

What Works in Youth and Women's Employment in MENA?



Knowledge Sharing Forum
on Evidence and Impact Measurement

***NEW DATES:** 7-8 May 2018*
The GrEEK Campus, Cairo, Egypt

Supported by:





What is the challenge?

Youth unemployment rates in the Arab States¹ and North Africa regions have been the highest in the world for the past 25 years and continue to rise. In fact the Arab States region reached a youth unemployment peak in 2016 of 30.4 per cent - a 4 percentage point rise over the preceding decade. The struggle of young people in the Arab States to find decent work is exacerbated by ongoing armed conflicts, migration waves and low levels of economic growth. Women and rural populations face many similar challenges including decent work deficits, low labour force participation and a difficult transition from school to work. Labour force participation rates among women in the region are low; only 15 per cent among young women, as compared to 37 per cent worldwide.²

In dealing with these challenges, countries across the region have launched a series of policy and programmatic initiatives. Governments, social partners, civil society and development partners have joined forces to promote women's and youth employment and entrepreneurship as key policy issues. For example, Egypt launched the Egyptian Youth Employment (EYE) Programme, in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada and the ILO's Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People. Jordan initiated the National Programme for Empowerment and Employment while Tunisia is formulating a new national employment policy. The first regional conference for social partners on Youth Employment in North Africa (YENA) was hosted by the ILO in September 2017, resulting in a regional plan (the "YENA roadmap").³

An important element of success of national and regional employment initiatives is that programmes are designed based on the evidence for "what works". The MENA region has benefitted from the extensive growth of the evidence base over the past decade due to improved labour market data, diagnostics and impact evaluations. A key component has been the "Taqeem Initiative", a regional impact research and capacity development project. Taqeem is a partnership between the ILO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) whose goal is to strengthen gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa.

Objective

This Knowledge Sharing Forum will be an opportunity to share the current status and progress on what works in youth and women's employment in the MENA region while promoting multi-sectoral collaboration to define and address priorities for policy formulation.

Key to this is the further establishment and growth of a regional Community of Practice (CoP) to facilitate knowledge sharing, partnership creation and up-scaling of successful youth employment programmes. The current 17 members (see list in annex) of the Taqeem CoP are a group of organizations implementing innovative results measurement strategies and conducting impact evaluations on youth and women's employment, with a focus on the rural economy. The event will allow the CoP members to share their experiences on results measurement and impact assessment in youth employment. Complementary to this is the piloting of the ILO's new "Guide on Measurement of Decent Jobs for Youth" that provides comprehensive guidance to evaluating, monitoring and learning in labour market programmes targeting young people.

¹ The ILO uses the regional designation "Arab States". In this concept note "Arab States" and "Middle East" are used interchangeably.

² ILO 2017. *Global Employment Trends for Youth: Paths to a Better Working Future*. International Labour Organization.

³ *Youth Employment in North Africa (YENA) Roadmap: 2017-2022*, International Labour Organization.

Day 1: The evidence base for what works in youth and women's employment in MENA

The morning of day 1 will be dedicated to sharing recent knowledge and good practice on youth and women's employment in the MENA region, with a concentration on the rural economy. Two thematic policy sessions, one on **young people** and one on **women**, will give an overview of the challenges and present case studies to demonstrate proof of impact. Notably a background paper on "Economic and social dimensions of women's rural employment in the Middle East and North Africa: Status, trends and policy implications", has been prepared for presentation at the Forum, in the framework of the Taqem Initiative.

The afternoon will be dedicated to multi-sectoral dialogue on effective policy solutions. It will be a platform to discuss evidence based responses, using the example of the CoP on Youth Employment, as an effective avenue of collaboration. Potential topics to be explored include young women's empowerment in the rural economy, micro-loans and social finance programmes, sectoral strategies and value chain development for rural employment and technical and vocational training strategies. The World Café methodology⁴ is proposed for facilitation. Furthermore, a needs assessment survey is being conducted and a broad audience of partner organizations working in the field of youth employment are invited to participate. This survey will function as input for the forum, since it will inform key topics that are deemed relevant and will shape the final design of the agenda. The survey can be conducted in [English](#) and [Arabic](#).

Day 2: Measuring decent jobs for youth

Day 2 of the Forum will concentrate on results measurement of youth employment interventions, with a focus on women in the rural economy. Through effective results measurement, youth employment stakeholders can learn how to improve their operations for sustainability and scale while contributing to building the global evidence base.

The "Guide on Measurement of Decent Jobs for Youth"⁵, will be piloted, introducing participants to the key steps in results measurement and impact evaluation. This will be followed by examples from Taqem CoP members on how modern M&E systems and impact evaluations can generate learnings and evidence for what works in youth employment and women's empowerment.

Participants

1. Policy makers/government representatives
2. Youth serving organizations, including NGO's/international organizations, and social businesses
3. Researchers and academics
4. Private sector representatives
5. Taqem Community of Practice members.

Within the above mentioned organizations, the event targets policy- and decision-makers, technical specialists as well as results measurement and impact evaluation experts. It will be possible to register for Day 1 and/or Day 2 of the event.

Logistics

Contact: Heba Rashed, rashedh@ilo.org

Dates: 7-8 May 2018

Venue: The GrEEK Campus, Cairo, Egypt

Working languages: English and Arabic

⁴ The World Café methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible facilitation format for encouraging participation and dialogue in large groups. It can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. The specifics of context, number of attendees, the purpose of the event and location, are all factored into the event's invitation, design, and choice of table topics.

⁵ For an overview of the contents of the new Guide, see [this link](#)

Agenda

Day 1 – 7 May	
9:00 – 10:00	Welcoming remarks and opening statements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government representative • ILO DWT/CO Cairo • ILO Youth Employment Programme • IFAD • Global Affairs Canada
10:00 – 11:00	Youth Employment: What Works in MENA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The challenge:</i> Regional overview of young people's labour market situation • <i>Policy responses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from youth focused active labour market programmes in Jordan and Egypt • Impacts of employability and financial education in rural Morocco • Impacts of young women's entrepreneurship and employability in rural Upper Egypt • <i>Discussant:</i> key policy-maker
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee
11:30 – 12:30	Women's Employment: What Works in MENA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The challenge:</i> Regional overview: Economic and social dimensions of women's rural employment in MENA • <i>Policy responses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment in rural Tunisia • Impacts of women's entrepreneurship and edutainment in Egypt • <i>Discussant:</i> key policy-maker
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 13:45	Results of needs assessment survey and World Café intro
13:45 – 14:30	World Café: Round 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of topics & key priorities
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee
15:00 – 15:45	World Café: Round 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy responses (addressing youth and women's needs in MENA)
15:45 – 16:30	Reporting and Closure
Day 2 – 8 May	
9:00 – 9:15	Piloting the "Guide on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth"
9:15 – 10:45	Introducing the 7 Notes of the Guide: Monitoring, evaluation and learning in labour market programmes
10:45 – 11:15	Coffee
11:15 – 12:00	Taqeem Community of Practice Ignite! Talks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring rural women's and youth employment
12:00 – 12:45	Mind mapping: What is missing and what's next? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to further strengthen the evidence base • The Community of Practice going forward
12:45 – 13:00	Closure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILO DWT/CO-Cairo • Government representative

Taqeem Community of Practice Members

1. Population Council & Institute of Labour Economics (Egypt)
2. Cairo Demographic Center (Egypt)
3. Alexandria Business Association (Egypt)
4. RISE (Egypt)
5. Medium, Small And Micro Enterprise Development Agency (Egypt)
6. Business Development Center (Jordan)
7. Better Work (Jordan)
8. Ministry of Labour (Jordan)
9. United Nations University (the Netherlands, intervention in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia)
10. United Nations Relief and Works Agency (Lebanon)
11. Berytech (Lebanon)
12. International Trade Centre (Morocco)
13. Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (Tunisia)
14. Education for Employment (Tunisia)
15. Economic Research Forum (Egypt)
16. Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People (Egypt)
17. Queen Rania Foundation (Jordan)