016-22 of 24 March 2016 on the right of access to information, thus becoming one of the first countries in the region to adopt such provisions. This law is one of the most progressive laws on this matter in the Arab world. It is now important to adopt the necessary regulations and put in place a uniform action plan for its implementation (e.g. through raising awareness among citizens, training for all public structures, guides and procedural manuals for public

officials, both at the central and local level). In coordination with OECD and Article 19, the Independent Commission for Access to Information (INAI) launched a guide for citizens and is preparing –together with the Presidency of the Government- a detailed guide for public officials.

It must be noted that access to information among young people is unequally distributed between youth in big cities and young people living in small towns and villages, especially in inland areas of the country, which face greater obstacles of obtaining information. To address these inequalities, the role of local youth councils was raised by young people as they could constitute a communication channel between policy makers and youth.

The situation is similar when it comes to civil society and political parties. Indeed, many young people perceive that political parties do not tailor their communication to young people. Exchanges are conducted in a traditional way (meetings, large gathering, press releases) and do not take the views of young people into account to the degree young people expect. Again, the observation made by young people suggests a limited use of social networks. Finally, the sometimes paternalistic tone used in traditional forms of communication discourages young people from becoming involved. Similar challenges concern media actors whose work is sometimes perceived as following a traditionalist and exclusive approach and lack independence from political parties.

The electronic platform that the Tunisian Government will put in place to facilitate dialogue with young people has sparked enthusiasm but also scepticism among youth over concerns that this initiative may not be effective. For Tunisian youth, this platform should offer the possibility of exchange and ongoing dialogue without fearing censorship. It should also allow them to find information which they deem relevant to access certain services and to have a complete understanding of their rights (access to employment, health, electoral rights, etc.) in the country's news. It should also offer a broad diversity in terms of content and activities in order to correspond to a variety of profiles.

Young people also expressed a wish to provide the platform with a monitoring and evaluation committee comprised of young people, and provide opportunities for feedback on services and activities, especially through social networks.

Good practices from OECD countries

Reaching out to young people through communication channels that truly speak to youth is a challenge that is shared by all governments. Social media platforms are not only a tool to reach and inform young people but also to gather their opinion and feedback on policies, programmes and activities. The draft OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government acknowledges the need to “explore innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government tools” in this regard.

To date, all OECD countries have adopted a law on access to information. In the MENA region, five countries have done so (Jordan in 2007, Yemen in 2012, Sudan in 2015, Tunisia in 2016 and most recently Lebanon in 2017).

In Germany, the online portal “Ich mache Politik” (I do politics) invites young people to participate in shaping youth policy and political decision-making processes at federal level. The project is run by the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring) which represents the interests of youth associations in Germany vis-à-vis the parliament, government and the wider public, and receives financial support by the Federal Ministry

for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Between October 2014 and mid-2017, young people between 12-17 years old and youth groups (e.g. youth associations, school class, community groups) were invited to share their views on the formulation of the forthcoming Demography Strategy of the government. Through the e-participation tool (ePartool), youth could bring in their ideas and discuss intermediary results which are made available online. In a second step, young people were invited to vote upon the most important statements and ideas brought forward by their fellows. The platform allows young people to see how their contributions were dealt with and whether their input was taken into account.

France has set up a “compass of rights” platform, which offers young people under 25 access to information about their rights in the areas of employment, housing and health. The aim is that young people gain visibility on their rights and anticipate the approaches to be taken. This platform provides dynamic and personalised access to information alongside guidance features and support for young people. It presents young people, via a mini questionnaire, with a simplified, mobilised service, put forward by local actors. Young people can then choose the most appropriate services to request from among the available results and choose to be contacted by a professional within a reasonable time.

The European youth Forum (EYF) gathers 18 youth organisations led by young people to work together to create a new form of representation and expression. The French Youth Forum (FFJ) was born, inspired by the EYF, bringing together all political initiatives. The FFJ aims to build an autonomous space for youth expression in France and act as an interlocutor recognised by the authorities. It has already performed six reviews of “the representation of young people in France”, “new policies for young people”, “health”, “voting and participation of young people in France,” “training, professional integration of young people, what are the conditions for a chosen course?” “Climate issues - youth, strength of proposal.” The Ministry for Youth regularly consults the FFJ and CNAJEP and combines the piloting of work and holds consultations upstream with interdepartmental youth committees or youth priority maps. It promotes via partner ministries for planning and their various interlocutors, youth participation in the construction of policies that young people.