



EuroMed Youth III Programme



INTRODUCING YOUTH POLICIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES-IN BRIEF



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The third phase of the **Euromed Youth Programme*** (Euro-Med Youth III), funded by the European Commission (DG EuropeAid) and launched in October 2005, is a regional Programme set up within the framework of the third chapter of the Barcelona Process '*Partnership on Social, Cultural and Human Affairs*'. The overall objectives of the Euro-Med Youth Programme are to promote intercultural dialogue among young people within the Euro-Mediterranean region, motivate active citizenship as well as to contribute to the development of youth policy.

The overall aim of the studies undertaken in **Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey** on Youth Policies, was to be a reference tool which would give all stakeholders in the field of youth, as well as youth project organisers, an overview of the situation of young people and of provisions available for them in the 10 partner countries. The objectives were to identify whether there was a Youth Policy, legislation or any other national strategy addressing the needs of youth and what kind of provision was made through non-formal education and youth work in the relevant partner countries.

Research for the studies was carried out by 7 experts and involved gathering of information, during a 5-month period, on basis of available written materials and resources, and as a result of missions to the studied countries to interview relevant youth authorities, organisations and young people individually or through focus groups.

The outcomes of the studies, each produced in a report format following a common structure for all the ten studies, give an enlightening overview of the definition and situation of youth in the Mediterranean partner countries. The studies focused on young people's rights and entitlements as active citizens, such as opportunities to vote, get elected and contribute to the decision-making process; the challenges faced by youth such as unemployment, immigration, housing, marriage, generational and cultural conflict, young women's place in society; young people's reactions in response to such challenges and description of provision for leisure-time activities and non-formal education through governmental and/or non-governmental youth institutions and organisations.

A reading of all the studies shows that a national youth policy is not yet fully implemented in any of the partner countries. However, each of them has a number of national directives, legislations, policies and/or strategies to address youth issues, usually at cross-sector level, even if youth are not, in some cases, recognised as a priority. The definition of youth varies from country to country, sometimes even within the same country depending on the responsible national authority. Non-formal education has no, or limited, place in most of the studied countries, formal education being the main priority of national authorities. The Euromed Youth Programme is assessed positively and considered to be an essential tool for the promotion of youth work and non-formal education.

Each report, published individually, provides a factual background on youth issues on basis of information collated by the relevant researchers. In addition, one document bringing together the executive summaries from each of the ten studies has been also produced to highlight an overview on the situation of youth within the Mediterranean region.

* www.euromedyouth.net

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1. ALGERIA

The demographic effect of the youth omnipresence generates symbolic representations of young people in Algeria, either as an asset for the country or as a burden. Today, the Algerian youth is socially considered through the mirror of the social crisis. To define an Algerian young person necessarily means to recognise some elements such as generalisation of secondary education, the actual increase in the age of marriage for both sexes (around 30 years old) and a delayed and difficult access to first employment and to accommodation. To be a young Algerian also consists of a multiple, plural cultural identification. It is at the same time an urban culture made up of innovations (e.g. the *rai* and rap music, etc.) and of finding their roots (e.g. different kinds of 'chaabi' music depending on the region). To be a young Algerian means to be open to the modern technologies of communication such as the internet and mobile phones, but with a high sensitivity to familial solidarity. Thus, there is not just one Algerian youth but several Algerian youths.

According to the estimates, 10.7 million young people (aged 15-29) live in Algeria, which corresponds to 30% of the overall population. Net enrolment rate for primary education is 95% and that of secondary education is slightly higher than 60%. This ratio goes down to 20% for higher education. Young women play an important role: most of the successful candidates to the '*Baccalauréat*' in 2008 were girls (67% of the overall accepted candidates). Young people below 30 are the main victims of unemployment, representing 72% of all unemployed people. When they have jobs, nearly 77% of them do not have national insurance even though it is compulsory in Algeria. This is due to the fact that the informal sector is the main employer of young Algerians. Juvenile delinquency generated by the development of social inequalities and poverty is on the increase. Accordingly gangs or violent groups appear, especially in the urban areas.

Young people have a pluralistic vision of the Algerian culture(s), somewhere between tradition and modernity. Most young people do still have important familial and religious solidarities, progressively absorbed by the dominant urban culture, open to cultures from the West as from the East and to new technologies. Language and religion are the two factors of cultural identity in Algeria and have passed through tensions, revolts, tragedies and political manipulations over the past two decades. The main leisure channels of youth are sports, television, music, cinema, internet, video games and reading (mainly newspapers). These practices differ between the privileged and urban youth and youth of modest and rural conditions.

The main challenge faced by Algeria is to provide support to youth. Over 70% of the population is under 30 years old, which explains the challenges regarding training, education, vocational counselling, employment, accommodation, sanitary prevention, access to leisure activities, to new technologies, to culture and sports. Emigrating is a dream of millions of young Algerians. According to a 2002 survey, nearly 37% of young people aged 15-29 (43.5% of young men and 29.1% of young women) plan to emigrate in order to find a job, attend training, and get a better standard

of living. This is a genuine social phenomenon, shared by both urban and rural youth, and a real challenge for Algeria and its bordering European countries, as reported by the unfortunate phenomenon of '*harragas*' or '*kamikazes*', i.e. young people who try to reach the Italian or Spanish coasts by boarding small boats. This phenomenon reveals how deep the feelings of despair and abandonment are for young Algerians. Other matters which endanger the Algerian youth are using drugs, leaving school, lack of sanitary protection, violence and delinquency.

The Algerian Constitution guarantees the right to education, which is free, universal and compulsory until the age of 16. The Labour Code allows young Algerians to work after being 16 years old. Minimum age to get married had been set to 18 for men and 16 for young women. The age of civil majority is 19, which also refers to voting and exercising civil rights. The institutional approach defines youth mainly through biological categories, limited by age. Each institution has different categories: for example, the Ministry of Employment defines youth from 18 to 35 years old, whereas the Ministry of Youth and Sports considers the age group as 18-30. Nevertheless, most policy makers refer to youth as those under the age of 30.

There is a multiplicity of public actors dealing with youth issues in Algeria. The main sectors of investment are education and training, in which three ministries intervene simultaneously: the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Vocational Training. The Ministry of Youth and Sports is the main institutional actor in the development of youth policy with other specialised actors such as the Ministries of Employment, Solidarity, National Education, Culture or Justice.

In October 2007, the government dedicated its biennial meeting of Government and *Walīs* (governors) to youth policy, during which two objectives were underlined: to examine how policies are relevant and able to address youth concerns and to respond satisfactorily to their expectations; and to define the content and main lines of a coherent and integrated policy in its vision towards youth, with a participatory approach. This was the first conference on youth organised by the Algerian state, the outcomes of which were the identification of six lines of actions: expectations of youth; education, training, learning and access to knowledge; employment and socio-professional integration of young people; integration of youth in the social environment; fighting against deviant acts and social evils; and a multi-sectoral approach to youth issues ensuring consistency between the various institutional approaches. In addition, two programmes dealing with youth unemployment were adopted in 2008: one dedicated to young graduates and the other focusing on giving young people, who do not have any degree and did not receive any vocational training, the opportunity to get their first job.

Hundreds of local and national associations exist in the youth sector, most of which work on social development or childhood and youth matters. The associations' influence remains modest not only because of the weakness of financial and material resources, but also because of the lack of training and isolation of the associative activities. It is only since 1989 that a new, more liberal law has been governing associations and therefore, it has only been a short decade since the association movement has developed and structured. There is no local or national youth council in Algeria, nor is there any federation of associations involved in the youth sector. There are, however, more and more networks of associations of young people, which are getting organised at local or regional levels.

The civil society potential, the start of cooperation and partnerships between the structures of the state and of the associations bode well for the reinforcement of the Algerian associative sphere in youth matters. The requests for proposals come from the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as from the Euromed Youth Programme or from the NGOs' plan of action (with the Ministry of National Solidarity), directly or indirectly to contribute to the development of associative frameworks and convey a project culture in practices of non-formal education and development of associations.

There are some international support mechanisms, working to support Algerian civil associations of development, such as the European Union's cooperation with the Algerian government and other bilateral mechanisms with countries such as France.

Regarding the perceptions of actors involved in youth related policies, the public authorities acknowledge that national policies have not always reached the expectations of youth and lacked effectiveness and consistency because of the lack of mechanisms for consultation and coordination of the various institutions dealing with youth issues. The opinion polls carried out on youth expectations confirmed this observation of relationship disconnection between youth and action by public authorities. One of the important issues raised by the representatives of organisations is the relationships between civil society, NGOs and the state, emphasising the need for cooperation, and partnership between government and the associations. Others denote the need for public subsidies, and the need for the associations to be autonomous and independent. The concern of the majority lies in the realisation of actions, such as the development of inter-associative cooperation, the establishment of municipal centres for drug prevention, and the facilitation of relationships between associations and public authorities. From the young people's perspective, their loss of hope and failure to communicate are their biggest problems.

In conclusion, few people recognise the presence of a youth policy in Algeria, but refer to the priority given to sports. Indeed, actions and schemes do exist, but there is no policy, no comprehensive vision in the medium- or long-term. Youth related policies tend to move towards being inter-sectoral and general. Public action for youth cross-cuts various areas: unemployment, job training, drug prevention, non-formal education and sports. There is not yet any inter-ministerial coordination for youth issues. In addition, there is no perception of any strategy that takes the resources and problems into account and that establishes priorities for youth matters. However, the outcomes of the conference on youth policy were positively received, because it gave the highest Algerian authorities the opportunity to realise the actual situation of youth in Algeria and especially to observe a situation that gets characterised by a *"gap between the young Algerian generations and institutions and public authorities"*. In addition, a local policy with national guidelines adapted to each region is requested. A political vision and the will to act on young people, who represent a large section of the Algerian society, as well as the implementation of youth related policies, are also demanded. There is also a need for the development of research about Algerian youth, as there are very few studies, research, and resources available on youth issues. Despite the political importance of the matter, only a limited number of academic or scientific works have been published, most of which are based on the themes linked to the understanding of social relationships between young people and traditional social institutions such as family or the cultural or linguistic heritage.

2. MOROCCO

It is difficult to speak of the Moroccan youth population in general because of the important inequalities of the Moroccan population. About 40% of national wealth is concentrated in 1% of the territory; 45% of the population still live in rural areas. And there are very difficult conditions of living in some rural areas and parts of urban sectors. PNUD statistics put Morocco on the 124th rank over 177 countries for human development.

Currently, Morocco has a population of 33.5 million inhabitants. Nowadays, the yearly growth rate is 1.2% and the fertility index 2.1 children per woman, while a generation ago, it was 7-9 children. Today, 20% of the population is in the 15-25 years old bracket. The full effect of the decrease of fertility will be felt only by 2015, because of the lapse of demographic transition.

This situation brings a challenge for education and employment. The state now devotes 30% of the national budget to education, which is its second priority since 1999, when the National Education and Training Charter was adopted. But Morocco still has the highest rate of illiteracy in North Africa: 50% of the population and 36% of the young adults. The aim is to reach 5% by 2035.

One of the consequences of the high number of young people is the growing need for jobs and housing. Since 1970, there is a housing shortage for youth and the poor. Many young people still live with their family after they are 30, even if they have a job. Youth unemployment is expanding and while young people were a production force within the family in previous generations, they are today considered a "burden" in urban areas. Another problem comes from the number of young single women with children in the cities.

The main problem is the unemployment of young university graduates. About 60% of young people with university degrees are unemployed, while 30% are without a job, and only 8% of those who do not hold any diploma. The general rate of unemployment for the Moroccan population is 15%. Privatisation of the economy does not offer enough jobs and there is a strong demand for jobs in the public sector, which the state cannot afford.

Young people are very fond of computers and information technologies. For 95% of youth in the cities, Internet is the main occupation of their free time, at home or in cyber cafes. They are particularly keen in modern music, such as rap or hip hop, even in rural areas. There is still a "digital gap" over the territory but computer use is spreading everywhere. Since 1990, one notices the role of civil society and the role of many associations which help the youth to deal with computers. A number of educated young people come back to rural areas and invest themselves with this kind of practices more than in politics, as before. They are open to international customs and begin to take power over the older people in the villages. They like to deal with collective modern goods, like electricity or computers. They go to rural schools to help the teachers to use computers. This is a good example of volunteering.

The hobbies practised by the young people are more sportive than cultural. For 70% of the boys, football is a national past time; only 12% have cultural hobbies. Only 30% of young women practise a sport.

One of the most important reforms of King Mohamed VI, adopted in 2004, is the reform of the "Code of personal status", which fights against inequality between men and women. It defines the status of women and family. In this new code, the Moroccan state distances itself from the religious tradition. Islam remains omnipresent but is represented by the monarchy more than by the religious authority.

These new laws are difficult to implement due to the lack of social and institutional framework and resistance from the society. A range of discriminations still exist against young women.

Because of rapid urbanisation, a problem of identity has existed for the young people since the 1970s and 1980s. The lack of jobs marginalizes many of them. They feel robbed of a future and of support. Many of them float between "drugs and piety". They constitute an easy pray for radical Islamism or deviant behaviours. This new religious and political Islam takes often over many responsibilities in education and housing, as a solution against social ills. The Moroccan state tries to eliminate deviant behaviours and relies on the associative network.

Institutional and legislative provisions are related to the rights of the youth and their interests. The main feature is the New National Youth Policy (NPNJ), which was adopted in 2003. It constitutes the framework of a global plan for young people, children and women.

A specific form of justice has been created for minors, with special judges and 22 reform centres built all over the country.

The main authority in charge of the New National Youth Policy is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It is helped by three other Ministries: Childhood Affairs, Female Affairs and the Interior. Local and national authorities and elected officials are involved in action plans against social insecurity and exclusion. The funds for this policy attain less than 1% of the budget because these actions must yet prove their efficiency. The two main priorities are to modernise establishments devoted to young people (summer camps, youth centres, housing), and to increase institutions which help young people to find a place within society. However, there is no National Youth Council in Morocco.

Since 2003, one of the main projects of Moroccan youth policy has been the "vacation for all" programme, dealing with youth associations and children. It mobilises all year long all sectors of the State Bureau in Charge of Youth (SECJ) which is part of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In July 2005, King Mohamed VI wanted to promote a transversal strategy for young people and against poverty: the National Human Development Initiative (INDH). This brand new programme fights social insecurity and exclusion and helps the associative network, under the coordination of the Ministry of the Interior.

Non-formal education and youth work offer activities devoted to free time. These include formal activities such as technology and computer courses, language and literacy courses. Today there are 440 such associations, the number having doubled in the past four years. They host many clubs dealing with music, cinema, literature and sport.

Young people working in these associations can be trained at the Continued Education Institute (IFC) after their majority; 22,000 girls and boys have been trained since 2003, not a sufficient number in response to today's huge needs. This training involves skill development, exchanging effective methods and developing youth policy. The 2007 action plan of the SECJ aims to reinforce dialogue with youth organisations and to involve them in the preparation of the various activities of the youth centres and club activities.

There are some difficulties in recognising volunteer work in Morocco. The INDH programme wants to include formal institutional recognition of volunteer work in the future.

Another priority of the 2007 plan is young people's access to information on rights and opportunities; 92 youth info booths have been created in youth centres, especially in isolated rural areas. The National Youth Documentation and Information Centre in Rabat provides excellent information tools, but requires Internet experience to be used.

The status of youth associations and non-governmental organisations (NGO) allows some of them to be recognised and to receive funds, after the reform of the law on associations in 2002 and the decrees of 2005. The non-profit associations which are recognised by the state must fulfil a general public service mission and may receive financial assistance. On an estimation of 38,000 associations, only 8,400 hold this privileged status. Their use of funds is highly controlled. Associations receiving foreign assistance must inform the government.

In Morocco, three kinds of associations can be identified today: large national associations that work with all kinds of people and rely on a vast network of unpaid volunteers trained internally. Beside them, there are new associations, created after the terrorist attacks in Casablanca in 2003, which are devoted to development and offer targeted activities. Their young leaders deal with international foundations. These associations are very successful among the youth population. The last ones are small neighbourhood associations, working mainly with youth at-risk, which find it difficult to recruit members and leaders.

There are also about 700 "foyers" for women, of which 300 in rural areas. Managed by the Ministry of Female Affairs, they offer social and medical services to young women and help them to find jobs mainly in non qualified sectors.

The large associations are gathered in federations and national youth unions. The National Institute for Youth and Democracy brings together young delegates elected for one year.

Other youth initiatives are quite popular, as literary coffee hours (25,000 young people participating), reading at the beach (35,000), reading hour (800 forums with 380,000 young participants).

Only 10 to 15% of young Moroccans are members of an association. This low number comes from the lack of official recognition of this type of activity, without any diploma or any kind of awards. There is also a gap between youth's expectations and activities offered. The centres want a permanent commitment while young people do not like to be engaged in the medium or long term.

The Euromed Youth Programme of the European Commission has an important place. Morocco is the first Mediterranean country with a decentralised follow-up programme. Provincial delegations of the Ministry of Youth and Sports are in charge of information towards associations and organise informal sessions all over the country; thus within a year, the number of submitted proposals for projects has increased significantly. Furthermore, training sessions are organised by the Rabat Unit to help associations in methodology and in dealing with the financial tasks of the projects, which remain complex. Even if the number of selected projects is rather low, the Ministry considers this partnership as the most successful example of international cooperation. Participants benefit greatly from the intercultural contacts, which represent a bridge for young people on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. A truly successful partnership is expected by the authorities, which also regret the strict restrictions of visas for young people of the south.

Many other international organisations and foreign embassies, especially Francophone countries, organise and help funding youth activities, in partnership with associations.

In conclusion, the Moroccan youth policy is marked with paradoxes. The decision-makers have enhanced the quality of youth infrastructures and leaders' skills, but the association networks are at a turning point because young leaders need more recognition and professional training. The young people are also split in their wishes. Many of them want to go abroad, but the restrictive visa policies are a major obstacle. Regarding the youth network, they are both attracted by youth infrastructures and support and rebelled against obedience and tradition. They wish to play an active role within society. Their values are more universal than before and religion still has a major influence on them. They wait for a more clear youth policy with a global approach.

3. TUNISIA

Tunisia has a special place in the Arab world due to the voluntary family-centred policy reform from President Bourguiba, upon independence in 1956, with the Code of personal status for women's rights which promoted equality between men and women. Youth is now plural, crossed by dividing lines such as the use of internet and the gender gap.

Tunisia counts 11,410,000 inhabitants and young people represent 18.2% of the population. This massive presence of young people born in the 1970-1980 shows an influence that has never been and will never again be as important. The declining fertility rate is contributing to the legal and economic emancipation of Tunisian women, as much as the code of personal status, even if, within the private sphere, the core of familial dependence has largely remained.

Due to this "demographic revolution", education is a challenge and wants to position itself between tradition and modernity. With the "Charfi" reform in 1989, the relation between Muslim tradition and education system is defined in terms of belonging to an evolving culture and the Islamic education is becoming "Islamic thought". This means that youth has to study Islam as a religion of tolerance as well as a distinct culture.

Girls' education, even though it has progressed, remains subject to persistent cultural barriers. The rate of economically-active females in the total population remains very low. They remain very poorly represented in positions of authority. They are also subject to stereotypes regarding the role they must occupy in the workplace and in the public sphere. Their emancipation brings tensions. Major taboo or censure regarding sexuality prevents them to live outside the family home.

Today, work is a major problem for youth. Tunisian youth no longer plays the role it had previously, after the independence, of transforming society. There is a growing incomprehension between the adult world and the youth world. Urbanisation, schooling, expansion of the service sector, all these phenomena brought individualism and changed ways of living.

The use of the Internet is of great importance in both rural and urban areas. Cyber-cafes are meeting places as well as a window on the world. This marks a strong difference with those who cannot access to these technologies. The Tunisian state has the political will to multiply access to the Internet for formal as well as informal education.

The urban/rural dichotomy lost its meaning with the state penetration in rural areas but rural youth, often with a good education, fail to find a job corresponding to their level of education. Sometimes, it may happen that young people without any qualification invest themselves in micro projects in agriculture, with the help of associations.

Tunisia faces overpopulation and enrolment in universities grew 16 fold between 1981 and 2001. There is a tendency towards privatisation of higher education. About 5% of North African students study outside their countries, compared to 2% in the rest of the world. The Tunisian state grants funds for education abroad but this produces a greater form of discrimination. Moreover, access to European and American Universities is more and more difficult for economic and security reasons.

Major progress was made in Tunisia regarding health: life expectancy has risen to 73.6% in 2006, the rate of infant mortality has fallen from 54% in 1984 to 20.3% in 2006. Fight against contagious diseases has been successful, but fight against AIDS is not easy, particularly among the homosexual population, since homosexuality is forbidden by law. The number of young people using drugs keeps increasing. Another new problem concerns young single mothers, who live in a serious social and cultural state of isolation.

Rural exodus and the demographic transition have created a need for housing and this is a major issue for society. Despite large construction efforts, this shortage affects primarily young people and contributes to inter-generational tensions. The necessary late cohabitation of parents with their children is exasperated by unemployment problems.

The role of religion is important on the production of ideas and is not separated from modernity. It represents a major characteristic of the youth personal identity. Young people also become familiar with the outside world, Europe particularly. Some of them, in spite of the difficulty to get visas, consider the Western model as synonymous of liberty, emancipation of women. Others reject this model and consider it to be a form of cultural aggression. They are partisans of a radical form of Islam, more political than that of their fathers.

Youth is recognized as a priority since the Declaration of 7 September 1987. The young people can hold a seat in elected committees. The fourth consultation of youth is now organized by the "Observatoire National de la Jeunesse" (National Youth Observatory) for the 11th development Plan as part of a larger dialogue with young people.

The age of majority is 18, as well as the age of criminal responsibility. Boys must carry out their military service at the age of 20, for one year, but they can obtain a dispensation if they make a financial contribution. Judges for children were created in November 2004. The promulgation of the child protection code and the creation of an institution in charge of general interest protect the children.

Due to the increase in the number of years of education, youth today is comprised of subgroups and the institutional approach is cross-sectored, not only the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Physical Education but also the Ministry of Women, Children and Family, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice and, as well as, the Ministry of Interior. Since 2002, a National Youth Observatory (ONJ) organises regular consultations, information sessions, and studies and promotes a better knowledge of the Tunisian youth.

About 1.5% of the state global budget is devoted to the Tunisian Youth policy. This Youth policy has implemented priorities through programmes: the 26/26 fund, planned in 1992 which fights against poverty and the fund, called the "Fonds National pour l'Emploi 21/21" (National Employment Fund) which has been initiated in 2000.

In addition to this last fund, the presidential youth programme of the 11th plan is centred specifically on employment with three priorities. The associations which work with people with specific needs are helped by the state, particularly when they contribute to their integration in the economic cycle. The second priority focuses on education: the presidential programme aims at an 80% success rate for the completion of compulsory education. The third priority is called *Youth facing their future* and encourages counselling and assistance for young people, even for those who live abroad.

There is a lack of recognition for non-formal education because the actors in charge of its promotion are not yet clearly defined. Only a few individuals employed in the youth sector are very conscious of the necessity to rethink education and to increase access to non-formal education. The others are trapped in the academic system. Anyway, while non-formal education is not officially recognised, it plays an essential role in society and often makes up for deficiencies of the formal sector.

Due to the necessity of promoting non-formal education, the training of the youth leaders becomes a necessity, but which is unequally fulfilled in organisations throughout the country. The state institution in charge of training, the Higher "Institut Supérieur de l'Animation pour la Jeunesse et la Culture" (Institution of Youth Leadership and Culture), does not fulfil all the needs and the state privileges the extension of these training programmes through regional units. The big associations, such as the Tunisian scouts, use experienced internal staff to train their youth leaders, but the smaller do not have such possibilities and only a few of them are helped by international organisations. Furthermore, the status of recognized volunteers is often confused with those of unpaid workers.

In the context of liberalization and privatisation, the state has transferred to the associations part of the responsibilities it was in charge of, mainly in the social sector but only 5% of the young people choose the associative engagement for their free time. Because of this, the state prioritises the access to information for young people through Youth Information Points all over the country in the youth centres. Today, they are more than 300 information points in youth centres and 80 itinerant centres in the rural isolated areas.

The distinction between the official youth sector and the independent associations, the NGOs, is difficult because of the state control. Beside the big official associations, there are a very dense network of small associations but also youth centres, rural clubs, which offer activities, formal and non-formal, and social services such as job search, health and lodging. The official youth associations are represented at the national level by federations.

The Euromed Youth Programme is highly regarded by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its benefits appreciated by the young people.

The Tunisian Youth policy is helped by public and private international organisations. These organisations give funds and other aids to the state or directly to the youth organisations. The politicians take into account the challenge that youth policy has to face. However, they underline all the realizations since 1987. Their priorities are, today, to combat youth unemployment and to set up a youth strategy through dialogue with youth.

The youth leaders claim for more recognition by the state and the society. The majority of the youth leaders are unpaid workers and their activities are seen as free-time occupation more than as real and professional activity.

The young people wait for a bigger adaptability of the youth centres and more quality for the trainers. The question of opening hours of youth infrastructures has been a recurrent claim. Despite the very positive observation of an increased variety of activities, offered in the youth structures, they deplored the lack of training of the youth leaders.

There is tension between the will and the expectations of the young people and the will expressed in policies designed to target their needs. Despite the competition between the activities offered by the youth organisations and the new tools for young people's free-time activities, it is obvious that the involvement of young people today does not always fit with the associative involvement. They are afraid of long term regular weekly participation with a management close to the formal education. They prefer limited investment to be directed to humanitarian causes with immediate concrete results and more freedom.

In conclusion, it can be said that the national youth policy, as well as non formal-education, are still waiting for recognition from both state and society. It is more accurate in Tunisia's case, to speak of plural strategies concerning youth rather than a single youth policy. The work of the non-formal sector, while essential, has only imposed itself in recent times. The state has made cultural and sports infrastructure a priority and has thus worked with the associative network and NGOs. As a result, there are now public programmes, without however, the existence of any defined youth policy. The existence of the National Youth Observatory has marked a big change in the state's approach to recognizing youth.

4. SYRIA

Syria is facing a very interesting historical moment in the field of youth. The social and economic environment of the country is changing fast and radically. Youth Policy is becoming a priority because the young people are the majority in the country and they will be the new leaders, workers and decision-makers in the coming years. The process of defining Youth Policy is still under way. Young people in Syria face many challenges because the new political and economic reforms are transforming the society and the culture in a radical way. The educational system has not been providing the young generation with the occupational skills they need to succeed in the job market. The mismatch between the skills of the job seekers and the needs of the employers has contributed to low returns on education and created an incentive to drop out of schools. The new generation is confronted with Western cultural models and with a new economical and social system. These models are completely different from the ones of their parents and teachers so the gap between generations is increasing faster than before and communication and understanding are more difficult. Syria is home to a new generation looking for its own identity but also struggling for a good job, a house and a social place in the country.

Syria is a lower middle-income country. In 2003, the income per capita was about \$3,400 and in 2005 was \$3,808. The rural population composed 49% of the population in 2005. Over the past five years, the Syrian government has initiated a series of reforms to help the country toward a "social market economy." The government has begun introducing public sector employment retrenchment policies, has removed barriers to private sector entry for most industries, has permitted development of private secondary schools, universities and banks and has introduced legislation to reform the country's labour laws. As with other countries in the Middle East, a demographic wave is moving through the Syrian population creating a youth overpopulation. The youth population in Syria had increased to 25,4% in 2005, presenting challenges for job creation for young people. The population between 0-14 years of age was of 33% in 2006. The annual population growth rate in the 2005 was of 2,5%. The unemployment rate among youth (ages 15-24) in Syria stood at 26% in 2002. The labour situation is changing, but for 80% of young people a "good" job is still a public sector job, especially for the young women. There are stereotypes about the "job life" in the private sector as less respectful, uncertain in respect to the future and dangerous for the women. Public employment offers life-long certainty.

The educational system and employment are the two turning points in today's Syrian society. This unstable situation is creating for young people a longer dependence on their own families and therefore, major difficulties in being active in civil society. The economical and social position of the families can be established if the young people can select their job or they have little choice but to work to support themselves and their families. In fact, there is not any financial support by the government for young people searching their first job or their first house. The Syrian family is important for young people to secure employment and assist with housing and obtaining a loan in

preparation for marriage. In this social framework, it is very interesting to notice that nearly 40% of the young men identified working as the most important goal in their lives compared with only 12% of the women. By contrast, more than 50% of the women ranked family and marriage as their important goal compared with 25% of the men. An almost equal percentage placed education as most important. The young people in Syria have some specific needs and challenges for achieving their priorities. They demand an educational system able to overcome the big gap between the schooling system and the new labour market but also one which can better prepare them in their own life's project. Young people need more space to be active in civil society: there are few Centres where the young people can meet for activities outside school.

The access to loans remains a problem: the regulation of the banking system is not well-developed. Another challenge is housing because the prices, especially in the urban areas, are very expensive. All these factors are at the base of the youths' large economical, as well as social, dependence on their families. Since young men are expected to provide housing in the event of marriage, the priority of the families is to support their male children. Most young women, therefore, are dependent on their own parents or husbands.

Regarding the Institutional and Legislative framework, young people can vote at the age of 18 (without any distinction between boys and girls). The Syrian Constitutions affirms that the education is compulsory for all children aged between 6 and 12. The age for admission to employment is legally set at 18 years. It is prohibited to employ a person less than 12 years of age in any occupation and persons less than 15 years old must not be employed in production work. The Syrian Law make a distinction between males and females concerning marriageable age: 18 years in the case of young men and 17 years in the case of young women. It is important to note that, in the Juveniles Act, children begin to have legal responsibility after the age of 7 years. But adolescents between 7 and 15 years cannot be sentenced to penalties but may be subjected to special reform measures.

At the moment, there is no official Youth Policy in Syria but since last year, the Government has been working on a National Youth Policy that will be the base for the Five-Years Development Plan. This Plan will be the operative strategy about Youth Policy in Syria and it will define structures, activities, procedures and a budget for young people. The Plan will be the starting point for the development of laws and specific provisions about Youth Policy in Syria. This process involves a number of national and international organisations as consultants or researchers. The Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA) is responsible for a national research project on the situation of young people. This research has been realised with the support of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and will be the base for the development of the National Youth Policy. A National Committee has taken charge of the National Policy. The most relevant national actors in Youth Policy are taking part in this process: Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, Revolutionary Youth Union (RYU), Syrian Federation of Youth, etc. The aim is to present a comprehensive document about young people's lives. The Syrian Commission for Family Affairs is also charged with the implementation of the Euromed Youth III Programme. In fact, the Euromed Youth Union (EMYU) which is responsible for the

implementation of the Programme is part of SCFA. The EMYU organized an informative meeting about the Programme in various parts of the country and supported the local associations in applying. In the last call for proposals, five projects were submitted and four were granted.

The situation of young people in Syria is clearly very complex and needs adequate answers. The problem of employment is only one issue. The others are the changes in society affecting their daily lives, their values and their relationships within their families. One of the most important challenges is to help this new generation adapt to a general transformation of the society. In the meantime, the gap between the two generations is increasing. The young people are living in a time of great change in the system of values. Today's society shows a cultural, social and economical model completely different from the one of their parents. The young people are experiencing an identity crisis far from their parents, but without another model. The associations are developing projects that can give possible answers to these issues through different media (cultural, debate...). This process is still in an embryonic stage. There is not a comprehensive strategy about Youth Policy, nor is there a working method to implement it in the field of youth. A large portion of the youth work is still delegated to institutions, schools or international organisations. There are not many youth centres and the majority belong to the Revolutionary Youth Union (that has been entrusted by the Government to coordinate the activities for young people in Syria). Civil society is increasing its voice and its tools to be visible and active towards the political system, but there are still some obstacles. Young people aspire to more freedom of expression and to create associations. Everything is possible, but with much uncertainty about the time it takes to complete procedures. In Syria the constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression: the right to participate in a constructive way in the life of the nation. But the State of Emergency in force since 1963 severely restricts personal liberties. The young people request complete freedom in their daily lives and the respect of their rights. The Syrian youth is living in this moment of transition and most young people are struggling to be active citizens in their own country but also to be aware about the possibilities offered by the outside world. Syria is trying to define its new path in Youth Policy to overcome these contradictions between needs and opportunities.

5. LEBANON

Young people in Lebanon represent a fifth of the total population which is estimated to have four million inhabitants. But, generally, young people are not recognized as being such an important sector of the Lebanese society. They are only an element of a bigger community which remains based upon denominational lines. The last decades have stressed the lines of division around political and denominational issues without special consideration given to youth issues.

Lebanese youth shares some characteristics with the other Mediterranean youth: a strong unemployment rate, a desire to leave for some of them, a narrow relationship with the extended family, a strong openness towards studies and particularly mobile phone, but also the use of the Internet. But this youth has a noticed particularity: a cultural and space communalization (inheritance from old people and parents), a noticed political consciousness.

The age of legal majority, which is no longer a social limit of youth, faces the problem of citizen majority (the right to vote at 21 years old) which remains the same, despite young people's claim to lower it to 18 years old, because of the sensitivity of the election issue in Lebanon.

When young Lebanese people have finished their studies, they often have to face unemployment. Unemployment, which affects particularly Lebanese youth, weakens young people's occupational integration, especially as no programme has been established by the authorities in order to accompany and to facilitate young Lebanese people's transition towards work life. These young people are forced to call upon the last resource they have: family. Despite the problems of generational conflict reported by the NGO leaders, a certain number of young people rely on the resources of the family in order to facilitate their social and occupational integration. However, the problem remains unsolved for young people whose families do not have resources which could facilitate the transition towards a first job. In this context, socially disadvantaged families are strongly penalized.

The large proportion of young people who are at school, and the postponing of the average age of the first marriage, contribute to the lengthening of the age of youth. This is why some people refer to youth up the ages of 30 or 35 years old. The postponed departure from the parental house, the lack of housing and the absence of the young people's financial autonomy contribute to make the end of youth a hard step and a painful stage when young men (but it is more delicate for young women) are forced to move on, to negotiate between their aspirations of autonomy, independence, and the achievement of experiences, and the parents' needs and requirements, family values and economic realities. This negotiation is often in opposition, either with the family, or with the group of peers, and is often arbitrated for the benefit of familial links, especially in times of politico-religious tension.

The young Lebanese are strongly sensitive to the culture of their own community, as well as being sensitive (and this is not contradictory) to elements of the world mass culture. The latter, which are strongly conveyed by modern channels of communication technologies, will profoundly change the young Lebanese. Televisions by satellite and especially the Internet (and not to forget the mobile phone) participate in openness to the world, to a certain planetary globalization whose lower effects are not yet perceived with clarity.

6. JORDAN

Jordanian youth sector is shaped by two factors: youth policy – its formulation and implementation – as well as role and projects of youth NGOs which often provide a backbone or supplement for state activities. Engagement and support of the Royal Family, sustainable and encouraging macro-environment for youth-related projects and activities and availability of funds (including international donors) result in a dynamic and blooming youth sector supported by a youth policy that is believed to be one of the most pro-active in the Arab countries of Middle East and North Africa. Key points crucial for understanding the youth policy in Jordan include: implementation of the existing plans and strategies; role of external actors in the development of youth policy; evolution and structure of the non-governmental youth sector, as well as a legal and socio-economic framework of the conditions of young people in Jordan.

The state of Jordan is vulnerable to external shocks and enjoys unfavourable natural conditions, which influence lives and pose challenges to young Jordanians. The most important socio-economic problem refers to the gap between educational attainment and the labour market resulting in huge unemployment among university graduates and at the same time reluctance to accept low-skilled jobs (which is additionally backed up with so called ‘culture of shame’). Other challenges include health-related issues (healthy lifestyles, reproductive health) and cultural confusion – which is to be attributed to social and economic changes that Jordan is experiencing.

The state of Jordan makes a continuous effort to meet the needs of young people. Jordanian legislation provides rules for social, political and economic participation of young people in the society with some of the laws being recently reformed, or in the process of modification – most for the advantage of the youth. The key document is the National Youth Strategy (NYS) for 2005-2009 prepared jointly by the Higher Council for Youth, UNDP and UNICEF. It regulates youth issues in Jordan and provides a framework for developing a youth policy that meets the needs of young people and promotes their development. The priorities identified in the NYS are: 1) participation, 2) civil rights and citizenship, 3) recreational activity and leisure time, 4) culture and information, 5) information technology and globalisation, 6) education and training, 7) employment, 8) health, 9) environment. Each one comprises a set of operational and strategic objectives.

The National Youth Strategy is implemented by the Higher Council for Youth which is in charge of the overall coordination as well as evaluation, monitoring and review of the policy. Even though the preparation stage of the National Youth Strategy is often quoted as a best practice, still efforts are needed in order to implement it at full swing. Youth policy itself is a cross-cutting issue, involving many actors aiming at increasing the opportunities of the young people as it became one of the nation’s top priorities. By collaboration with other ministries and relevant actors

the Higher Council for Youth is ensuring a multi-sectorial approach. On the other hand, it seems that the number of stakeholders responsible for the implementation of youth policy results in decentralisation of its delivery and fragmentation.

The rapid development of the NGO sector can be traced back to the early 90s and was caused by economic recession and political liberalisation. At that time NGOs started to overtake some of the state’s responsibilities and complement them. Jordanian NGOs can be categorised into four groups, each having its particular strengths and problems: Royal NGOs – often with the best capacities; national, secular NGOs – smaller and often with insufficient funding and staffing; religious organisations – linked mostly to the charity sector; and international organisations – branches seated in Jordan that target youth. The non-profit youth sector includes a variety of actors and enjoys favourable structural conditions. The organisations are active in a wide range of fields including: performing basic services (e.g. delivery of non-formal education), organising the community (through community service or volunteering) and advocacy (to which promotion of active participation can be linked). There are many examples of best practices that can be named, which provide not only insights into the solutions, but also problems and challenges the NGOs are facing.

Jordan has a relatively long tradition of participation in the Euromed Youth Programme and through the work of the Euromed Youth Unit (media coverage, translation of relevant documents) it is spreading to relevant stakeholders. Still it seems to reach only those actors that are focused on Euro-Mediterranean activities and is associated predominantly with the Euromed Youth Exchanges component. However, other components are becoming more and more popular (especially the European Voluntary Service- EVS). The Euromed Youth Programme seemed to impact the youth policy in terms of introducing and promoting the non-formal education approach and also re-focused the attention of some NGOs to the Euro-Mediterranean field.

There are also other international actors which contribute to youth development in Jordan. Possible ways include provision of funding (state projects, but also grants for NGOs) and influencing the policy itself by collaborating with relevant state actors. Jordan relies heavily on foreign grants and international actors provide significant funding for major projects and contribute to their design and implementation (e.g. National Youth Strategy, Education Reform for Knowledge Economy). Many international donors provide channel funding opportunities directly to the applying organisations.

Two core themes related to the youth policy which provoked the most intense discussions: one related to the National Youth Strategy and the role of the Higher Council for Youth, the other tackled the role and challenges of youth NGOs. The National Youth Strategy is perceived ambivalently by many stakeholders, who appreciate the design and the vision behind, but point at its inefficient implementation.

In regard to the NGO sector several challenges were identified. Some of them can be related to their accessibility (increasing the availability of information on youth-related projects and making youth NGO more inclusive), while others to their macro-environment and functioning (insufficient staffing, limited opportunities for youth work training, funding problems). On the other hand, many young people and youth leaders agreed that the development of the NGO youth sector has a significant impact both on personal (self-fulfilment) and on social level (contributing to a positive change).

Constant focus on youth and involvement of the Royal Family provided sustainable environment for the development of the non-governmental youth sector. On the institutional level, care about young people was framed into the NYS, developed using the examples of best practices. The biggest challenge for the existing youth policy is, however, the implementation of the NYS. The non-governmental youth sector seems to supplement the state in the delivery of basic services and capacity building. Moreover, both parties managed to develop a sound way of co-existence and/or collaboration for the best benefit of the youth.

7. ISRAEL

There is no official definition of youth in Israel, however the definition most commonly used refers to the age bracket of 13 to 18 years. While the starting age is sometimes settled slightly lower in various definitions, the end age of 18 is fixed as the age of conscription into the military for both girls and boys. Some youth organisations however see young people leaving the army at 22 or 23 years as still in the need of youth services and therefore extend the age span of youth for their own definition. With a median age of 28.8 years, a 16.1% of the total population in the age bracket between 15 and 24, and 44.1% under the age of 24, the youth factor is quite decisive in Israel. The formal education system is well developed with high enrolment rates for all three sectors. However, the enrolment ratio is lower for certain ethnic groups (Ethiopian and Arab Israelis). Youth unemployment is not low (18.5% in 2001), and poses an even graver problem for certain segments of society, e.g. Ethiopian new immigrants, but is not seen as a major problem by most actors.

The living conditions of young people in Israel are massively influenced by their ethnic, religious and social origin as also by their habitat. The majority of the young population is highly influenced by globalised youth culture, showing similar patterns of reaction to modern media. Leisure time is preferably spent with friends at shopping malls, reading and watching television, not much different than a majority of young people in Western European countries. The huge role the compulsory military service plays for a large percentage of the Jewish youth population in different aspects has been noted by almost all actors interviewed. The problematic security situation has a high influence on young people, often leading to a more risk-prone behaviour.

Israel offers a well-developed infrastructure for the participation of young people in decision-making. Youth and students' councils operate throughout the country in all sectors of society at local, regional and national levels. From a very young age youth are encouraged to take part in these structures. However, their actual influence on political processes was disputed by the actors interviewed. This was partly due to the fact that at least the youth councils do not have a mandate to tackle political topics other than those directly related to youth. Another reason was that the councils mainly do lobbying work for their concerns but only have limited decision-making power. Still, there are certain standing agreements and also partly legal regulations in existence that guarantee that youth are consulted at a local level and partly also at national level. Certain aspects of civil education are taught at school and volunteering is seen as a value that is deeply connected with the creation of the state of Israel. For this reason certain hours of voluntary service are also compulsory in grade ten.

There is no national youth policy in Israel. Recent governments have taken attempts to create such a policy, but due to frequently changing administrations, overlapping responsibilities of government bodies and other political reasons those attempts did not succeed so far. Eight different ministries, and also partly the prime minister's office, are concerned with youth issues. A coordinating body does not exist until now, but for certain cross-cutting topics committees have been formed to for-

ulate sector strategies. The current administration promotes two different youth strategies, one of them is 'Youth at the Centre', the other the 'Youth Law'. The first is an approach mainly for sharing best practices in the youth field through empowering youth work at the municipality level. This more decentralised approach tries to answer to the very diverse field of actors and programmes existing in Israel. The Youth Law is pushing for a legal regulation in the field of youth. It has been widely discussed over the last years and undergone several changes since then. While youth organisations have emphasized that the law should establish a coordinating body in youth policies, the Ministry of Education in charge is trying to pass a version through the parliament that would mainly establish youth departments in all municipalities. The Ministry of Education, which commands its own 'Youth and Non-Formal Education-Department', has received about 9-10% of the overall government budget in 2008 and dedicated around 11% of this to the department mentioned above. Several actors complained that only youth at risk was a priority budget wise.

Israel is home to a wide variety of youth organisations. The most important of them are the youth movements, which are mass organisations present all over the country. Many of them were founded before the existence of the state. There are currently 14 of these movements financed through the government, and most of them are somehow connected to a political party or other kinds of political organisations. An exception from this is the scout movement. These movements are aligned in a national umbrella organisation. Apart from the youth movements, most of the towns, city quarters and villages have their own community centres. While most of these centres do not exclusively cater for young people, they also offer services for youth. Community centres are privately organised but most receive support from the state and/or the municipalities. The majority of these centres is organised in an umbrella organisation. NGOs have started to play a bigger role in youth service providing in recent years. However state services continue to be the more important players in the field. Most of the organisations offer possibilities for young people to become active but not many are actually youth-led themselves.

The majority of the actors interviewed saw the Euromed Youth Programme in a positive light. Especially the chance to meet youth from Arab countries was noted positively. Due to the fact that Israel maintains very strong relations with the U.S. and Western European countries like Germany for international youth work, the Euromed Youth Programme does not take an outstanding role. The Euromed Youth Unit (EMYU) did not take a special role in the development of youth policies but did offer study visits in this matter to relevant actors.

There are no notably developed regional support mechanisms. Other support for youth organisations comes mainly from the private sector and from a very strong relation with philanthropic foundations inside and outside Israel. Most of them are connected to the international Jewish community. Those organisations provide the different parts of youth in Israel with money and other services, often tied to certain political or religious stances. NGOs have the chance to raise money from these institutions, sometimes also for activities critical of the official government policies.

The Ministry of Education has taken measures to improve the situation in the youth field. While there is no national youth policy, sector strategies try to substitute for such a unified approach.

8. PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

The population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt, which covers the three regions of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem) is relatively young. The Palestinian Ministry for Youth and Sports defines youth as the part of the population between 15 and 30 years of age. However, several NGOs employ their own definitions which often cover a wider age bracket. The age pyramid shows a youth growth with 71.7% of a total population of 3.7 million being under the age of 24. Youth in the age bracket of 15 to 24 make up for 19.3% of this. The Gaza Strip population is even younger than that of the other two regions.

The situation of young people in the oPt is to an extremely high degree dominated by the political situation. This refers to both the ongoing conflict with Israel and the domestic situation. Here the rift between Hamas and Fatah and its result, i.e. two political entities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, produces an unstable setting for youth, youth work and youth policy. Young people in the oPt are forced to struggle with a situation which hinders their freedom of movement, security, education and employment. Youth unemployment and the dire prospects of finding an adequate job after graduation are among the biggest problems for young people. Youth unemployment rates are at a 37% high in the oPt leading to high levels of poverty with regional differences ranging from the Gaza Strip, where the situation is worst, to East Jerusalem, where it is best. While educational levels are high in general in regard to enrolment rates, especially the tertiary sector faces problems in terms of quality.

As employment and, in consequence, income is unavailable to a large percentage of youth, their chances to become fully independent from their parents are limited. Costly marriages and the setting up of an own household is more and more delayed to a later time of life. This puts young people into a prolonged period of dependency termed as 'waithood'. This does not only cause frustration among the young but also affects their chances to make relevant changes to their society.

The possibilities for youth to take part in decision-making processes on issues concerning themselves are limited. It seems that the importance of young people in this respect has decreased in recent years. A major possibility of participation is maintained in the students' councils which continue to play an important political role. Several municipalities in the West Bank have also begun to establish proper youth councils to increase the possibilities of action for young people. They themselves however complained that the general political culture, also in youth NGOs, is not open for a broader participation of young people. The subject is not covered in formal education, though partly in the universities, where several hours of community service are obligatory.

Youth in the oPt falls into the portfolio of two different ministries: the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education also incorporates the former Ministry of Higher Education that deals with the university sector.

The Palestinian government, with the support of UNICEF and other actors from the academic field and the civil society, has already started to develop a youth policy in the year 2000. It was finalized in 2005 and now awaits implementation. A wide consultation process has taken place in setting up the policy which included various ministries, the civil society, and also a large number of young people. However, several of the youth NGOs interviewed raised criticism towards the process, especially as the policy until now fails to be met by a dedicated budget or an appropriate plan of action. Regarding the content of the youth policy, it aims to strengthen the involvement of youth in all youth related policy fields, however it is more a framework than a concrete action plan.

About 507 youth clubs and centers and about 250 other organisations dealing with young people are active, 42 of which working exclusively with youth are found in the Gaza Strip. In addition, there are the international NGOs and organisations which offer youth activities. Furthermore a number of youth movements, such as the youth organisations of the big political fractions, are not only existent but also often have high numbers of members, although they lack constant activities. While youth clubs deal mostly with sports and receive partial funding from the government, the majority of youth organizations are dependent on foreign funds. Due to this many interviewees remarked that the majority of youth projects are donor-driven in matters of the priority areas they cover, and which often shift quickly. In order to establish a NGO, a minimum age of 18 years is required. However, in reality only very few of the organisations are actually youth-led. And it is difficult for young people to really advance to a leading position in an organization.

The role of the Euromed Youth Programme is twofold: on the one hand, the majority of actors praised its role in exposing young people to foreign cultures and countries; on the other hand, all actors regarded its impact as limited due to the small number of projects which could be financed. Also the role that the EMYU played was discussed by various interviewees both from governmental and civil society levels. The political situation prevents a number of young people especially from the Gaza Strip from taking part in the Programme.

The major source of support to the Palestinian youth sector lies in the international donor community. Other support from the private sector or on a regional level (e.g. from the Arab League, ALECSO) was found existent but very limited. For the development of the National Youth and Adolescents Policy, UNICEF played a major role in funding the process and the distribution of the results.

It can be concluded that the Palestinian Authority with the support of UNICEF, NGOs and youth has made a decisive step in creating the national youth policy. This is even more impressive taking into account the political realities which the government has to face. However it remains a challenge to continue the implementation process of the policy while really meeting the demands of young people.

9. EGYPT

Youth in Egypt has come to the limelight and occupied a significant position in the national agenda; young people's diversity and autonomy has been recognized, and this is reflected in the creation of especially designed programmes and projects for this population group and their inclusion in the sectorial priorities. The national youth policy in Egypt is clearly echoed through several formal reports and documents that express the state's policy. The most important one was the «National Youth policy» which was formulated in 2003-2004 by the National Democratic Party (NDP). Later, this policy was unfortunately neglected, though it was due to be adopted by the government and parliament. The other important documents are the "National Youth Plan for the Millennium" (December 2000) and the documents on the establishment of youth higher institutions like the republican decree that established the National Council for Youth. However, it is rather difficult to say that any of those documents have ushered in a comprehensive vision for a youth policy in Egypt. Despite the fact that there is no formal document that contains the state's public policy in this field, youth policy is rather echoed in the legislations, institutions, budgets and programmes of political socialization of youth and children.

The analysis of youth situation in Egypt illustrates that although youth potentially constitute a demographic gift, they put enormous pressures on the educational system and the labour and housing markets. The youth face various challenges that affect their personal as well as career development. It is widely accepted that youth has come to the limelight and occupied a significant position in the national agenda; young people's diversity and autonomy has been recognized, and this is reflected in the creation of especially designed programmes and projects. The study shows that the number of young people within the Egyptian population is increasing significantly compared to other age groups, a so-called "youth bulge". In the coming decade, these young people will become the largest group in Egypt's long history that made its way to adulthood. This demographic transition represents both an opportunity and a challenge.

The youth policy in Egypt is derived from the constitution and legislations that aim at socializing youth and teenagers, guaranteeing their rights and defining their duties. These rights and duties have been stretched out through a large number of laws that regulate the family, child rights, education and political rights. There are many formal regulations that organize the field of youth work in Egypt: firstly, the law 77 issued in 1975, and modified in 1978, which regulates the formation and activities of institutions and bodies that work in the field of youth. Secondly, the presidential decrees that established the main coordinating bodies which formulate and implement the national policy and thirdly, the bills and regulations that the concerned ministry issued to deal with youth such as the bills of youth centres and student union. It is important to note that the law 77 has been the only legislation related to youth drafted by the government and adopted by the parliament. The main dilemma with this law is that it does not clearly determine the place and role of youth in society, as well as the responsibility of that society and public institutions towards them. A

striking point that stands out is that this law regulates the work of youth bodies and actors, though it does not refer to the youth policy or the definition of youth. Furthermore, there is instability and inconsistency in institutions and bills. It is obvious that there is no well-defined legislation that looks at youth from a comprehensive and inclusive perspective. It was suggested that Egypt needs a law for youth like the Child Law, but the problem of overlap between the jurisdiction of ministries and agencies was raised and hindered this idea.

The first thing to note on the national youth policy in Egypt is the overlapping definition of youth and children due to the type and the set up of ministries and agencies considered responsible for youth such as: Education, Higher Education, Youth and Sports. According to the NDP youth policy paper, young people are between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. However, it also mentions those who are between 6 and 18 years old. On the other hand, a document issued from the Supreme Council for Youth and Sport in May 1996 considered youth as being from 6-30 years old. The NCY differentiates between two groups: the age group from 6-18 years old (teenagers and children) and from 18- 30 years old (Youth).

Secondly, it is important to take into consideration that there are many authorities and actors responsible for devising and implementing youth policy such as the National Council for Youth, the National Council for Sport, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education. Although the National Council for Youth (NCY) is in charge of formulating and implementing cross-sectorial policies, there is uncertainty about its ability to guarantee their effective implementation. It can be argued that there is only a restricted cross-sectorial national youth policy without strong linkage to other youth-serving ministries.

The third important remark that stands out is the need to differentiate between two kinds of cooperation: firstly, cooperation in formulating and implementing a coherent youth policy which includes coordination in aims and goals to reach a better investment of the state human capital; secondly, the cooperation between different actors in implementing a joint activity or programme. The study concluded that a reasonable degree of cooperation in the second aspect is found, but the first aspect of cooperation faces strong obstacles, despite efforts on this aspect. Youth policy in Egypt needs a common vision and strategy, and without this strategy, every action or programme will just have a limited effect.

With regard to non-formal education and the youth NGOs, the NCY provides civil education for a large number of youth and teenagers and considers it one of its priorities. The NCY has established the central administration for civil education and young leadership which is responsible for youth training and capacity building of youth workers in NGOs and governmental organizations. In the recent years, there has been an upward trend in the number of youth leadership developmental programmes, whether government-led and organized by the National Youth Council or by other actors like UNICEF and Euromed Youth Programme. A number of officials confirm that NGOs are invited to play a leading role in experimenting with, and then scaling up the less formal education programmes. It is now increasingly accepted that civil society and youth associations are critical of any sustainable process of development.

Many youth-led initiatives, as well as youth-targeting initiatives, have contributed to the emergence of a youth civil society. Youth-led civil society in Egypt has witnessed a revival in the past 10 years. Youth-led NGOs and student-led clubs and associations are only a small indication of changes in youth organizations. Media tools used by youth, and for youth, whether in magazines or more recently in electronic format, including «blogspots», are testimonies to this revival. The UN study in cooperation with the Arab Network for NGOs showed that 303 NGOs now exist in Egypt. Another study carried out by the World Bank classified 122 NGOs as youth NGOs and 44 groups as informal youth groups. Only 14 youth organisations are members of a union of youth NGOs called the “Federation of Egyptian Youth NGOs” which was established in January 2006. It can be argued that the percentage of youth organizations is small in relation to the general percentage of NGOs in Egypt (less than 0.5%). Moreover, the percentage of youth NGOs is small in relation to other NGOs concerned with specific target groups, such as women. However, generally, youth organizations face major obstacles to become more effective, the most important of which are limited funding, poorly qualified staff, and difficulty in attracting unpaid volunteers. The legal framework governing youth associations is the same law that governs civil society organizations. Consequently, the current Law 84/2002 is a crucial dimension in recognition and funding of associations and impacts powerfully on their effectiveness. This Law allows greater recognition of civil society organizations than any previous law, but it also restricts civil society.

The Euromed Youth Programme used to be lively and energetic in Egypt during its first and second phases (1999-2004). The main activity of the Programme was youth exchange projects which gave a large number of Egyptian young people the opportunity to travel and visit other countries and to get to know and understand other cultures. In addition to this, many other international and regional organizations work in the field of youth. Some of them work with the formal and governmental bodies, and others support Youth NGOs. The National Council for Youth cooperates with different kinds of organizations. There are many initiatives in this field like the Arab League’s Programme on the empowerment of youth, the Bibliotheca Alexandria Forum and the International Youth Forum hosted by Suzanne Mubarak International Women for Peace, as well as international mechanisms like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UNICEF and the Anna Lindh Foundation based in Alexandria which play an important role in the field of youth.

The national youth policy in Egypt needs a vision, by and for youth of the present and future society, and with participation of all stakeholders, linked directly to both formal and non-formal education, and stressing that the vision of youth should be seen as a vibrant resource and indeed a solution and not only as a problem for society.

10. TURKEY

Since the early years of the Turkish Republic, “youth” existed in public debates. The positive and progressive role attributed to young people as pioneers of modernisation and owners of the Republic, started to change gradually in the 1970s. The military coup d'état in 1980 and the 1982 Constitution shaped a new vision of youth not only in changing the approach to youth but also resulting in limitations in the rights of young people and forms of youth activities. In the post-1980 period, public debate tended to represent contemporary youth as “apolitical consumers” and “selfish”. Today both approaches exist simultaneously: while on the one side young people are seen as “good-for-nothing”, on the other side “youth myth” continues to exist.

There are about 12.4 million young people aged 15-24 in Turkey. This is 17.6% of the total population. The statistics show that there is not only one category of young people in Turkey. One-third of young people aged 15-24 are students, one-third is working, and the rest are called “idle” and “invisible or less visible” as stated by the UNDP (2008): women who are neither studying nor working; the physically disabled; young people who stopped seeking jobs; juvenile delinquents; street children and youth, internally displaced, or victims of human trafficking and others.

Average schooling rates in Turkey are 89% at primary, 56% at secondary and 18% at higher education. Illiteracy among young women is 6%. Although school enrolment rates for girls have increased, there are gender gaps of 4% in primary and 8% in secondary education in 2006. Young people make up 16.7% of the total employed in Turkey and youth unemployment is 18.7%. The participation of young women in the labour force is very low. Rate of poverty among young people is 26%. It is very common that single young people live with their parents. In Turkey, rural-urban migration is mainly a young age phenomenon: two thirds of young people live in urban areas. International mobility is very low. The most common pattern of political participation is voting but young people are not interested in politics.

Young people in Turkey spend their largest amount of time together with their families and the parents' influence on the young people's lives is very high. Young people cannot afford to move out of the family home and they need financial help. Many young people do not exercise sports regularly and are not interested in developing their hobbies. The most popular activities are going to cinema and football matches (for young men). Most young people like to go to shopping malls to enjoy themselves. About 42% of young people, especially young men, consume alcohol. The ways of enjoying themselves differ according to their socio-economic status. Young people do not read much: only 36.1% read newspapers daily and 27.4% read books; young women read more than young men. Watching TV is the favourite leisure activity (81%). Young people extensively use internet, at home or at the internet cafes. Nearly 27% of young people claim that they are exposed to crime in their social environment, and 20% have friends who have a gun or who use drugs. Although there are some common trends among young people in Turkey, young women and young

men go through different experiences, which shape their participation in social life differently. Socio-economic and educational status, urban-rural differences and ethnic/religious backgrounds also result in different patterns of behaviour among young people.

The cultural and traditional roles attributed to young women differ from that of young men considerably. Early or forced marriages and ‘honour killings’ are two brutal examples of discrimination against young women in Turkey. Family often intervenes with young people's own decisions and not only pressure but also over-protection of family hinder young people to develop their personal independence, participation and self-confidence. Besides the fact that not all young people receive education, the quality of education do not always adequately meet the needs of young people in Turkey. The increase in the number of private schools at all levels of education influences the disparities and creates visible divisions among young people especially in terms of socialisation patterns. Thus, young people in Turkey need support from their social environment, families and the state in many aspects of their lives such as spaces for their self-development, identity, self-confidence and creativity free from conservative and traditional prejudices and pressures; further, cheaper and better quality education; work and career opportunities.

In the Turkish legislation, there is only one single provision which addresses youth in the Constitution of the Turkish Republic (Article 58) and youth is referred to as people to be protected. A specific law devoted to youth does not exist and the rights and services for youth are included in general laws and regulations. Eight years of primary education is compulsory for all citizens aged 6-14 and it is prohibited to employ children aged below 15. When young people are 18, they are eligible to vote, to establish or become a member of an organisation, to get a driver's licence, or to buy tobacco products. Military service is compulsory for all male citizens starting from the age of 20. Minimum age to be elected is 25. Children who commit crimes before the age of 12 do not have criminal responsibility. Many of these age-related rights are results of recent amendments in the Turkish legislation, often resulting from the liberalisation waves, Turkey's official candidacy status to the EU, development of civil society and increasing civil movements, which have in the end given way to partial modernisation of provisions regarding the status and conditions of youth in Turkey.

The services included in general laws and regulations are carried out by various ministries and departments in different public institutions. Four of them require particular attention: General Directorate for Youth and Sports (GDYS), Ministry of National Education (MoNE), Social Services and Child Protection Agency and the Turkish National Agency for the ‘Youth in Action’ Programme. In addition, local governments (municipalities) and the Southeast Anatolia Project are also important to mention due to the local and regional character of their work for young people. Some of the other public institutions which work on different dimensions of youth issues are Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs. This structural approach towards youth issues and problems is sector-based and fragmented. The absence of a single governmental unit or one single policy document results in the multiplicity of state actors both regarding youth related decision-making and provision/implementation of services. This situation often causes either repetitive provision of the same services or its non-provision. This fragmented structure also causes inconsistencies in approaches to youth.

Although the recent Five-Year Development Plans and the Government Programmes mention the importance of youth for the development of the country, they do not propose any concrete measures or action plans for the elimination of existing youth problems. The shares of the main public institutions in the national budget do not seem sufficient when the number of young people in Turkey is considered.

MoNE is the institution officially in charge of informal education, which covers all the educational activities besides and out of formal education categorised as public education, apprenticeship training and distance (open) education. Non-formal education as a method of learning is relatively new and often used by civil society. In the Turkish context, it is more relevant to the activities and methods of youth work than those of the public authorities, but there are two exceptions: the National Agency and the Department of Youth Services of GDYS. The notion and mobilisation of volunteering is high and voluntary activities through civil organisations increase. However, support to the non-profit youth sector (services and financial resources), provided by public institutions is limited. In spite of a high number of volunteers in youth work, there is not a formally defined profession of youth workers. Apart from the civil society organisations, youth work training is provided only by a limited number of public institutions. Both the civil society organisations and public institutions depend on trainers, who have a vague official status, but are reliable and experienced due to their international and national involvement.

The development of youth work in Turkey owes a great deal to NGOs working on youth issues and youth organisations. As the major users of non-formal education, there are various categories of organisations, which have different legal statuses: associations, foundations, youth clubs, youth centres, student clubs, private companies (non-profit activities) and youth branches of the political parties. The exact number of youth related NGOs at the country level is difficult to indicate but it is stated to be around 60, and there are some 120 organisations whose activities affect young people in different ways. These organisations often share similar aims and they function in almost all fields and activities related to youth. While there are experienced and institutionalised youth organisations, relatively new ones with fewer experiences face problems on the way to get institutionalised. By 2008, there is not yet a National Youth Council (NYC) in Turkey. However, the need for a NYC is increasingly voiced since the 1990s. Three major groupings of NGOs and youth organisations are associated with the attempts to establish a NYC in Turkey, but the existing legal framework and lack of sufficient infrastructure made an establishment impossible.

In Turkey the Euromed Youth Programme created some dynamics in, and impacted on, the development of youth work, NGOs and youth organisations, rather than directly influencing the youth policy. It has contributed to the capacity building of organisations working in the youth field by providing training courses; enhanced communication among the youth work actors through new platforms; considerably increased the opportunities for funding; and facilitated access to international youth work for inexperienced or disadvantaged youth organisations.

The international organisations in Turkey also get involved in issues of youth policies within the framework of cooperation schemes, often by devising and funding campaigns, projects and pro-

grammes. Support is sometimes given to the relevant public authority or sometimes directly to the youth organisations. Depending on the themes, different public institutions, private sector actors and NGOs are included as partners. The impact of the involvement of international organisations can be observed at the implementation stage, which directly aims at the elimination of a perceived youth problem, or sometimes the outcomes of various activities are noted as policy recommendations to the Turkish government. The most active international actors in the field of youth in Turkey are the World Bank, United Nations Agencies, Council of Europe, British Council and European Union.

The public authorities admit the absence of a separate tangible youth policy and law directly regulating youth policy in Turkey. Other perceived problems are multiplicity of actors dealing with youth issues; absence of a NYC; low levels of education and mobility of young people and difficulties in disseminating the information. The youth leaders, youth trainers and NGOs, individually or collectively voice their concerns and perceptions about the work of public authorities; about the youth related legislation and policies; about the civil society, youth work and the involvement of international mechanisms in the youth related activities in Turkey. Young people's views on youth policy focus more on their own problems, politics and politicians, and civil society and voluntarism. Their two biggest concerns are the limitations of the education system and lack of work opportunities. While young people do not trust politics, they attribute positive values to civil society and the voluntarism.

Evidence shows that young people in Turkey have considerable needs and challenges on the way to their self-development and participation in society. Different categories of youth require different emphasis in terms of policy. However, the actual policies related to youth do not seem comprehensive and inclusive and the existing institutional approach to youth is rather problem-based and sectorial. Although youth is attributed an important role for the development of the country in many general plans and programmes, there are no youth specific action plans or concrete measures to ensure youth participation. The existing problems of young people and of youth work show that the quality and quantity of the youth services, as well as the financial support, provided by public institutions for youth related issues such as education, employment, housing and participation are not at satisfactory levels. However, youth organisations' interest towards youth policies is on the increase since the early 2000s.







EuroMed Youth III Programme

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