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Social Inclusion, Democracy and Youth in the Arab Region

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Acknowledgments

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BTI	Bertelsmann Transformation Index
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DPOs	Disabled Persons Organizations
EMBs	Election Monitoring Bodies
ESCWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
IGC	Intergovernmental Council
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITC	Information Technology and Communications
LFPR	Labor Force Participation Rate
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOST	Programme for the Management of Social Transformations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PCP	Public Civic Participation
PWD	People With Disabilities
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
YAP	Youth Advocacy Process

Executive Summary

Since 2011, the Arab region has been experiencing severe changes in the political, economic, and social environments. The uprisings, led by youth, called on a change in the static political systems that failed to improve the socioeconomic conditions of a large portion of marginalized social groups. Young women and men constitute one of the largest social groups that have been systematically excluded for decades. With the aim of avoiding previous mistakes, this paper looks into the situation of youth inclusion in the Arab region and presents positive initiatives and policy tools that can guide Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and decision-makers in the future.

As the concepts in this paper are still young, the paper starts by defining the key concepts of social inclusion, social integration, social exclusion, social cohesion, civic engagement, and democratic participation. This is followed by a detailed assessment of the political and social context relating to youth inclusion in the Arab region. The assessment adopts the multi-dimensional approach to social inclusion and takes into consideration groups suffering from multiple exclusions including young women, young People With Disabilities (PWD), young people living in marginalized areas, young migrants and refugees, and young people living in conflict situations.

The paper also looks at positive responses by CSOs and governments direct towards social inclusion by mapping out 22 initiatives across the region while elaborating on two case studies. The first case study looks into the recently adopted national youth policy in Lebanon while the second considers the role of young PWD within Disabled Persons Organizations (DPO) and service providing associations to increase the social inclusiveness of PWD.

The final section of the paper offers policy tools that tackle the use of youth inclusion research in policy analysis, the assessment of the level of inclusiveness of public policies, youth democratic participation, the rights-based approach to social exclusion, and the development process of national youth policies.

1. Introduction

The constantly changing environment in the Arab region makes it difficult to analyze the political and social that youth are experiencing. Studies that have analyzed the changes in the Arab region in 2011 are already outdated and youth attitudes towards democracy and stability are rapidly changing from year to year. The upheavals that swept the Arab region in 2011 have changed the political landscape of many Arab countries. Demand for dignity, equity, social justice and greater participation in political and socioeconomic decision-making were central themes of those uprisings. Even though those popular uprisings have developed distinct trajectories in different countries, they were propelled by similar causes: decades of autocratic rule; gross violations of human rights; lack of rule of law and suppression of civil liberties and freedoms; and entrenched development challenges that accumulated over a half century, including persistent poverty and deprivation, high (youth) unemployment, endemic corruption and socioeconomic inequalities (ESCWA, 2012).

In this context, youth development and civic engagement have become pillars for social integration approaches including the “democratization of culture,” or inviting marginalized people into mainstream culture, and “cultural democracy,” which not only invites marginalized people to participate but also creates a new and equal space for marginalized cultures or newcomers to society, to introduce their own cultural practices to society not just by joining the existing system but bringing their own contribution to the system (UNDESA, 2008).

The post-Arab uprising period is demonstrating that democracy is not a simple change in political systems and representation but a long and difficult process that requires a change in the political culture. Democracy alone is not a standalone solution, its success is dependent on a mix of predictable and unpredictable variables. The relationship between participation and democracy is mutually reinforcing: participation is an important driver of democracy and democracy impacts participation and participatory processes. Participatory democracy provides the proper framework necessary to assess social inclusion while addressing its political dimension.

As part of UNESCO’s intergovernmental programme on the Management of Social Transformation¹, the current paper aims to:

1. Extend knowledge on social and political inclusion of young women and men in the Arab States based on past experiences from regional research and initiatives on “participatory democracy”;
2. Provide practical insights into the potential paths for social and political inclusion of young men and women. These findings could be used both by public authorities and non-state organizations to improve youth inclusion in social and political life.

¹ In 1994, UNESCO launched the Programme for the Management of Social Transformations (MOST), with a view to strengthening the dissemination of knowledge to Member States that would assist them in managing social challenges and related transformations. The MOST programme provides a unique platform bringing together researchers and policy-makers with the objective to apply scientific research in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies in the field of social development.

2. Defining Key Concepts

Social inclusion is a relatively recent concept that is increasingly being considered as a key factor to achieving targets of the development agenda at the international, national, and sub-national levels. Both developed and developing nations are recognizing that true human development cannot be achieved while minority and vulnerable groups are systematically being excluded from the social system.

This section defines the different concepts tackled in the background paper: social inclusion, youth development, civic engagement, and democracy.

2.1 Social Inclusion

An inclusive society is “a society for all” where everyone has rights, responsibilities and an active role to play. Such an inclusive society must be based on respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultural and religious diversity, social justice and the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, democratic participation and the rule of law (World Summit on Social Development, 1995). These are achieved through setting in place the appropriate mechanism for providing equal opportunity to achieve full potential and to participate in the decision-making processes of their daily life and those that shape their future. Social inclusion can be defined as “multi-dimensional” in nature, characterized by the following dimensions (UNDESA, 2007):

1. Visibility: to be noticed; to be recognized
2. Consideration: one’s concerns and needs are taken into account by policy makers
3. Access to social interactions
4. Rights: rights to act and claim (including right to be different, “identity”), right to access quality and accessible social services (housing, education, transport, healthcare, etc.), right to work, right to participate in the cultural life
5. Resources to fully participate in society: social and financial resources are key

Social inclusion differs from social integration, which refers to a dynamic process of engagement within society that enables the social inclusion of all while maintaining diversity and individuality. In other words, it is the attempt to create “a society for all” while respecting differences. This may include government initiatives, policies, capacity building and even access to infrastructure that allows for dialogue and exchange. Parallel to social inclusion and integration is social cohesion whereby every individual in a society has a sense of belonging, recognition and legitimacy not because of demographic homogeneity but rather respect for diversity (UNDESA, 2007).

At the opposite end of the spectrum lies social exclusion, the opposite of social inclusion, which is systematic neglect, oppression (i.e., social relations are unequal and inequitable) or discrimination against people (UNDESA, 2007). According to Naila Kabeer in *Social Exclusion: Concepts, Findings and Implications for the MDGs*, the concept of social exclusion is a recently coined term emanating from Europe due to the rise in unemployment and income inequalities at the close of the 20th century. Social exclusion was defined as “the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live.” The purpose this new concept served was to increase the understanding of

poverty which, according to Naila, offered “an integrated way of looking at different forms of disadvantage which have tended to be dealt separately in the development studies literature” (Kabeer, 2000).

According to Silver, there are three paradigms of social exclusion (Economic and Social Commission For Western Asia (ESCWA), 2007):

1. The solidarity paradigm considers exclusion a rupture in social bonds between the individual and society whereby integration is constructed around common values and norms via mediating institutions and policies of integration;
2. The specialization paradigm considers exclusion to be tied to discrimination resulting from individual behaviors and exchanges whereby integration is formed through networks of voluntary exchanges between autonomous individuals with their own interests and motivations; and
3. The monopoly paradigm considers exclusion to be a result of hierarchical structures that restrict access to goods and services for non-members of the dominant groups whereby integration is achieved through social protection.

An important distinction Kabeer makes is between the types and qualities of open and closed groups that mitigate or further social exclusion. Open groups, such as political parties and social movements, achieve their objectives by expanding their membership while closed groups, such as trade unions, cartels and professional associations, achieve their objectives by restricting their membership on the basis of an agreed set of rules (Kabeer, 2000). From this framework, we explain why, of the Arab monarchies, only Bahrain experienced civil unrest, as opposed to the several "republics" that have witnessed regime changes. According to Jones, monarchies maintained societies with traditional social contracts between rulers and ruled in addition to channeling funds to the people when required (i.e. closed groups with extended benefits to its members) (Jones, 2012).

Kabeer considers the concept of exclusion a shift in paradigm when addressing the issue of poverty; while the resource-based approach determines poverty as the cause of having little or no voice, the social exclusion approach reverses this causality to say that having little or no voice causes poverty. In other words, rather than understanding poverty and disadvantage as a lack in resources, social exclusion understands it as identity-based discrimination caused by cultural devaluation (Kabeer, 2000). Indeed, Deacon and Cohen recommend this paradigm shift in international development discourse whereby talking about ‘global politics of solidarity’, which is based on the inclusion of the ‘middle class’ in development policy, replaces the talk of ‘global politics of poverty alleviation’, which seeks policies that lift populations out of poverty or protect others from falling into it (Deacon & Cohen, 2011).

This current background paper deals with social exclusion as the major cause of different social challenges that present themselves in the form of poverty, unemployment, low literacy levels, violence, crime, and isolation. As governments work on reducing social exclusion, it is important to adopt two parallel approaches to policy change. The first requires the adoption of specific policies and subsequent programs that are aimed at the reinsertion of groups and individuals who already suffer from exclusion. This is a short term measure to address urgent social problems. The second approach entails ensuring that all current policies and practices are inclusive and do not systematically exclude social groups and individuals. This is a proactive approach that reduces social exclusion on the long run and sets governments towards the “society for all” agreed upon in at the World Summit on Social Development in 1995.

2.2 Youth in the Arab World

The United Nations defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 (UN General Assembly, 1981).

In fact, populations in the Arab Region are relatively young, with majorities in many countries aged under 25 years. One-third of the Arab Region is under the age of 15 years and one-fifth are youth, aged 15-24 years. In contrast, for developed countries youth account for only 13 percent of the population. Young people represent 20 percent of the population in Egypt and Syria, compared with 15 percent in Bahrain, 21 percent in Algeria, and 22 percent in Jordan, all of which have faced their own protests. In fact, the numbers of children and young people in the Arab region are at an all time high. Between 1980 and 2010, the number of youth in transition countries more than doubled and stood at 46 million. The Arab region is characterized by large numbers of youth and adults in the working ages (15-64 years), and comparatively small but growing populations of older persons (60 years or above). The growing youth population is entering a labor market already suffering from persistently high unemployment (UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, 2013).

It is important to note that the youth bulge in the Arab region is coming to an end as the share of youth in the total population of transition countries peaked in 2010 and will decline from 20 per cent to 17 per cent by 2025. However, because the number of youth is expected to climb to 58 million by 2025, twelve million additional jobs need to be created by then to prevent youth unemployment from climbing even higher in transition countries (UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, 2013).

These figures are key to better understand the key challenges facing youth in the Arab region. The majority of young people are now in the transition period towards adulthood looking to be financially independent and to find their place in society. Within the political, social, and economic instability in the region, there is a danger of **“Permanent Pre-Adulthood”** among Arab youth where they are unable to become active, independent, and productive individuals within their society even as they enter into their thirties.

2.3 Youth Civic Engagement

Youth development and civic engagement have become pillars for social integration approaches including the “democratization of culture,” or inviting marginalized people into mainstream culture, and “cultural democracy,” which not only invites marginalized people to participate but also creates a new and equal space for marginalized cultures or newcomers to society, to introduce their own cultural practices to society not just by joining the existing system but bringing their own contribution to the system (UNDESA, 2008).

Youth development is understood as skill sets² attained by youth that increase their chances at achieving their full potential in the future while civic engagement is the active participation of youth in political and economic decision-making. Youth development is enhanced through the experience of active social and

² The skill sets include skills (leadership, problem solving, conflict resolution, etc.), healthy lifestyles (HIV/AIDS prevention, drug use prevention, sex education, etc.), creativity (visual and performing arts), IT training (IT and media skills), business development and labor market skills (CV writing, interview training, entrepreneurship, etc.), foreign languages, and active youth participation (community involvement, interactions with local government, participation in youth parliaments, etc.) (World Bank, 2010).

political participation, or civic engagement. Civic engagement enhances the human and social capital of individuals, promotes government accountability and enhances the overall climate for investment and private decision-making. The interaction between youth development and civic engagement creates an asset of youth as agents of positive societal transformation (World Bank, 2010). Broader than political engagement, civic engagement can include service to the community through involvement in health and education and in charitable organizations (Ménard, 2010).

Consequently, it is evident that civic engagement and youth development are both directly correlated to the act of democratic participation which is not only restricted to the act of electing representatives but also entails participating in decision-making and contributing to society. In linking the broad concept of civic engagement to democratic participation, the concept of **Public Civic Participation** (PCP) emerges. PCP refers to the involvement of citizens and communities in the various stages of the policy-making process. It moves beyond citizen volunteerism and community civic engagement and mainstreams citizen activism in the political sphere. PCP is an essential pillar of “engaged governance” which incorporates civil society – civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, religious communities, etc. – into the realm of policy planning (UNDESA, 2007).

The post-Arab uprising period is demonstrating that democracy is not a simple change in political systems and representation but a long and difficult process that requires a change in the political culture. Democracy alone is not a standalone solution, its success is dependent on a mix of predictable and unpredictable variables. The relationship between participation and democracy is mutually reinforcing: participation is an important driver of democracy and democracy impacts participation and participatory processes. Democratic principles also foster participation as they provide the proper legislative basis and an enabling environment for citizens to feel empowered and free to make decisions that address their priorities and help improve their lives. This has brought forth the concept of “**participatory democracy**” that can be described as the process through which all groups of society have a genuine opportunity to be politically active and the responsibility to significantly contribute to decision-making, particularly on issues that affect their lives (ESCWA, 2012). Participatory democracy provides the proper framework necessary to assess social inclusion while addressing its political dimension.

3. Political and Social Contexts of Social Inclusion of Young Women and Men in the Arab Region

Currently challenges of social inclusion may be understood at two levels. Primarily, the current transition phase in the Arab region is experiencing changes in political regimes creating new oppositional forces. This may automatically result in the redefinition of social and political categories. Youth today face a challenge of setting a clear vision and putting in place proper political leadership that moves towards an inclusive society rather than recreate old regimes oppressive of different or new categories (UNDESA, 2009)

The second challenge lies in the policy infrastructure that encourages inclusion. Examples of policy categories here may include policies targeting specific groups previously excluded, general policies to achieve social integration, policies addressed to the legal and regulatory framework to improve the business environment, policies to protect those with temporary and long term disabilities, policies to promote active civic participation, and policies that give citizens access to rights (UNDESA, 2009).

In the below two sections, the paper presents the current challenges by looking at the political and social context that young are faced with today in the Arab region.

3.1 Political Context of Inclusion

The danger of not considering social exclusion when evaluating political contexts is making excluded groups invisible through inadequate or inappropriate data collection that do not cater for the excluded in economic growth models, social provisioning and voting processes. This has been one of the key reasons behind the uprisings in the Arab states.

Before the uprisings, youth in the Arab region were considered to be plagued by apathy. However, their political participation was still present in three types of activities (Khouri & Shehata, 2011):

1. traditional NGOs, volunteer activity and charitable societies;
2. traditional political action (parties, authorized trade unions, state-run youth organizations) and more modern political activism (street protests, web mobilization, new media exposure and activism);
3. a combination of these two in 'civic activism' – a blend of public education and consciousness raising, political lobbying, street activism, or volunteerism and community service of young people around a single common cause.

In an analysis of youth in the Arab region, Tacon describes that they are often excluded from formal public life. He adds that for those countries who allow their citizens to vote, youth are generally permitted to vote, either at ages 18 or 21. However, only Bahrain, Qatar and the Sudan allow youth to stand at national elections; in other countries, the minimum age for candidacy range from 25-30, excluding youth from direct participation in formal national decision-making processes. Other forums through which young people could participate, such as parliamentary committees, are meanwhile only tangentially related to youth, and tend

to be of a lower status. Youth participation in civil society is also constrained, as the governing bodies of such organizations also tend to exclude youth (Tacon, 2011).

Despite an expected improvement in the democratic situation of Arab states following the toppling of the long standing regimes, the performance remained very low in 2012 (see below table) with three of the lowest performers (Yemen, Syria, and Libya) being key countries affected by the uprisings. Another interesting point is to see gulf countries having the highest levels of stateness accompanied by the lowest levels of political participation.

Table 1: Democracy Status in the Arab region

Country	Democracy status	Stateness	Political participation	Rule of law	Stability of democratic institutions	Political and social integration
Lebanon	6.2	6.3	6.5	5.8	6.0	6.3
Kuwait	5.0	8.0	4.5	5.3	3.0	4.0
Iraq	4.4	4.5	5.8	4.3	4.5	3.0
Bahrain	4.4	7.8	2.5	4.5	2.0	5.0
Algeria	4.3	7.0	4.3	4.3	2.0	4.0
United Arab Emirates	4.2	8.0	2.5	4.5	2.5	3.3
Qatar	4.1	8.3	3.5	4.0	2.0	2.7
Egypt	4.1	7.0	3.3	3.5	2.0	4.7
Tunisia	3.9	7.8	3.0	3.5	2.0	3.0
Jordan	3.9	6.5	3.8	4.0	2.0	3.3
Morocco	3.9	6.8	3.3	3.5	2.0	4.0
Oman	3.9	8.3	3.0	3.5	2.0	2.7
Yemen	3.7	4.8	3.8	4.0	2.0	4.0
Syrian Arab Republic	3.2	7.0	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.7
Libya	3.1	7.5	1.3	2.8	2.0	2.0
Sudan	2.9	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	3.3
Saudi Arabia	2.8	5.8	1.5	3.3	1.0	2.3

source: adapted from the 2012 Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) available from <http://www.bti-project.org/atlas/>

The aftermath of the uprisings has been dominated by discourse on proper democratic representation. Surveys in 2011 show that youth in the Arab region place a high value on democracy (93 percent in Jordan, 84 percent in Egypt, 85 percent in Morocco, 91 percent in Iraq and 75 percent in the UAE), and that most young Arabs aged 18-24 desire the right to vote (Khouri & Shehata, 2011). However, the Arab Youth Survey clearly demonstrates the quick shifts in attitudes of young people in the Arab region from year to year. In the 2012 survey, the key finding reported that fair pay and home ownership displaced democracy as a top priority among youth in the region. The results add that today, being paid a fair wage is not only the highest

collective priority among those surveyed – with 82 percent of all Arab youth citing it as “very important” – but is also the highest individual priority in each of the 12 countries covered. Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who said that living in a democratic country is “very important” to them declined by 10 percent in the 2012 survey. Only 58 percent of Arab youth said that this is “very important” to them, down from 68 percent in 2011 (ASDA’A Burson-Marsteller, 2012).

However, one can say that even this data from 2012 has become outdated as it does not consider the drastic changes that have taken place in Egypt, Syria, and Tunisia over the course of this year. With socioeconomic conditions worsening in countries of transition due to security and political instability, it is expected that this trend of prioritizing essential living conditions over democracy will continue to increase. Up until now, democratic progress has failed to improve the livelihoods of youth, who have been able to become key actors in changing regimes yet they are still unable to control their own lives and future. Public Civic Engagement and Participatory Democracy are two key concepts that should be at the base of democratic transitions to ensure that progress in this field is effective and sustainable rather than superficial and solely focused on the electoral process.

Acknowledging the importance of being a part of the included groups in the new democratic regime, entering the discourse has become a target for many categories in the Arab region while being inclusive of all has become the new challenge that is not only a regional but an international challenge.

3.2 Social Context of Inclusion

The social context surrounding youth and their inclusion in society has been drastically changing over the past three years. There is no doubt that a sense of hope overwhelmed the region at the beginning of the so-called “Arab Spring”. However, this sense of hope, especially among youth, has been diminishing as the transition process is being plagued with constant political, security, and economic instability, in addition to the uprising turning bloody in Libya, Syria, Egypt, and Yemen.

Regardless, surveys in 2012 continued to show signs of hope with the Arab Youth Survey reporting that 72 percent of Middle East youth agree that, following the events of the Arab Spring, the region is better off today with 68 percent of Arab youth saying they are also personally better off now than they were a year ago (ASDA’A Burson-Marsteller, 2012). This and similar surveys fail to include key countries affected by the uprising such as Syria and Yemen, where few youth would agree that their situation is better off now than it was a year ago. In addition to this, the situation of Egyptian youth has completely changed over the course of this year with the regime change and the economic collapse and increasing inflation rates weighing in heavily on the wellbeing of Egyptian families.

Other research tends to take the social context of youth more seriously analyzing youth dissatisfaction and denied adulthood while quoting “Many youth in Tahrir Square did not have to fear losing their jobs or homes by spending days camped out at the protests because they had no jobs to be absent from, and no spouses or houses of their own to return to” (Mulderig, 2011). A study published in early 2013 by the British Council and the American University of Cairo, looking into youth perceptions in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, offers a more recent and realistic perspective on the social context youth are exposed to today. The study

explores the gap between the expectations and aspirations of young people in light of revolutionary promises made in 2011 and 2012 on the one hand, and their actual experiences on the other. It analyses youth perceptions towards sociopolitical changes happening in their environment over a period of eight months (May to December 2012) in three key countries of the Arab transition: Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. The study highlighted that recent figures on unemployment and poverty demonstrate that young people are waiting in yet another era of unfulfilled promises. In Egypt for example, there is an evident decline in trust and social cohesion in the post-Mubarak due to a labeling that deepened divisions among Egyptians and showed how a wide segment of Egyptian society was intolerant towards those of different or shifting political positions. Family ties have been harmed due to differing political positions: parents, in most cases, do not show tolerance for the different positions that their sons and daughter have chosen. Friendships have similarly come to harm, to the extent that political positions have become a key breaker that can end long-term friendships (British Council and the American University of Cairo, 2013). Although this is a relatively new phenomena in transition countries, countries such as Lebanon have been experiencing this social polarization since the 1970s.

To investigate in depth the social context of youth exclusion, the below sections present the situation of youth challenged by multiple exclusion.

Social Inclusion of Women

Multiple discrimination and exclusion is a common occurrence in the Arab region. This is particularly clear in the case of young women, who have fewer legal protections and rights than men, and as such face wage discrimination compared to their male peers, discrimination in access to information and social services, cultural pressure to marry, as well as the risk of gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and honor killings (United Nations and League of Arab States, 2007). Although there has been considerable improvement in the literacy of women in the region over the past years, especially in the Gulf states, access to the labor market remains limited mostly due to cultural barriers and the role women are expected to play in society. The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of women in the Arab region is only 29.7 percent compared to the 72.2 percent among men with even in countries such as Lebanon showing a low percentage of 21.1 percent (UNDP and ILO, 2012). In addition to this, activists in the region are continuously lamenting the negative effects of the Arab uprising on the status of women in terms of political representation and rights abuses in transition countries.

Young People With Disabilities (PWD)

Another vulnerable group that is challenged by multiple exclusions are young PWD. These are one of the most vulnerable groups in the region as their exclusion is present at all levels of society. In many Arab countries, they are not only excluded from the educational system and labor market, but are even excluded by their close and distant family members. With the important role families play in the region, family exclusion of young PWD makes social inclusion practically impossible for this group, especially with most experts agreeing that early intervention with PWD is the best way of properly equipping them to become active and productive members of society.

Young People in Marginalized Areas (Rural and Urban)

Young people can also face exclusions due to geographic circumstances, most particularly in rural areas which make up 43 percent of the Arab population (World Bank, 2010). Poverty rates in these areas are significantly higher than their urban counterparts, and as such, they expose youth in these areas to all the causes and effects of region-based poverty such as significantly unequal availability of ICT infrastructure (UNESCO, 2011), as well as education and access to the labor market. The most striking instances of the effect of such marginalization was the case of 25 year old Bouazizi, the now symbolic rural Tunisian man who burned himself to death after a member of the local authorities stopped him from selling from his unlicensed cart, subsequently sparking the Tunisian and eventually Egyptian and regional Arab Uprising in 2011.

Young People, Migration, and Refugees

Young people in the Arab region move for three main reasons: as immigrants (both legal and illegal) for better work opportunities and for security due to violence or instability and as refugees due to armed conflict and persecution. Movement takes place within the region as well as to countries outside the Arab region, mainly North America and Europe. The Arab Uprising brought forward the frustrations and difficulties experienced by a large cohort of youth who are highly educated yet unemployed or employed in positions that do not match their skills and capacities. This presents one major reason for the emigration of the most highly skilled youth, causing the complex phenomenon of “brain drain”. The inability to find decent and stable jobs is preventing young people in the Arab region from establishing themselves in society as these jobs do not enable them to acquire their own housing and to start their own families. This has been highly linked to the phenomena of delayed marriage and permanent pre-adulthood, leaving emigration as the only available option to break the status quo (Mulderig, 2011).

Moreover, migration is also caused by unstable political situations and driven by a need for basic security from violence and conflict. Some countries, like Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen, have adopted pro-migration policies as part of their national strategy, though migrant integration policies are absent in the Arab world, especially integration of other Arab workers. In more severe areas of armed conflict, most particularly in Iraq and recently in Syria, young people are forced to flee their countries as refugees. This forced uprooting is especially difficult as it usually occurs in a violent context and results in the harsh conditions of temporary pre-resettlement refugee camps in host countries. Young refugees today can be counted in the millions, a number continuously increasing with the ongoing civil war in Syria. With the lack of funding, preparation, and proper support in host communities, young refugees are being driven to interrupt their education and seek their and their family’s livelihood through informal labor, begging, and illegal activities. Young female refugees also face the risk of being forced into sex work. Finally, refugees are at a higher risk for health problems particularly as the humanitarian response to health issues can be poor and uncoordinated as illustrated in the current situation of Syrian refugees (Coutts A. a., 2013). In Lebanon for instance, Syrian refugees living in camps are facing a severe health crisis (Coutts A. F., 2013) which continues to deteriorate quickly and which are exacerbated by poor, over crowded living conditions where outbreaks of diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis A can quickly spread.

Young People in Conflict Situations

The Arab region has a long history of violence and armed conflict which continues to this day, most severely in the now two-year civil war in Syria which has caused more than 100,000 deaths of which 7000 are children (UNICEF, 2013) and 2,019,518 refugees of which one million are children. Youth and mostly young, single, unemployed males are one of the most vulnerable groups targeted for military and militia recruitment (UNICEF, 2011). Young men in countries such as Yemen, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq and more recently Syria suffer severe physical and psychological trauma from protracted exposure and participation in violent environments and as such can have difficulty reintegrating in society particularly with other peers in their age group (UNICEF, 2011). For young women, increased instances of sexual and gender-based violence have been correlated with increased instances of political and social violence (UNICEF, 2011). Political and internal civil conflicts such as the ones in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and recently Egypt are also often related to particular identity groups most often formed on religious or sub-religious (sectarian) lines, most importantly in the recently increasing Sunni-Shiite tensions as well as some older ones such as the Egyptians Copts. In other instances they can also or alternatively be based on ethnic identity-groups such as the case with the Kurds in Iraq and Syria or the Berbers in the Western Maghreb region including in Mauritania, Tunisia and Morocco. Young people's involvement in the conflicts among these identity-groups can further marginalize them as the conflict becomes more severe and the identity-group tensions become more entrenched in the collective psyche, as is currently the case especially in Lebanon and Egypt, particularly when those groups are minorities in their corresponding countries and at risk of religious or ethnic persecution.

Youth involved in conflict also suffer from severe short-term and long term psychological effects (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2013) (Tol, 2011) (United Nations, 2005) as has been seen most dramatically within both recent Syrian refugee camps as well as in longitudinal studies on youth in conflict areas.

The long-term effects of trauma can further entrench the social marginalization of the victims as their most fundamental social and emotional capacities can be perturbed (Elbedour, 1998) and, without sustained and professional intervention can deteriorate and further isolate victims from other members of their social groups.

Conflict also poses severe threats to the physical health of youth as it has been linked to an increased level of drug abuse, smoking and alcohol abuse (United Nations, 2005), those effects are more severe in young women who are also at higher risk of infection from sexually transmitted infections since conflict is also linked to an increase in risky sexual behavior (United Nations, 2005).

Inclusiveness of Social Policy

Karshenas and Moghadem argue that the history of social policy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been that of nation-building and state-building with an aim to create a social base of support for emerging nation-states or regimes as opposed to aiming to achieve citizen rights. Moreover, they find that education has been more of a filtering process to allocate scarce jobs rather than a mechanism to develop the nation. In countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Morocco, and Tunisia the goals of achieving a national identity through social policies were more explicit whereas in oil-rich gulf states, high financial resources enabled generous social policies but at the same time diverted attention from essential developmental goals. For example, education was not mandatory and women continued to be excluded from the labor

force because the governments had the resources to hire foreign labor. Karshenas and Moghadem, however, credit the states in the Arab region for achieving impressive progress given the starting point in 1960 (Karshenas & Moghadam, 2009). The essential feature that must be addressed here is how these social policies that did in fact achieve some developmental targets fell short in providing sufficient satisfaction for citizens in Arab States by excluding certain categories and groups from social policies.

3.3 Multidimensional Approach and Key Challenges

The political and social contexts of youth in the Arab region presents a number of challenges dealing with the different dimensions of social inclusion. The dimensions follow the conclusions of the expert group meeting, organized by the UNDESA in collaboration with UNESCO and UN-HABITAT that took place at the UNESCO HQs in Paris from 10 to 13 September 2007 in order to reach a better conceptualization, analysis and operationalisation of “social inclusion” (UNDESA, 2007). Although the dimensions at first glance seem to overlap, the distinction is necessary to ensure that inclusive policies are effective and not superficial. Visibility ensures that young people have channels through which to express themselves free of oppressive censorship. However, visibility alone is not enough. The ability of young people to express themselves loses meaning if decision-makers do not take these views into consideration. Visibility is much more effective if it directly feeds into the decision-making process in an institutionalized process. Interaction on the other hand ensures an open space for different social groups to communicate and build consensus on public issues, in addition to improving social cohesion. None of this is possible though if young people do not have access to their fundamental human rights. Access should be accompanied by the necessary resources and skills needed to effectively participate in society. For example, youth participation can be easily manipulated by different interest groups if young people do not have the necessary understanding of the debates and processes.

Although the below table distinguishes the political context from the social context, the reality is that the two are highly interlinked. True democratic participation is useless unless it is able to translate into an improvement in the social aspects of life. As demonstrated in the previous section, young people in the Arab region have started to lose faith in the democratic process because they are still unable to take control of their own lives. Improved political participation should lead to a better representation of traditionally excluded groups. This increased participation can ensure that the interests of these otherwise neglected groups are taken into consideration as policies are being developed. On the long run, the democratic process in itself should serve as the instrument that ensure the inclusiveness of policies.

The different challenges are summarized in the table on the next page into 23 and categorized according to the dimensions (visibility, consideration, interaction, rights and access, and resources) and the political and social contexts.

Table 2: Challenges (CH) of Youth Inclusion by Dimensions and Context

Dimensions of Social Inclusion	Political Context	Social Context
Visibility	CH1 Restrictions on the freedom of assembly and freedom of demonstration	CH2 Restrictions to the freedom of expression translated in the censorship of media and art and restriction to some social media tools
Consideration	CH3 Limitation on voting and running for elections for youth and women CH4 Restrictions on the formation of political parties CH5 The detachment of youth participatory initiatives for political and policy decision-making processes	CH6 Restrictions to the establishment of non-governmental community and youth organizations
Interaction	CH7 Restrictions on political and policy platforms for discussions: youth with youth and youth with decision-makers	CH8 Cultural barriers to interactions between youth of different religious, ethnic, political, and gender backgrounds due to the decline in social cohesion CH9 Lack of public spaces for social interaction among youth such as youth centers CH10 Delay in marriage and family formation
Rights and Access	CH11 Unequal civil rights for young women CH12 The right to security and protection from situations of conflict CH13 Corruption and bad governance	CH14 Unequal or no access to affordable housing for young couples, healthcare, and decent employment CH15 Restrictions to the freedom of conscience and worship CH16 Rights abuses related to forced marriages, honor killings, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and other Gender Based Violence (GBV) CH17 Not recognizing the basic international human rights of vulnerable groups including women, children, PWD, foreign workers, and refugees
Resources	CH18 Lack of knowledge on active citizenship and skills on policy development and good governance CH19 Lack of leadership skills among youth in the region	CH20 Restriction and low access to information and ICT CH21 Lack of labor market and entrepreneurial skills among youth CH22 Difficulty in financing youth projects CH23 Lack of life skills leading to healthier decision, family planning, and reproductive health

4. Responses to the Social Inclusion of Young Women and Men

In order to address the different challenges that youth face, as analyzed in the previous section of this paper, we have to ask what are the responses that have taken place in the region to tackle or impact youth inclusion?

The responses we present include 22 examples of initiatives led by CSOs, along with two case studies from Lebanon: the National Youth Policy and a case study on the inclusion of young PWD.

4.1 Examples: Civil Society-led Initiatives

Collected initiatives across the Arab region provide good examples of how participatory democracy from grass roots leverage the social inclusion of young women and men in the Arab region. Some may simply inspire youth and others may better inform decision-makers, practitioners, and other supporters of youth inclusion.

In fact, the mapping exercise covers national and regional initiatives and experiences from 17 countries³ that have addressed in the recent past (2008-2012) one or more of the challenges facing the inclusion of young people in the region.

The initiatives and experiences take on the form of:

1. Prospects for youth development
2. Prospects for civic engagement
3. Changes affecting democratic participation

The mapping process showed a concentration of initiatives tackling unemployment and economic empowerment of youth to play a more active role in society. These types of initiatives can be observed in all the countries of the region with some of them being solely led by governments. On the other hand, initiatives relating to democratic participation were abundant in the countries of transition including Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Iraq, and Yemen. However, it was very difficult, if not impossible, to find similar initiatives in Gulf countries.

Below is a list of the initiatives including the name, geographic coverage, partners, and page number. The list is sorted by sub-region (Maghreb, Red Sea, Levant, and the Arabian Gulf) and then by the alphabetical order of the country.

³ The countries covered include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen.

Initiative #	Name of Initiative	Geographic Coverage	Partners	Page #
Maghreb Sub-region				
Initiative # 1	Promoting Education, Altruism and Civic Engagement (PEACE)	Algeria	World Learning, Handicap International , Algerian National Federation of People with Disabilities, USAID	23
Initiative # 2	Promoting Peaceful Transition and Protecting Vulnerable People	Libya	Mercy Corps, UNHCR	23
Initiative # 3	Strengthening conflict prevention capacities and the rule of law in Mauritania	Mauritania	UNODC, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA	24
Initiative # 4	Morocco's Youth Employment Strategy Green	Morocco	Moroccan Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment, UNDP-Morocco	24
Initiative # 5	Engaging Tunisian Youth to Achieve the MDGs	Tunisia	IOM, UNDP, FAO, ILO, UNIDO	25
Red Sea Sub-region				
Initiative # 6	Promoting Civic and Political Awareness of Egyptian Youth	Egypt	Etijah, Plan International	25
Initiative # 7	Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) in Yemen	Yemen	Peace Players International, AMIDEAST, USAID	26
Levant Sub-region				
Initiative # 8	Iraq Priority Grants program	Iraq	United States Institute of Peace	26
Initiative # 9	Youth For The Future (Y4F)	Jordan	International Youth Foundation, Jordanian Ministry of Social Development, USAID	27
Initiative # 10	Democratic and Empowerment Processes for Youth in Lebanon (DEEP)	Lebanon	Permanent Peace Movement (PPM), International Development and Empowerment Association (IDEA), UNDEF	27
Initiative # 11	Ruwad: The Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program	Palestine	Education Development Center, USAID	28

Arabian Gulf Sub-region				
0	YAL Arab Leadership Forum	Bahrain	Young Arab Leaders Bahrain	28
Initiative # 13	The National Youth Project	Kuwait	The National Youth Project, Kuwait Government	29
Initiative # 14	Youth Projects Development Fund	Oman	Omani Ministry of Commerce and Industry	29
Initiative # 15	Reach Out To Asia (ROTA) Youth Development	Qatar	ROTA, Qatar Foundation	30
Initiative # 16	King Abdullah Scholarship Program	Saudi Arabia	Saudi Ministry of Higher Education	30
Initiative # 17	Takatof	UAE	Emirates Foundation for Youth Development	31
Initiative # 18	Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development	UAE	Emirates Foundation for Youth Development, INJAZ-UAE	32
Regional Initiatives				
Initiative # 19	The Middle East Youth Initiative	MENA	Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings, Dubai School of Government, Silatech, Wolfensohn Family Foundation	33
Initiative # 20	Building Bridges for Youth Action	MENA	ActionAid Denmark	33
Initiative # 21	Engaging Democratic Activists for MENA Advancement	MENA	Menapolis, Partner-Jordan, Institute for War and Peace Reporting	34
Initiative # 22	MENA Regional Youth Savings Initiative	MENA	Silatech, German Agency for International Cooperation, Sanabel	34

Initiative # 1	Promoting Education, Altruism and Civic Engagement (PEACE)
	Algeria
	Civic Engagement
	2012 – 2014
	World Learning, Handicap International, Algerian National Federation of People with Disabilities, USAID
	<p>PEACE engages Algerian university students and select young leaders with disabilities in addressing social problems within their communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project activities achieve four primary objectives: • Enhance the capacity of Algerian universities and civil society organizations to collaboratively provide students with volunteer and career opportunities; • Improve leadership, project planning, and job skills for Algerian university students and select youth with disabilities; • Increase student participation in community service projects; and • Maximize future program sustainability by building on current government and donor initiatives, strengthening existing civil society networks, creating new partnerships, and building local training capacity. <p>Through a partnership with Handicap International and the Algerian National Federation of People with Disabilities, the PEACE program works with existing networks to provide general university students and youth with disabilities meaningful volunteer experiences that reflect their interests and help them to make a valuable impact on their communities while building practical skills and enhancing their professional portfolios for future employment.</p>
	This initiative aims at increasing the civic engagement of young people by encouraging and training them to get more involved within their communities. The project also targets a young people with disabilities, a group suffering from multiple exclusion.
	http://www.worldlearning.org/program-areas/international-development-and-exchange-programs/projects/promoting-education-altruism-and-civic-engagement-peace/

Initiative # 2	Promoting Peaceful Transition and Protecting Vulnerable People
	Libya
	Youth Development
	2011 – Ongoing
	Mercy Corps, UNHCR
	The program equips local leaders with negotiation and conflict management tools to help promote a peaceful transition from authoritarian rule. The program is also designed to protect internally displaced persons (IDPs) and others who are vulnerable by monitoring protection issues and providing essential supplies. Working with local leaders around the country, we're helping communities respond to the needs of displaced people and identify where they need help to do so.
	This program is community oriented aiming to build inclusive societies of all stakeholders and who are able to build a network of Libyan leaders who are capable of managing disputes and promoting reconciliation, especially where displaced people and minority groups are involved.
	http://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/MercyCorps_LibyaFactSheet.pdf

Initiative # 3	Strengthening conflict prevention capacities and the rule of law in Mauritania
	Mauritania
	Civic Engagement and Democratic Participation
	2009-2012
	UNODC, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA
	This multi-UN agency programme aims at preventing conflict and inter-community tensions through the following multi-sectoral and integrated approaches: strengthening social cohesion through the promotion of national unity and citizenship; developing policies which allow for an equal distribution of resources; establishing mechanisms for conflict resolution and dialogue; and strengthening the rule of law by building the capacities of actors in the areas of conflict prevention and management. UNODC's contribution to this programme supports the establishment of conflict resolution structures, activities to foster dialogue and social mediation, and those which combine traditional practices with the use of formal judicial mechanisms and decision-making bodies.
	This program allows the establishment of conflict resolution structures, and various activities to foster dialogue and mediation. This in turn strengthens social cohesion and allows for further inclusion to all sectors.
	http://www.mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/Mauritania%20-%20CPPB%20-%202011%201st%20semester%20-%20JP%20Fact%20sheet.pdf

Initiative # 4	Morocco's Youth Employment Strategy Green
	Morocco
	Youth Development
	2013-2016
	Moroccan Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment, UNDP-Morocco
	This project aims to reduce vulnerabilities and inequalities, including those of gender, through support for economic and social policies / strategies and programs, to accelerate of the MDGs achievement with a focus on reducing poverty, vulnerabilities and inequalities, and to implement of national and territorial strategies that are low-carbon, climate-change and natural-disaster resilient and job generation.
	This project allows for the increase in access to financial services for green businesses for the most vulnerable groups including youth in targeted areas. It also allows for the establishment for a capacity market plan for green jobs.
	http://www.pnud.org.ma/pdf/DocProjects/P00082363/Prodoc_YES_Green.pdf

Initiative # 5	Engaging Tunisian Youth to Achieve the MDGs
	Tunisia
	Youth Development
	2008 – Ongoing
	IOM, UNDP, FAO, ILO, UNIDO
	<p>This Joint Programme is supporting efforts to develop regional capacities in migration-prone areas through the sustainable creation of decent jobs and the promotion of local competencies. The programme operates in the pilot regions of El-Kef, Gafsa and Tunis through interventions adapted to the varying needs of two target groups - unemployed university graduates and unemployed unskilled youth. Its goals are being achieved by:</p> <p>Enhancing national and regional capacities to develop, implement, coordinate and monitor regional employment and migration policies and programs; and</p> <p>Promoting innovative entrepreneurship and job creation schemes, including a circular migration mechanism for the targeted youth of the pilot regions.</p> <p>The UN is implementing the programme through a network of governmental and non-governmental partners, with capacity building cross-cutting all interventions.</p>
	This initiative aims at improving the regional capacity to adopt effective policies that tackle youth unemployed for both educated and unskilled youth.
	http://www.mdgfund.org/program/engagingtunisianyouthachievemdgs

Initiative # 6	Promoting Civic and Political Awareness of Egyptian Youth
	Egypt
	Democratic Participation
	2011-2012
	Etijah, Plan International
	<p>Etijah is working with Plan International on a one year campaign - from April 2011 till April 2012 - to raise the political awareness of Egyptian youth in 17 governorates in a neutral, non-partisan manner especially in the wake of the revolution and as the legislative and presidential elections are about to take place in Egypt. The project directly targets almost half a million Egyptians of different ages and backgrounds in 1700 villages through workshops, seminars, the use of social media and short videos as well as face to face communication to raise awareness on the civic and political participation of young people in Egypt.</p> <p>The first phase of the project started in Alexandria with 34 young people representing their governorates, a male and a female from each governorate, to draft the campaign's manual and the delivery methods of the academic content. The manual - from which 10000 copies were printed out - includes most of the questions that any citizen might ask or want to know about politics, with simple, credible and neutral answers to them.</p> <p>The next phase will be the training of 350 trainers. Twenty young people, a male and a female from ten regions or markaz within each governorate, will be provided with TOT to enhance and develop their presentation and communication skills in a manner that would enable them to pass on the message of the campaign to the people in the 1700 targeted villages during the stage to follow.</p>
Impact on social inclusion	This initiatives improves the knowledge and skills on active citizenship and democratic participation with a focus on young people in Egypt.
Source	http://www.etijah.org/index.php?id=projects

Initiative # 7	Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) in Yemen
	Yemen
	Youth Development and Civic Engagement
	2010 – 2012
	Peace players International, AMIDEAST, USAID
	<p>Promoting Youth Civic Engagement is a two-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to engage youth in sports and recreational activities in Aden and Sanaa and three other governorates.</p> <p>PYCE operates through steering committees involving community leaders as well as other local actors who will help to develop a peer network of youth and community actors. This network of influence leaders reaches out to young people and their communities offering training and encouraging sports and recreation events in community youth centers. Program activities include promoting and facilitating positive relations between youth and moderate community leaders; forming governorate Steering Committees to stimulate and coordinate beneficial youth activities, and the establishment of the PYCE Peer Network; providing rapid response mini-grants for Peer Network members; renovating selected youth clubs; and supporting the establishment and expansion of youth sports and recreational programs, including training coaches and sports officials, equipment grants, and establishing sports leagues and formal competitions.</p>
	The initiatives strengthens social cohesion between youth and community leaders and improves the skills of young people on civic engagement.
	http://www.amideast.org/yemen/institutional-strengthening/promoting-youth-civic-engagement-pyce

Initiative # 8	Iraq Priority Grants program
	Iraq
	Civic Engagement
	2004 – 2011
	United States Institute of Peace
	<p>Two separate grants from the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) have been supporting grassroots efforts by Iraqi civil society groups to help some of the country's young people to effect change and overcome disparaging stereotypes of other ethnic and religious groups. Collectively, the two grants—part of USIP's Iraq Priority Grants program —aim to strengthen the huge but often neglected youth population in ways that can further their ability to participate in a democratic society and promote tolerance and mutual understanding while ethnic and sectarian divisions still plague the country.</p> <p>One grant supported the efforts of a nongovernmental organization to empower middle and high school students in Baghdad's violent and impoverished Sadr City to collaborate on peacebuilding projects, some reflecting environmental themes. The other brought together young adults, mostly in their 20s, from four ethnic and religious groups living near each other in the Ninawa Plains in Ninawa Province, giving them opportunities to learn about each other away from the violence and hardened attitudes that have characterized relations among communities in the region they share.</p>
	The program focuses on violence prone areas in Iraq, and the grants are given to projects targeting a wide audience of youth. The project empowered youth to play a more active role in reducing violence and conflict within their communities.
	http://www.usip.org/grants-fellowships/priority-grant-competition

Initiative # 9	Youth For The Future (Y4F)
	Jordan
	Youth Development
	2011 – Ongoing
	International Youth Foundation, Jordanian Ministry of Social Development, USAID
	<p>Youth for the Future (Y4F), formerly known as Youth:Work Jordan, is a program of the International Youth Foundation (IYF) carried out in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development and the Government of Jordan. Its goal: to support youth at-risk in realizing productive and rewarding roles in society, while helping Jordanian society maximize the energy, talent, and enthusiasm of today's young generation.</p> <p>To achieve this goal, Y4F seeks to foster an unprecedented coming together of people and institutions in support one of the nation's greatest assets: its young people. We believe that through combining existing knowledge, resources, and expertise, it is possible to achieve far greater results for Jordan's youth.</p> <p>Y4F takes internationally-recognized best practices in the field of youth development and adapts them to address the needs of the nation's underserved youth. At the same time, it unites diverse sectors of society – government entities, companies, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and others – in a far-reaching effort to scale-up proven approaches to reach greater numbers of young people. Among the more than 50 strategic partners that are benefiting from Y4F models are global and regional companies, including Al Manseer, Caterpillar, Luminus Education, Starbucks, and the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization.</p>
	This is an initiative combining CSOs, the public sector, and the private sector aimed at the inclusion of young people by targeting the education-work transition of underprivileged youth.
	http://www.youthforthefuture.org/

Initiative # 10	Democratic and Empowerment Processes for Youth in Lebanon (DEEP)
	Lebanon
	Democratic Participation
	2013-2015
	Permanent Peace Movement (PPM), International Development and Empowerment Association (IDEA), UNDEF
	The project aims at the realization of the participation rights of youth through social empowerment leading to their active participation and their involvement in all decision affecting them in the family, at schools, in institutions and in social life. This is advocated mainly in light of articles 12, 13 and 15 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The overall strategy will be based on Capacity Building, Awareness raisin and Interaction and partnership.
	This project aims to strengthen democratic practices in Lebanon through participation of youth in the public life. This is also ensured through increasing capacity of local NGOs to promote youth participation in public life and in society in general, increasing empowerment and capacity for participation enhanced among youth, and increasing advocacy efforts undertaken by youth.
	http://ppm-lebanon.org/content/185

Initiative # 11	Ruwwad: The Palestinian Youth Empowerment Program
	Palestine
	Youth Development
	2005 – Ongoing
	Education Development Center, USAID
	Ruwwad, taken from the Arabic word for "pioneers," is a program created by Palestinians, for Palestinians. Its mission is to empower Palestinian youth and the adults who serve them, so that both groups can become strong local leaders and change-makers. Since 2005, Ruwwad has been planned, designed, and implemented "by youth, for youth," with a focus on positive leadership development for young women and men ages 14 to 30. Ruwwad provides youth with training, funding, and support to lead grassroots community service projects, and works with the Ministry of Youth to improve the government's capacity to serve its young people.
	This initiative empowers marginalized Palestinian youth and provides them the opportunity to grow and develop. This project allows groups in the society to implement their projects and advance themselves despite the turbulent political situation.
	http://www.gem2.org/sites/default/files/Ruwwad%20Evaluation%20Final%20Report%2005152011.pdf

Initiative # 12	YAL Arab Leadership Forum
	Bahrain
	2009-2014
	Youth Development
	Young Arab Leaders Bahrain
	Every year 200 handpicked young Bahrainis that show great potential are trained in leadership development, entrepreneurship and education, to prepare them for a bigger world, with better opportunities. The aim is that these individuals will pass down their knowledge to future generations. YAL Bahrain offers unique opportunities for young people to gauge their capacities, to enhance their skills, reach a higher level of leadership, and pinpoint their sense of direction.
	This initiative improves the leadership skills of young people. However, the selection process limits this opportunity to youth who are already privileged rather than marginalized youth. The impact on youth inclusion is therefore minimal as it is limited to one group of young people.
	http://www.yal.eventscom.net/brochure.pdf

Initiative # 13	The National Youth Project
	Kuwait
	Democratic Participation
	2012 – Ongoing
	The National Youth Project, Kuwait Government
	<p>Young Kuwaitis are encouraged to chip in with recommendations and initiatives on the economy, education, housing, health, the environment, the arts, literature, sports, volunteerism, the law, and the reinforcement of citizenship and democratic practices. The program's motto is "Kuwait is listening" and the youth project posted a page on its site for Kuwaitis to provide their input.</p> <p>The council selects three initiatives per month and supports one with a stipend of 10,000 Kuwaiti Dinars (US\$ 35,511.32) and two others with 3,000 Kuwaiti Dinars (US\$ 10,653.41) each.</p>
	<p>This initiative creates a direct platform between young people in Kuwait and decision-makers at the highest level. The selection process hinders the ability of marginalized and underprivileged youth to participate and is therefore not fully inclusive.</p>
	http://youth.org.kw/images/TNYP-3.pdf

Initiative # 14	Youth Projects Development Fund
	Oman
	Youth Development
	2001 – Ongoing
	Omani Ministry of Commerce and Industry
	<p>Youth projects development funds (SAOC) known as "youth fund" aims at supporting Omani youth to make them able to initiate small and medium commercial businesses through investment in capital and providing administrative and technological assistance. The projects which the fund participated in its capital in the time of its establishment are allowed to get grants and facilitated loans according to the related laws and programs. They are also exempted from income tax for 5 years as from the beginning of the activity. This period can be renewed to another period of 5 years.</p>
	<p>This government initiative facilitates access funding for Omani youth to finance their businesses. It is only limited to Omani nationals and not residents of Oman.</p>
	http://www.oman.om/wps/portal!/ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3hjA3cDA39LT18Tp0AXAyMvI2_TYEdjl4NgE_2CbEdFAJCSMWg!/?WCM_PORTLET=PC_7_30G0009!MSB9102BG2LM6PHSO3000000_WCM&WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/en/site/home/bz/bz6sb/bz66/grantsandloans

Initiative # 15	Reach Out To Asia (ROTA) Youth Development
	Qatar
	Youth Development
	2007 – Ongoing
	ROTA, Qatar Foundation
	<p>Inspired by The Heir Apparent H. H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani's call for strong and active organizations to work on developing active and involved Qatari society, ROTA's community development strategy supports the establishment of a secure and stable society operating on the principles of justice and equality.</p> <p>With the involvement of over 40 secondary schools and 9 universities, ROTA is directly empowering and equipping the youth of Qatar to be active agents of change in the development of their own communities through a four-part youth development strategy. The strategy includes a growing Youth Service Club Network, the annual EMPOWER youth conference, a series of four-day Leadership Training programs and a Corporate Mentorship program aimed at supporting a select group of ROTA Youth Ambassadors, namely the ROTA Youth Advisory Board.</p>
	<p>ROTA's Youth Service Clubs are designed to unlock youth potential and to empower the young people of Qatar by developing the skills they need to tackle community projects and become leaders. Since 2007, over 2,000 youth in Qatar have benefited from ROTA activities and gained the confidence and skills needed to become leaders of tomorrow, empowering 14 to 24-year-olds to become active members of their communities.</p>
	http://www.reachouttoasia.org/en/project-detail/youth-development-1

Initiative # 16	King Abdullah Scholarship Program
	Saudi Arabia
	Youth Development
	2005 – 2020
	Saudi Ministry of Higher Education
	<p>Since its launch the program has grown to serve over 130,000 students in 46 countries across the globe, over 20 percent of which are women.</p> <p>Originally under a five-year watch at its inception in 2005, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) received short extensions in 2007 and 2009. A major extension was announced early this year that will keep the program running to 2020. Such a move reflects the Kingdom's response to addressing the growing needs of higher education of the youth demographic in Saudi Arabia to feed its job market and economic demands to become a greater competitor in the world market. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) says the focus of the program is to prepare Saudi youth for the various fields in the public and private sectors.</p>
	<p>Recipients' families receive the same insurance coverage, and joint scholarships are given to students with spouses. This project ensures a representative student population studying abroad, scholarship recipients range from the privately educated elite of larger cities in Saudi Arabia to the youth from poorer, smaller towns. Thus it tackles youth from poorer areas who are unable by themselves to learn abroad.</p>
	http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/studyboard/king-abdulla-hstages/pages/default.aspx

Initiative # 17	Takatof
	United Arab Emirates
	Civic Engagement and Youth Development
	2007 – Ongoing
	Emirates Foundation for Youth Development
	<p>Takatof is a civic participation organization founded by the Emirates Foundation in April 2007. Its goal is to embed civic participation into the way of life in the Emirates by connecting people with volunteer projects and providing training and resources. The Emirates Foundation designed the voluntary social program, Takatof, in April 2007 in order to create a culture of volunteering throughout the UAE. Takatof, which means 'shoulder-to-shoulder' in Arabic, mobilizes people and resources to find creative and sustainable solutions for proven community needs.</p> <p>Takatof's aim is not only to raise awareness of community needs but also to empower UAE nationals and encourage them to participate in specific volunteering opportunities promoting the concept of volunteering as a 'way of life'. Residents are also encouraged to join in.</p> <p>Another youth program is the Al Khawi (brother in Arabic), which brings together youth groups from different Emirates and classes to promote friendship, enhance feelings of social responsibility and encourage exchange of experiences between diverse young people.</p>
	This initiative through its subprograms allows for engagement of all nationals who lack skills and who are financially in need. This programs seeks to engulf all youth with UAE nationalities in projects that will further their development and growth.
	https://www.abudhabi.ae/egovPoolPortal_WAR/appmanager/ADeGP/Citizen? nfpb=true & pageLabel=p_citizen_homepage_hidenav&lang=en&did=127856

Initiative # 18	Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development
	United Arab Emirates
	Youth Development
	2007 – Ongoing
	Emirates Foundation for Youth Development, INJAZ-UAE
	<p>Khalifa Fund was launched on 3 June 2007 to help develop local enterprises in Abu Dhabi, with a total capital investment of AED 2 billion. The Fund aims to create a new generation of Emirati entrepreneurs by instilling and enriching the culture of investment amongst young people, as well as supporting and developing small to medium-sized investments in the Emirate.</p> <p>Khalifa Fund provides integrated and comprehensive programmes to meet the needs and requirements of investors seeking to establish or expand investments.</p> <p>In order to create a favourable investment environment and strengthen the capacity of entrepreneurs, the Fund has developed a system of support services for entrepreneurs. These include training, development, data and consulting services, in addition to a number of marketing-focused initiatives.</p> <p>Financing solutions are offered for viable projects, which help to feed the national economy. These financing programmes are Khutwa, Bedaya and Zeyada, which cover all project segments.</p> <p>In addition, there are a number of other initiatives such as Sougha for heritage handicrafts, Al Radda for correctional centre inmates and Ishraq, for those who have recovered from an addiction at the National Rehabilitation Centre. Amal is a Khalifa Fund initiative that aims to target special-needs Emiratis.</p>
	This initiative supports young nationals in becoming economically active within the UAE society. It responds to the high dependence of UAE nationals on jobs in the public sector to secure their living.
	http://www.khalifafund.ae/En/AboutUs/Pages/Overview.aspx

Initiative # 19	The Middle East Youth Initiative
	Middle East and North Africa
	Civic Engagement
	2006 – Ongoing
	Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings, Dubai School of Government, Silatech, Wolfensohn Family Foundation
	<p>The initiative blends activities in an attempt to bridge the divide between thinkers and practitioners and utilizes robust research as a foundation for effective policy and programs. The initiative has three complementary pillars:</p> <p>Research and Policy: Advance the understanding of economic and social issues to promote solutions for the inclusion of young people through cutting edge research. The main target group is youth 15-29 years old. The research framework focuses on youth making two major transitions to adulthood: from education to employment and from employment to household formation (marriage and home-ownership).</p> <p>Advocacy and Networking: The initiative aspires to be a hub for knowledge and ideas, open to all stakeholders who can make change happen. Strong partnerships with policymakers, government officials, representatives from the private sector and civil society organizations, donors and the media will pioneer forms of dialogue that bridge the divide between ideas and action.</p> <p>Practical Action: With a focus on areas with the greatest potential for innovation and impact, the initiative will mobilize partners for practical action that can improve young people's lives. MEYI's latest initiative, Taqueem, promotes impact evaluation of programs in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship across the Middle East.</p>
	The Middle East Youth Initiative promotes youth inclusion through an integrated approach that cuts across five sectors: education, employment, marriage, housing and credit, and civic participation.
	http://www.shababinclusion.org/section/about

Initiative # 20	Building Bridges for Youth Action
	Middle East and North Africa
	Civic Engagement
	2012 – Ongoing
	ActionAid Denmark
	<p>The program supports the empowerment of excluded groups; strengthens solidarity by connecting and organizing people committed to a common cause; and promotes campaign activities to shift national and international policies. With a human rights-based approach AADK promotes the political influence of people living in poverty and advance the capacity of youth to hold decision-makers accountable.</p> <p>The programme operates in Jordan, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territories and is currently on hold in Syria. AADK has recently started up a programme in Egypt, wishing to extend into Tunisia, Morocco and Libya.</p>
	The initiative promotes social change regarding youth participation, empowerment of women and strengthening civil society.
	http://www.actionaid.dk/sw9740.asp

Initiative # 21	Engaging Democratic Activists for MENA Advancement
	Middle East and North Africa
	Democratic Participation
	2012 – Ongoing
	Menapolis, Partner-Jordan, Institute for War and Peace Reporting
	<p>PDC's regional initiative, "Engaging Democratic Activists for MENA Advancement" is supporting networking and shared learning among democratic activists from 12 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The leaders of the democracy movements in these countries, including NGOs, youth movement leaders, the private sector, the media, new political parties, and bloggers, have challenges to address far beyond democratic elections and changes of government.</p> <p>The first EDAMA learning exchange, held in in September 2012 in Amman, Jordan, brought together democratic activists from the 12 EDAMA countries with activists from 18 different countries that have experienced the transition from authoritarian government to democracy, including Serbia, Slovakia, Georgia and others. The Forum fostered regional connections and relationships and offered training in community mobilization, cooperative advocacy, coalition building, and facilitation.</p>
	With EDAMA's combination of in-person conferences, online collaboration tools and relevant lessons from all over the world, democratic activists in the Middle East and North Africa can create a strong network of regional democracy-builders who can inspire and support each other.
	http://www.edamaplatform.net

Initiative # 22	MENA Regional Youth Savings Initiative
	Middle East and North Africa
	Youth Development
	2012 – Ongoing
	Silatech, German Agency for International Cooperation, Sanabel
	<p>The project will allow young people aged 16-30 to build their financial assets through the opening of youth-specific micro-savings accounts. Silatech is offering financial and technical assistance in cooperation with GIZ, while Sanabel is serving as the knowledge dissemination and policy partner. In addition to new youth savings accounts offered through a network of partner financial institutions, the initiative will provide training on “financial literacy” for young people, as well as an outreach campaign, in partnership with its partner financial institutions, to raise the awareness amongst young people of the importance of saving money. The two-year program is expected to facilitate access to micro-savings accounts and financial literacy training for at least 50,000 disadvantaged young people in its three countries of operation—Egypt, Morocco and Yemen. It is expected that an estimated 150,000 youth will be influenced through outreach campaigns linked to micro-savings and financial literacy training offered by partner financial institutions and other youth serving organizations.</p>
	This initiative tackles the economic inclusion of youth by providing the technical and financial resources for young people to initiate their projects.
	http://www.silatech.com/home/news-events/silatech-news/silatech-news-details/2012/04/17/silatech-giz-and-sanabel-to-launch-regional-youth-savings-initiative-targeting-150-000

4.2 Case Study: The Lebanese National Youth Policy

In addressing youth inclusion, it is crucial to look at national youth policies that have been developed and/or adopted by governments in the region. The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY) calls on governments which have not already done so to formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth-related concerns. The WPAY states that this should be done as part of a continuing process of review and assessment of the situation of youth, formulation of a cross-sectoral national youth programme of action in terms of specific, time-bound objectives and a systematic evaluation of progress achieved and obstacles encountered (UN General Assembly, 1995).

The WPAY also called for the appropriate strengthening of national coordinating mechanisms for integrated youth policies and programmes. Where such mechanisms do not exist, the WPAY urged governments to promote their establishment on a multilevel and cross-sectoral basis (UN General Assembly, 1995).

This section will look into the national youth policy that has been recently adopted in the Lebanon focusing on the process and contribution of this policy to social inclusion. The selection of the policy was done based on the following criteria:

1. How current the youth policy is
2. Creativity and participation in the development process

4.2.1 Analysis of the Youth Policy

The analysis of the policy follows the requirements suggested by Denstad that are based on the European experience and that are inline with the UN Programme on Youth (Denstad, 2009).

The analysis of the Lebanese national youth policy shows several challenges that are linked to the nature of the political system in the country rather than flaws in the process of developing the policy. Government challenges include the lack of a clearly identified and empowered government authority on youth, problems in inter-ministerial cooperation, lack of political stability, and an overly centralized system that hinders local and national synergy.

The review also reveals to improvements that can be made to the process of developing the youth policy:

1. The youth representation that partook in drafting and adopting the policy was limited to young people with affiliations to political and civil society organizations. This approach tends to exclude average youth who have no political affiliations and who have not had the chance to get involved in civil society. It is preferable for the participatory process to be open to any young person interested in participating.
2. The second point regards a criteria for the participation of youth organizations. None of the NGOs that are members of the forum are youth-led, even if they have youth specific programs. The danger is that each NGO promotes the issues it focuses on as being the youth priority (Drugs, LGBT rights, domestic violence, access to education). Although these organizations can push for a rights-based approach to the policy, their participation is not directed by youth priorities and therefore may misdirect the youth policy towards CSO priorities rather than the reality that youth are living in.

4.2.2 Analysis of the National Youth Policy Process in Lebanon

The work on youth policy in Lebanon started in 2000 in the frame of the Youth Advocacy Process (YAP), by a group of youth NGOs, the United Nations Youth Task Force, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The work methodology was based on: identifying youth needs; categorizing them into sectors; and forming task forces in each sector; developing youth policy recommendations in each sector; presenting these to the Ministry of Youth and Sports; lobbying various decision makers to acknowledge these recommendations (Youth Forum for Youth Policy, 2012).

The youth policy recommendations summarize all the work done by civil society since 2001, in addition to discussions with representatives of all party youth organizations and youth associations, and with civil society activists in Lebanon, in the framework of 14 workshops that were organized throughout Lebanon in 2009. These recommendations were also reviewed and discussed with experts during 5 roundtables in 2009 (Youth Forum for Youth Policy, 2012).

The final version of the youth policy document was developed by the Youth Forum for Youth Policy, which operates in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports with the aim of having national youth friendly policies in Lebanon. The Lebanese Council of Ministers adopted the policy document on April 3, 2012 through a Ministerial Decree and the President endorsed the document by holding a ceremony to launch the youth policy at the Presidential Palace on December 1, 2012 (Youth Forum for Youth Policy, 2012).

Using the checklist, the Lebanese youth policy process can be analyzed as follows:

Criteria	YES/NO/Somewhat
A clearly defined government authority on youth	Somewhat
A clearly defined target group	YES
A concrete and transparent strategy	YES
A knowledge-based policy	Somewhat
Young people as a resource, not a problem	Somewhat
The promotion of youth participation	YES
A cross-sectoral, integrated approach to youth policy	YES
Inter-ministerial cooperation	Somewhat
A separate budget	Somewhat
Established links between local, regional and national levels	NO

1. A clearly defined government authority on youth: Somewhat

The government authority on youth in Lebanon is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Combining both youth and sports in one ministry tends to shift the focus of the ministry on the more popular sports aspect rather than the youth aspect. In addition to this, the authority of the ministry regarding youth policy in particular is not clear, especially that it currently has no way of following up on its implementation by other ministries. Therefore, there is a government authority on youth, however its role is not clearly defined.

2. A clearly defined target group: YES

The first section of the youth policy document defines the category of youth as being between the ages of 15 and 29. The definition was defined with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the civil society organizations in Lebanon, and the United Nations agencies operating in Lebanon, based on social and economic criteria.

3. A concrete and transparent strategy: YES

The process of developing the youth policy was very transparent and included all political parties, 12 ministries, and civil society organizations. The final policy recommendations, although broad, suggested concrete measures to be adopted at the national level.

4. A knowledge-based policy: Somewhat

A knowledge-based approach was adopted to identify the necessary changes required for implementing the youth policy. This was done through a technical and legal review of the youth policy document in 2012 to identify the next steps in implementing the policy. However, the adoption of the points within the youth policy was based on the needs and aspirations of youth along with a difficult consensus building process between all political parties, ministries, religious groups, and participating CSOs. This consensus building process does not lead to the adoption of the most effective policy alternative but the least controversial one.

5. Young people as a resource, not a problem: Somewhat

The section of the youth policy on labor and economic participation included only 2/37 points that regarded young people as a resource being:

1. Spreading idea incubators and financial support institutions for the economic initiatives of young people
2. Supporting innovations and inventions by young people

The policy tends to over emphasize the government's role in provide the right economic, social, and political setting for young people access their rights. However, it fails to provide a broad forward looking vision that sees young people as a resource and directs all government decisions accordingly.

6. The promotion of youth participation: YES

The policy clearly calls out for youth participation by dedicating complete sections for economic participation, political participation, and social integration.

7. A cross-sectoral, integrated approach to youth policy: YES

The policy is cross-sectoral as there is one policy document that covers migration, labor, economic participation, education, culture, and health.

8. Inter-ministerial cooperation: Somewhat

The policy document was adopted by the Council of Ministers and therefore should be integrated within the polices of each ministry. The Youth Forum for Youth Policy also advocates for inter-

ministerial cooperation. However, the reality of Lebanon's political system renders inter-ministerial cooperation difficult for implement any national government policy. This is due to the fact that ministries are divided by diverse political groups who have no unified policies regarding development.

9. A separate budget: Somewhat

The Youth Forum for Youth Policy has been advocating the Prime Minister Office to establish a separate youth budget line with the Ministry of Finance. However, the government has resigned and a new government is in the process of formation. This has prevented the adoption of a budget for 2013 and therefore the necessary modifications for the budget lines.

10. Established links between local, regional and national levels: NO

The youth policy focuses recommendations on the national level that are directed towards the Council of Ministers, Ministries, and Parliament. The policy calls out for balanced development in the regions, but even this call is directed towards the central government. The policy does not clarify the role of local authorities in implementing the policy. However, this is not necessarily a flaw in the youth policy per se as the nature of the Lebanese government is a centralized one. The power of the public sector lies mostly with the centralized government at the national level, and any effective policy needs to be adopted at this level.

4.3 Case Study: Inclusion of Young PWD in Lebanon

Ensuring the social inclusiveness of policies is preemptive to reduce the risk of systematically marginalizing social groups both intentionally and unintentionally. It is therefore important to adopt a comprehensive approach to social inclusion as a "process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities - that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to public services as well as enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives" (UNDESA, 2009).

In this regard, UNESCO has developed a methodology of assessment of public policies in terms of social inclusiveness (2013), which was tested in 9 countries including Lebanon. Some of the indicators are related to the political and civic participation of citizens. In Lebanon, a specific emphasis was given to young Persons with Disability (PWD).

The present case study sheds light on the role of young PWD within Disabled Persons Organizations (DPO) and service providing associations to increase the social inclusiveness of PWD.

Case Study Objectives and Methodology

This qualitative survey was developed to better understand the current challenges and opportunities of DPOs and CSOs working with young PWD on the following points:

1. The inclusion of young PWD in any advocacy or decision-making process within the organization;
2. The level of interest in working with young PWD including understanding the importance of their inclusion in society and the reasons behind their exclusion;
3. The existence of any programs, services, or research specifically offered to young PWD;
4. The existence of any advocacy efforts aimed at policy change affecting young PWD.

The survey consisted of 30-60 minute consultations with 10 relevant NGOs⁴ working in the field and dealing with young PWD, selected based on:

1. Equal geographic distribution across the Lebanese territory;
2. Working directly with young PWD or on young PWD issues;
3. Having implemented a project/program specifically targeting young PWD over the past two years;
4. Having conducted advocacy work for PWD over the past two years.

The consultations were guided by the following open ended questions:

Table 3: The Questions of the Survey on the Inclusion of Young PWD

#	Objective	Questions
1	Defining the problem	1.1 - How would you define the challenges of social inclusion that young PWD are facing in Lebanon?
		1.2 - What are the causes that lead to the exclusion of young PWD?
		1.3 - What consequences does the exclusion of young PWD have on society, directly and indirectly?
		1.4 - Have you conducted or do you know of any research related to young PWD?
2	Type of work/process with young PWD	2.1 - What work do you do benefitting/targeting young PWD?
		2.2 - How do you involve young PWD in planning, implementing, or evaluating the work you do? Is this involvement institutionalized?
3	Identifying policy options	3.1 - What are some policy changes (political will/legal/Institutional/financing) that you believe would help increase the inclusion young PWD?
4	Needs and support	4.1 - Which types of training and support are needed to strengthen the capacity of young PWD in advocacy?

Findings

Although it is a small scale and qualitative survey, the findings shed light on the current challenges and opportunities for DPOs/CSOs with regards to the social inclusion of young PWD and their specific leadership role in the advocacy.

In fact, the survey results show that the NGO sector in Lebanon sees an urgent need to address the issues of PWD by the government in a serious and coordinated manner. Even with slight improvements over the past few years, both policies and culture are far from becoming inclusive. Young PWD are

Labor market quotas should be a temporary measure to introduce PWD into the market. On the long run, there should be no need for quotas because working is a normal activity for PWD and should not require a law to enforce it – Dr. *Moussa Charafeddine, Friends of the Disabled.*

⁴ The participating NGOs included: Al Hadi Institute for Deaf & Blind Children, Father Roberts Association, Friends of the Disabled, Kafaat Association, LCDP- Lebanese Council of Disabled People, Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped, Mousawat Association, Ray of Hope Association, The Learning Center for the Deaf (LCD), YAB- Youth Association of the Blind.

currently excluded from the educational system and labor market that is preventing them from fulfilling their roles as active and productive members of society.

Any effort to tackle the inclusion of young PWD requires a two way intervention; one that ensures the rights are protect by law and its enforcement while the other works on shifting the cultural view of PWD towards one of acceptance and inclusion.

Although there are an number of NGOs working with young PWD, these young people are rarely offered a chance to take on a leadership role within these organizations and within the advocacy movement at a national level.

At the level of the government, it seems that passing the 220/2000 law that protects the rights of PWD was not accompanied by a comprehensive national policy and sufficient political will. This has proven to be a major obstacle in implementing the law as it requires close coordination between several ministries and public entities. In terms of advocacy training and support, young PWD today need to see some practical concrete improvements resulting from these efforts. They need to believe that advocacy can improve their lives before taking on a leadership role within any movement.

5. Useful Policy Tools

There are a number of policy tools developed and tested by international development agencies, researchers and CSOs. This section provides a review of 5 policy tools which may help decision-makers, civil society organizations, and researchers to better address the issues of social inclusion, policy-making, and democratic participation of youth.

Each of the five selected tools covers a different area that was tackled in this background paper. They were chosen based on their relevance to the topic and their recent use (4 out of the 5 were taken from papers and reports that were published in 2013). The tools cover the use of youth inclusion research in policy analysis, assessing the level of inclusiveness of public policies, youth democratic participation, the rights-based approach to social exclusion, and the development process of national youth policies.

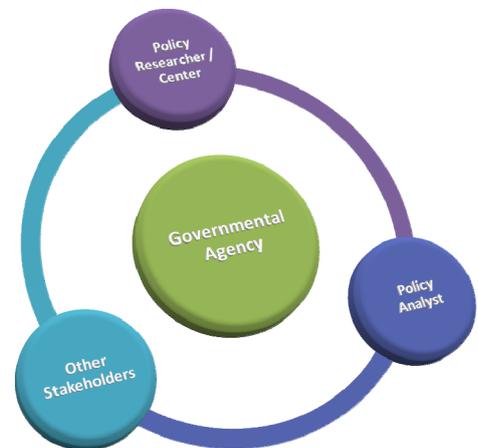
5.1 The Use of Youth Inclusion Research in Policy Analysis

Youth Inclusion is context specific and differs from country to country, city to city, and neighborhood to neighborhood. In order for research tackling the multidimensionality of youth inclusion to be effective, it should be incorporated within the policy-making process at the national and sub-national levels and not only the international one.

Understanding the Policy Community

To Understand the role of research in policy-making, it is crucial to understand the policy community. Governmental agencies, whether national or sub-national, adopt their policies based on the recommendations of the policy analysts they refer to. Policy analysts, though do not conduct any primary research themselves, review all available research that is produced by policy researchers and policy research centers (Young, 2002). The lack of research at the national and sub-national levels regarding youth inclusion renders the process of designing policy more difficult by policy analysts. If we are looking for evidence-based policy-making that is cross-sectoral, the research community needs to produce local studies on youth inclusion that are multidimensional with indicators that policy-makers can use in assessing the impact of policy.

Figure 1: The Policy Community (Young, 2002)



Policy Cycle

Policy analysts go through the policy cycle in order to recommend and design policy options that are evidence-based (Young, 2002). This section will present what type of research is needed for the different steps of the policy cycle.

Research plays a vital role in defining public issues. It is important to answer key questions such as: Is this issue caused by social exclusion? What are the consequences of this issue on the vulnerable groups? What are the effects of this given issue on the other dimensions of social exclusion?

Once policy analysts identify the different policy alternatives, research is necessary to evaluate which alternative to choose based on:

1. whether the alternative tackles the root causes of the public issue at hand;
2. the cost/benefit analysis of each policy alternative;
3. the ramifications of the policy alternatives on other sectors and social groups.

An additional factor that should be added to the selection criteria is the impact of the policy alternatives on social inclusion. In case a policy option has a negative impact on inclusion, the policy design should reduce that negative impact to the minimum through the available tools (legislation, rule of law, fiscal policy, and government investments). This should be translated into measurable indicators that are monitored during the implementation phase of the policy and during the evaluation phase.

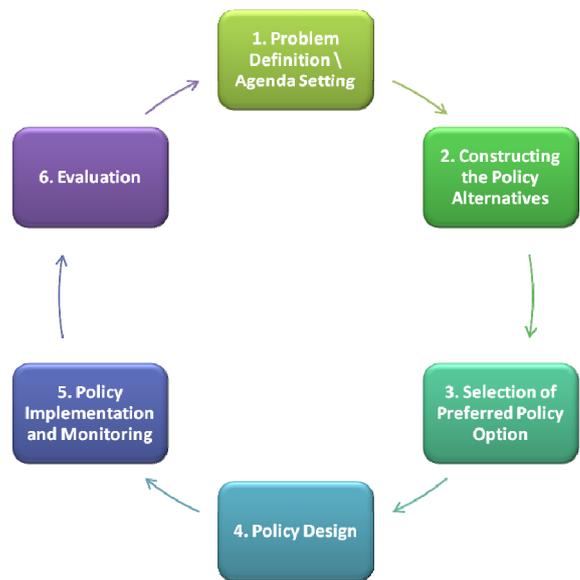


Figure 2: The Policy Cycle (Young, 2002)

The above process applies to all evidence-based policy for all the sectors at a national and sub-national level. Designing policy specifically for youth can lead to negative effects as stated by Silver “Sometimes, even social assistance and youth insertion programs can produce exclusion through stigmatization of participants” (Silver, 2007). Dealing with the consequences of youth exclusion through youth targeted programs is not enough. Local and national governments should take exclusion factors into consideration in any policy they adopt as a preemptive measure to avoid additional exclusion.

A good source on the evidence-based approach to policy-making is a guide developed by the Youth Economic Forum in Lebanon for “Effective Public Policy Engagement for Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon”, available at: http://www.yef-lb.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/YEF%20Policy%20Guide_ENG.pdf

5.2 Methodology for the Assessment of the Level of Inclusiveness of Public Policies

UNESCO is currently in the process of testing and finalizing a methodology for the assessment of the level of inclusiveness of public policies. The design of the programme and the development of this methodology was initiated in the beginning of this biennium, in January 2012 as social inclusion has been adopted as one of the thematic priorities of MOST (UNESCO, 2013).

The methodology will be developed in two phases (UNESCO, 2013):

1. The first phase consists in elaborating the present preliminary document, incorporating expert feedback by concerned UNESCO Sectors and Services and the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformations (IGC MOST) Programme. This preliminary document will be piloted in 9 countries, in 3 regions, up to September 2013. The pilot phases focuses on disability as per the collective choice of the Field Offices managing the national policy reviews.
2. The second phase consists in revising and finalizing the preliminary document so that it can be adapted to apply to any policy area (by developing specific indicators) with focus on any population group. The final draft will be based on:
 - lessons learned, practices and findings of the nine country pilots;
 - comments made on the application of the methodology;
 - feedback received by reviewers.

This phase would be completed by the fourth quarter of 2013.

5.3 Enhancing Youth Democratic Participation Throughout the Electoral Cycle

In January 2013, UNDP developed a good practice guide on enhancing youth political participation throughout the electoral cycle. In addition to an number of good practice examples mentioned, the guide also suggests practical policy changes that will increase democratic participation. The below strategies should be considered by governments and youth advocates (UNDP, 2013):

Legal Framework

1. National governments and Parliaments
 - Align the minimum voting age with the minimum age of eligibility to run for office
 - Consider the introduction of youth and women's quotas in electoral laws
 - Identify and address context-specific legal barriers to youth participation
2. CSOs and Political Parties
 - Review and discuss the legal framework for youth participation
 - Consider calling for a youth-friendly legal framework
 - Campaign and lobby for proposed changes
3. International Development Agencies
 - Conduct research on an enabling legal framework
 - Provide technical advice to governments
 - Support dialogue and consultation processes on youth-friendly legal frameworks

Pre-Electoral Period

1. International Agencies and CSOs
 - Encourage continuous youth participation and civic education in schools and universities
 - Design training programmes as incubators for new projects
 - Support youth-led community development and volunteering organizations
 - Provide flexible support to innovative, small-scale youth projects
 - Bridge the digital divide with mobile phones and radio
 - Use online platforms for knowledge sharing and networking
2. International Agencies and Political Parties
 - Encourage affirmative action measures such as youth and women's quotas
 - Support the development of strong political party youth wings
 - Develop the capacities of young members in a multi-partisan setting
 - Address training and mentoring needs of young women separately

Electoral Period

1. International Agencies, Election Monitoring Bodies (EMBs), and CSOs
 - Ensure youth participation in all phases of voter education campaigns
 - Use entertaining methods and multimedia strategies to catch the attention of youth
 - Include youth on EMB advisory boards, and as poll station workers and election observers
 - Develop interactive online tools to reach out to young voters

Post-Electoral Period

1. International Agencies, Parliaments, Governments and CSOs
 - Help ensure that voices of youth are heard in Parliament and government
 - Facilitate youth-led national youth councils/parliaments
 - Invite youth groups to visit national parliaments
 - Initiate internship schemes for students in parliaments
 - Train and support young members of parliament
 - Initiate and support youth councils at local levels

The full guide is available at: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/electoral_systemsandprocesses/enhancing-youth-political-participation-throughout-the-electoral/

5.4 A Rights-based Approach to Social Exclusion

The theme of the UNDP's Regional Human Development Report for Europe and Central Asia in 2011 was "Beyond Transition, Towards Inclusive Societies". The report includes important policy tools and lessons learned from the European and Central Asian the region. One of the most important tools in the report is the rights-based approach to social exclusion.

Inclusion of the perspectives of marginalized groups in policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is valuable not only for the democratization of the policy process or the social conditions of the former groups, but also for the improvement of their knowledge of society, and increased buy-in and internationalization of the

chosen course of action. For initiating and sustaining such participatory policy processes, the human rights-based approach is an important tool (UNESCO, 2013).

Table 4: The Rights-based Approach to Social Exclusion

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to development uses the conceptual and analytical strength of human rights to analyze and address various forms of inequality and exclusion in political, economic or social terms. As a development framework, it is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.

The HRBA moves development action from the optional realm of benevolence (or charity) into the mandatory realm of law. It changes the focus from regarding people as passive beneficiaries of state policies to active participants in their own development and further recognizes them as rights-holders, thereby placing them at the centre of the development process. The HRBA addresses the 'what' question: what practices and policies constitute the building blocks of exclusion and what needs to be changed. It focuses on analyzing the inequalities, discriminatory practices, and unjust power relations that are the root causes of human rights and development challenges, and the processes that exacerbate exclusion and ultimately may lead to social fragmentation and conflict.

In addition, the HRBA addresses the 'who' question by specifically focusing on groups subjected to discrimination and suffering from disadvantages and exclusion. Such groups include children, minorities and women. The twin principles of non-discrimination and equality call for a focus on gender equality and women's human rights in all development programmes. With respect to identifying the necessary measures that need to be taken – the 'how' question comes into play. In this regard, the HRBA emphasizes participation at every stage of the programming process, particularly of those who are being disadvantaged. It also emphasizes the accountability of the State and its institutions with regard to respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights within its jurisdiction.

Source: (UNDP, 2011) -), Regional Human Development Report "Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies", available at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/regional/europethecis/RBEC_HDR_2011_EN.pdf

5.5 The Development Process of National Youth Policies

In a report published by the Council of Europe in 2009, Finn Yrjar Denstad defined national youth policy as the government's commitment and practice towards ensuring good living conditions and opportunities for the young population of a country. It can be more or less targeted, weaker or stronger, narrow or wide-ranging. He also states that a youth policy is not necessarily articulated in a specific strategy document, although preferable, but can be a set of established policy practices or rooted in a number of different documents, which together determine how a government deals with issues that address young people (Denstad, 2009).

Assessing any national youth policy in the region requires a closer look at the development process of the policy itself. The UN Programme on Youth suggests the following guidelines to look at:

1. Participation for an inclusive process
2. Knowing the situation and conducting a needs analysis
3. Define vulnerable groups
4. Understanding the available resources
5. Establishing a budget allocated for implementation of youth policy
6. Learning from past experience
7. Developing a clear vision to implement youth policy
8. Creating an institutional structure conducive to implementation of youth policy
9. Engaging in partnerships for action
10. Increase knowledge and design better programmes through monitoring and evaluation

Based on the European experience and similar to the UN Programme on Youth, Denstad identifies the necessary requirements of an effective and modern national youth policy as having (Denstad, 2009):

1. A clearly defined government authority on youth
2. A clearly defined target group
3. A concrete and transparent strategy
4. A knowledge-based policy
5. Young people as a resource, not a problem
6. The Promotion of youth participation
7. A cross-sectoral, integrated approach to youth policy
8. Inter-ministerial co-operation
9. A separate budget
10. Established links between local, regional and national levels

As the background paper focuses on youth inclusion, an important aspect to look at in the assessment of national youth policies in the Arab region is youth participation in the process of policy development itself. The UN Programme on Youth has identified different levels of participation finding that the higher the level of participation, the more control, influence and responsibility young people will have on the outcomes:

- Level 1 – Information providing: youth are informed of the policy and activities that have been decided on by decision-makers.
- Level 2 – Consulting, decision maker-initiated: decision makers decide when and on which topics youth are consulted.
- Level 3 – Consulting, youth-initiated: youth can put subjects forward, but have no decision-making powers.
- Level 4 – Shared decision-making or co-management: elders and young people share decision-making powers.
- Level 5 – Autonomy: young people take initiative and conduct projects themselves.

In assessing the content of the national youth policies through a rights-based approach, the Guide to the Implementation of the World Programme of Action on Youth suggests that we look at the following elements (UNDESA, 2006):

1. Express linkages to rights
2. Accountability and rule of law
3. Empowerment
4. Participation and inclusion
5. Non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups

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