

# Policy Report

## Toward social dialogue in the Arab Mediterranean countries:

Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco

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## **Abstract**

This policy report addresses some of the issues of social and economic exclusion of youth from the spheres of industry and work across the Arab Mediterranean countries—with a focus on Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon. The policy report aims to promote policies of social dialogue that can improve the conditions for social cohesion at national levels. The report is aimed at decision makers at EU level. Given that a variety of research methodologies were used by each country—and with different conclusions drawn—the report provides recommendations that are specific to the national level.

In the case of Lebanon, it is recommended that EU social partners endorse strategies aimed at reducing difference in pedagogical standards between public and private education institutions. Recommendations for Egypt are related to promoting skill-training programmes that can assist in improving employability of young people from marginalized backgrounds. In Algeria, further measures should be taken to encourage the conditions in which social dialogue can occur in work environments. For Morocco: further steps should be taken to encourage young people to engage with institutions at local and national levels.

## **Key concepts**

Social dialogue, social inclusion, social exclusion, social integration, social cohesion, participation, labour, education, youth

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## 1. Introduction: fragmentation of Arab society

Fragmentation of society, exclusion from political participation and limited access to economic resources: such are the kinds of terms often used in the description of civil society across the Arab Mediterranean Countries (AMCs). While the events of the so-called Arab Spring might not have necessarily facilitated the type of change that was sung by protestors and activists from across the Arab Street since 2011, a clear message was sent out: the youth across the region want in. Arab youth in different contexts and with different visions are demanding more inclusive engagement in political reform and greater access to economic resources. It is however, also apparent that although youth might be “heard” at the level of the state and beyond, it does not necessarily mean that their demands are listened to and taken into account in political and economic decision-making processes.

The AMCs are at a pivotal stage of social transformation and the participation of youth is crucial in shaping the region’s future. The importance of promoting a better policy of inclusive politics has been brought to the general public across the globe numerous times, with regional specialists drawing attention to the important contribution the region’s youth can make in the facilitation of institutional political and economic reform. Many have also highlighted that young people’s economic exclusion has equally catastrophic repercussions for the region’s future as limited political participation (Guéhenno, 2013; Ghanem, 2013)

It is apparent that the terms of youth exclusion from political participation and employment opportunities are shaped by deeply embedded structures of inequality— issues of employability are often related to the type of access to education. In Egypt, illiteracy rates are exceptionally high and reach 25.9% of the population in 2013. Meanwhile in Lebanon, although literacy rates are statistically the highest in the region, the opportunity for a student to pursue a particular specialization is often dependent upon the level of the language used at the school level (Kawar & Tzannatos, 2012). For example, if a student attends a school where Arabic is the main language with little focus on English, s/he will experience clear disadvantages if they decide to attend an Anglophone university. In the case of Algeria, the recent history of violence and war is often associated with young people who are consequentially treated with distrust and suspicion by members of management in the work area. Scales of marginality are also found in work places in Morocco, where the increasing rates of formally non-waged labour amongst young people who often work in informal

sectors of the economy is suggestive of the extent to which youth are increasingly exploited. It is evident that in all cases, differentiated accesses to employment are connected to unequal difference in social and economic backgrounds. In this regard, it is also clear that the social category of young people is indicative of a diverse group of people and not as a homogenous one.

This social policy report aims to recommend policies to European Union (EU) stakeholders that can assist in shaping more sustainable futures for the young people of today, while at the same time not dismissing the diversity of the different visions and aspirations of the AMC's youth. The main focus is concerned with social dialogue and its role in promoting socio-economic social cohesion within each of the respective Arab Mediterranean countries. The concepts of social dialogue and social cohesion will be discussed in the following section. The second section provides an overview of the methodologies utilized to collect data. In the third section, the text provides an analysis by country. In the concluding section, policy recommendations in favour of social dialogue are included by country.

## 2. Conceptualising the participation of youth in society

In light of the major socio-economic features shaping Arab societies today, a particularly pressing issue that arises when examining the availability of youth opportunities in the country, is that of the presence of any sense of social unity. Given the fractured political landscapes across the region, there is little to suggest that political, or even national unity prevails—and nor will it anytime soon. Also within each of the AMCs, there are increasing disparities found between the different social economic classes indicating that there is strong evidence to indicate that further polarisation will emerge. However, despite of this ongoing instability, the region might not necessarily be on the brink of collapse. Some scholars have suggested that instability has in fact become the *status-quo* for many of the AMCs. The point here is that there is a *normalisation* process of a shared sense of insecurity, instability and precariousness within everyday life: a notion of an “imagined community” of socially constructed understanding of belonging to larger group of individuals that are all not known to each other (e.g. Anderson, 2006; Bayat, 2012; Floris, 2011; Hermez, 2012; Knudsen & Kerr, 2012). This notion of “imagined community” in its most general sense of the term does not necessarily equate to an idea of social unity or uniformity in that structures of

inequality and exploitation are taken into account. Rather, the concept of the “imagined community” speaks to the broader idea of a reflexive action of locating oneself (hierarchically speaking) in a particular location (i.e. nation). Given the complexities of AMC societies, where there is little uniformity even in educating students with the same language, this notion of imagined community can allow us to examine if there is indeed a shared ideals and aspirations amongst the different youth communities of the AMC today. What are the types of aspirations underpinning young people’s hope of the future—are there shared commonalities amongst the different youth groups?

In the following subsections, we further develop our theoretical framework to address this question of community and belonging by exploring the themes of youth as a social category, social structures of inequality, empowerment and participation and finally, social cohesion and social dialogue as a policy.

## **2.1 Youth as a social category and structures of inequality**

In line with SAHWA’s perspective project<sup>1</sup>, we consider youth to be both a historically constructed social category and a relational concept (Durham, 2000). In taking such a stance, we are able to examine the underlying political, economic and social forces that structure and shape the spaces in which those actors who are considered to belong to the youth category. We are therefore not only able to think further about the construction of the category of youth within the AMCs, but can also start to explore the importance placed upon particular ideals of personhood. The term “personhood” is useful in this respect in that we are referring to the processes and stages involved in the social development (and construction) of particular gendered subjectivities (Durham, 2000; Comaroffs, 2006). Issues of education and employment are thus potentially highly significant features of the processes of personhood-and especially those aspects that entail the social transformation of a young person into an adult (Katz, 2004). By examining the “social reproduction” of certain notions of personhood, we thus attempt to identify the types of education and work related practices

<sup>1</sup> See SAHWA’s Concept Paper: Contemporary Youth Research in Arab Mediterranean Countries: Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Research. SAHWA Project. SSH.2013.4.1-2 SSH 1 Number 613174. Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), Barcelona. Url: <http://sahwa.eu/OUTPUTS/Publications/SAHWA-Concept-Paper-Contemporary-Youth-Research-in-Arab-Mediterranean-Countries-Mixing-Qualitative-and-Quantitative-Research>

and relations perpetuating certain patterns of social exclusion and/or those that are assisting in the empowerment of the young people of the AMC. In light of the complexities characterising the predicaments of AMC under focus in this report, it is apparent these structures of inequality at global, national and local levels often materialise through the relationship found exist between education and labour relations.

## **2.2 Empowerment and participation**

We consider that equally important to this question of the structures that appear to limit the fair distribution of access to education and employment is the issue of agency. Simply put, while we acknowledge the influential role of social structures including those belonging to the state as well as supranational institutes (such as the EU), we do not underestimate individual capacity to generate social change—or at the very least, experiences their role as such (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990; Scott, 2008). In this respect, a critical examination of the social structures of inequality and exclusion must also inadvertently take into account the forms through which empowerment emerge.

Rather than focusing specifically upon the theoretical implications of this question of empowerment in terms of the relationship between power structures and the actual ability to exercise power, we are more interested in examining the way the concept of empowerment is perceived by those who fall within SAHWA’s category of youth<sup>2</sup>. We will thus be able to investigate more reflexively and within the framework of “situated knowledge”, the relationship between perspectives of empowerment and participation (Haraway, 1998). It from this particular stance—that of the nexus of empowerment and participation—that we also begin to consider more critically the experiences of opportunity of young people living in AMCs. While nuances found in the different senses of empowerment as narrated by young people may potentially speak to and of narratives of power and autonomy, a different understanding of participation found within their narratives can serve to highlight changing and perhaps even at times, contradicting perceptions of society and community. It is through an exploration of the way participation is conceived by the young people who are (in effect) participating in our research where we will start to uncover how personhood is more

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<sup>2</sup> The category of youth as defined in the SAHWA project considers youth aged between 15 and 29 years.

intimately understood in relation to ideas about future. The nexus of participation and empowerment can thus shed some light upon the sentimental values that motivate the youth of today.

In conjunction with documenting the types of education and work related structures affecting the likes of young people, we therefore seek to examine the types of particular aspirations and affiliations underpinning the desires and hopes of young people today. How might such shared and affiliated desires run counter to the social reproduction of notions of personhood that are facilitated through certain types of education and work related practices that have perpetuated patterns of social exclusion?

### **2.3 Social dialogue**

Socio-economic reforms require engagement and participation amongst different social partners. The concept of social dialogue is of relevance in this regard—especially as it continues to hold significance for policy-makers and organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the EU. Amongst members of the ILO and EU, social dialogue often denotes the following types of exchanges, accordingly with Darling & Clauwaert (2003: 248):

- Tripartite concentration to designate exchanges between the social partners and European public authorities.
- Consultation of the social partners to designate the activities of advisory committees and official consultations in the spirit of Article 137 of the EC Treaty (replaced by Article 153 in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU); and
- Social dialogue to designate bipartite work by the social partners, whether or not prompted by the Commission’s official consultations based on Articles 137 and 138 of the EC Treaty (replaced by Article 153 and 154 in the in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, TFEU) .

There are some slight nuances between EU and ILO perspectives of social dialogue. According to Article 154 in the in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union



(TFEU), the negotiated outcomes of social dialogue are intended to become the legally or contractually binding agreement frameworks for the management of the process of social and economic reform. The overall aim of EU social dialogue is to facilitate reform within the industrial and labour sectors that can potentially decrease social and economic marginalization and exclusion. In the case of the Arab world for example, the EUROMED social dialogue forum of 2013 saw representatives from different countries come together to address concerns about the informal economy. Meanwhile the ILO (2013) has emphasized dimensions of labour rights, differentiating between bilateral and tripartite forms of social dialogue, where the former suggests collective bargaining and negotiation between employer and workers, while the latter includes governmental representatives. In this regard, social dialogue is seen by the ILO as playing an important role in achieving a number of objectives of concern to that organisation, namely advancing opportunities to attain productive and decent working conditions where freedom, equality, security and human dignity are upheld. To be a true social dialogue, the consultative process must include formal and informal negotiations between government representatives, employers, and workers on issues of mutual interest.

Given that this report is aimed at recommending policy options at EU-level stakeholders, attention is predominantly given to tri-partite social dialogue. Nevertheless, the ILO particular focus on workers' rights remain an important feature of the report and most especially in connection to the way improvement in labour standards can assist in the building of social cohesion (see also, Pace & Schumacher, 2007; Silvestri, 2007)

## 2.4 Social cohesion

Social cohesion differs from the concepts of social integration and inclusion. Concepts of social inclusion and integration are problematic because of the potential to assume the remedy to its antithesis—social exclusion—is to simply integrate those practices external to the social system under analysis. However, for practices of social inclusion to succeed, the practices external to the social system must be made equivalent to complement the pre-existing structures. Yet in doing so, issues of diversity are often unable to be accounted for. The repercussions of such strategies of inclusion can be illustrated through ongoing limited accessibility to education and labour of minority and marginalized groups.

Policies of social inclusion are unable to address the problems that are at the core of the system. As opposed to (re)offering the means through which to reproduce the unequal structures, we therefore aim to utilize the concept of social cohesion in order to examine socio-economic opportunities for youth under which a new social contract can emerge. Our aim is thus to assist in the development or promotion of policies of social dialogue informed by: “an ethos of relational” and justice and care (Shuayb, 2012: 11).

The concept of social cohesion has the principal objective of allowing for a proximate scale of social participation, while also taking into account political and economic factors (Shuayb, 2012). In this regard, social cohesion goes beyond discourses of citizenship or education that simply attempt to ensure employability in a highly competitive labour market (e.g. Shuayb, 2012: 13). In doing so, social cohesion is informed by a much deeper understanding of inclusion and empowerment that can recognize the fluidity of differences and similarities of culture(s) and communities as much as it does of individuals.

### **3. Methodology**

The research for this report was conducted through collaboration of four research groups across the AMCs and based upon team leader guidelines (Lebanon) in the framework of the SAHWA project. Each national team had approximately one month to collate data utilizing qualitative methodologies culminating in a five-six page document that was sent to the Lebanon team. The guidelines were based on carry out interviews and/or focus groups and document analysis.

#### **3.1 Interviews and focus groups**

Researchers were expected to identify actors of social dialogue and conduct four-five semi-structured interviews or a focus group. The objective of the interviews and/or focus group was to understand from the perspective of particular local actors of social dialogue, the effectiveness of (if any) current policies, legislation and other strategies that promote social dialogue amongst young people. Given the socio-economic dimensions of the concept of social dialogue, actors are also expected to be involved in issues such as labour and

employment. It was also recommended that the national teams engaged with actors who work in both governmental and non-governmental organizations where there is specific focus on aspects of socio-economic exclusion, marginalization, empowerment and participation. Actors could also be political activists. Researchers were also provided with a question template that could be used in the focus group and/or interviews. While there was recognition of expertise of each national team, it was expected that the standardized questionnaire would assist in the writing of a policy report that requires a cross-comparative analysis across number of different regional levels. Researchers were also asked in the summary of the focus group or synthesis of interviews to identify and evaluate themes that surfaced in the discussions.

### **3.2 Document analysis**

An overview and bibliographic report of relevant policies, legislation and of some of the literature that evaluates these policies and legislation will support the above data analysis. National teams were expected to provide document analysis of issues that are concerned with the themes of social dialogue and social cohesion.

### **3.3 Brief overview of each country's methodologies**

The Algerian team have drawn their conclusions from a number of informal interviews as well as previous studies conducted on youth and social dialogue in the country.

The Egyptian team conducted interviews with two ex-Ministers for the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a young person working in government and another who worked with UNICEF in Egypt. Two final interviews were conducted with recent graduates who have worked in student unions in their respective institutes when they were students.

In the case of Lebanon, the researchers conducted a focus group with youth-workers, social workers, governmental personnel and activists. The duration of the focus group was for approximately one hour. The Lebanon team also looked at the data collected during ethnographic research, drawing on focus groups with young people from Ras Beirut, Beirut

suburb of Ein El Remmeneh and the village of Joun in the Chouf Mountains. Data analysis indicates a number of well-researched policy papers on the relationship between youth, labour and employment, but lacking in social dialogue. Legislation concerned with young people is also predominantly absent. Qualitative research on youth related issues in Lebanon focuses mostly upon the urban context.

Finally, the Moroccan team also conducted informal interviews and drew on a number of pre-existing studies.

#### **4. Conditions of social dialogue from each country**

In the following sections, each of the national teams present an analysis of their data collected from interviews/focus groups and document analysis. Despite the different historical and social contexts of each country, a number of parallels can be drawn. Similarities emerge in connection to the ways young people in the AMCs are marginalized from work not only because they may lack the required qualifications but also due to the absences of networks and connections within particular work related spheres.

##### **4.1 Algerian youth and social dialogue**

In application of the recommendations of the ILO with regard to the deepening of social dialogue, was held in the city of Biskra (a town situated in the nearest south of the country) a tripartite meeting in social dialogue and social protection between the Government, the General Union of Workers and Employers' Organizations (in presence of Mr. Guy Ryder, General Director of the International Labour Office, who attended the meeting to see the experience of Algeria), The meeting was devoted to assess the implementation level of National Economic and Social pact for development and to promote the existing compatibility between the various social and economic partners about the strategic objectives of development (Tripartite meeting. Final communiqué. October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

In this context, in attending the general assembly of ILO, the Algerian Ministry of labour, employment and social security said that Algeria called up at least four ministerial sectors to

meet the social protection requirements in the areas of social security, the protection of vulnerable social groups, to ensure free health coverage as well as social housing programs. This endeavour is based on social dialogue in which all the partners are involved in a tripartite framework which forms the ideal framework to discuss and develop policies that belong to the world of work (325<sup>th</sup> session of the Council of the ILO. Plenary session 2015).

In a study on *Young people look to the future through social and religious values in Algeria*, (Boukabous *et al.*, 2013), it has been shown the young subject of the study, dissatisfaction with the performance of education and public education system increased by 62.42%, which calls for the development and improve the performance of the involvement of the private sector in a homogeneous and harmonious form. This provides a clear picture of the level of awareness concerning the importance of the system of education and its contribution to the improvement and building a future of social dialogue.

#### 4.1.1 Youth, education and training

Education and training system contribute, as already noted, at all levels in the preparation and social rehabilitation of young people to ensure communication between the generations and contribute to the economic, social and cultural development process without discontinuity intersection and ensure a smooth transition of roles.

One can review a number of institutions set up by the state in Algeria in order to promote the category of young people. These are:

- *Higher Education Network*: consists of ninety-seven (97) institutions of higher education, spread over forty-eight (48) provinces across the national territory, including high schools, preparatory schools, and university centres. These institutions receive more than one million 300.000 students in various disciplines along with the campus, restaurants, transport and grants.
- *National educational system*: It consists of 24.932 structures for various levels. They take charge of more than eight million pupils, along with the process of providing textbook distribution free of charge to 50% of the pupils. Feeding and granting pupils from poor families.

• *Vocational training network*: It consists 1.213 schools. Together the Institutes and the Centres they receives more than 410,000 pupils spread over more than one hundred competences and scattered in different parts of the country (Mebarki.M, Ministry of vocational training, 2015). These institutions provide, according to their different curricula and programs, opportunities to many of the young people for to get science and knowledge in order to contribute to the society development. Also it provides the formation of the integrated individual who works for the creation of wealth and promotes living in peace within a solidarity society and mutually reinforcing seeking justice and equality in rights and duties. This is what further deepens the meanings of social dialogue at various institutional levels.

#### **4.1.2 The reality of young people and social communication**

Algerian society has passed a series of events and very hard troubles after the financial crisis that happened in 1986 and generated the October 1988 events and the subsequent 1990 as the country entered the circle of bloody violence – commonly called the black decade - where youth was both the instigator and the victim. But the fact of the matter, it is the first force in the construction and development of the society, with an estimated rate of under the age of 29 years the proportion of 55.2% (*El-watan* 29 03.2015). It constitutes an important human resources, if not receiving enough attention, will turn the power of solving the crisis and building the future, to clog and inhibitor of the development process in all domains.

This calls for a change in the view of officials towards youth who see it the causes of the problems and unrest and deal with it on the basis of accusations of mistrust and demonisation. Most of the studies have indicated that 70% of the members of the society are of working age, and this requires the creation and establishment of 12 million new jobs in the foreseeable future, as well as of educational positions to teach 12 million pupils and students and apprentices, besides ensuring social security for medical treatment to 3.3 million citizens over the age of 60 years and providing healthcare for 1 million women who give birth each year (*El Watan économie n ° 465 du 06/04/2015*). It was to 1990 events a large impact of structural shifts in the economic structure, about which the state was forced to gradually withdraw from its role based on the appeasement and social fondling, and went

to price liberalization and privatization. So, that had directly an impact on members of the society and in particular the young and vulnerable groups.

Ironically, these policies and reforms led to lower the unemployment rate, where in 2013 it amounted to 10% and holders of university degrees counted of 15.7% of this ratio (*Office national des statistiques, 2014*). But, with the rising income of oil, the general trend of social policy changed and went to:

- Improve the living conditions of the population.
- Open jobs through some legal procedures which touched the young expelled from work and degree holders.
- Provide for social housing and promotional.

But the results of these adopted reforms and development policies were hypothetical because they were not based on production out of oil income. Then, it began to appear difficult to achieve effective integration of individuals in society. We had the position of some young (Responsible in youth organisations 2015) on the subject through their answers to the following question: What do you think are the opportunities available to young people today? Their answers indicate that the state institutions have become serving private social groups and stand by their side at the expense of other social groups. These policies achieved some gains for the benefit of young people, but they did not achieve what was expected from them as results.

According to the respondents group of individuals, the reality is expressed in these words: The absence of justice and equity within state institutions expressed by saying :

- Corruption is prevailing in the institutions
- There is a risk of widening social gap between the new rich, who do not know how they got the wealth, and the rest of other social groups. These reasons contributed to the emergence of
- A sense of marginalization, feeling of contempt and humiliation.
- Spread violence and fear because of the absence and the weakness of the state. In Algeria there were between July 2010 and July 2011, 9009 police interventions for maintaining

public order. On their side the road closure dam acts increased from 977 to 2493 in 2011 (*Safir.N. 2012.158*).

- Absence of law that protects and preserves the rights.
- Absence of deterrence against some of the negative behaviours such as violence against women and children in society at large.
- Loss of some core values as love of work, education, and entrepreneurship.
- Loss of some of the political, social, national and religious references to be substituted by CIT (globalization effects?)

This latest situation caused a deep rift between the institutions and some segments of the society, resulted in youth unemployment, marginalization, and lack of hope. "*Herga*" (irregular migration) or the desire to migrate and leave the country. This situation has an impact on the absence of solidarity, coexisting values, and respect for others.

#### 4.2 Addressing youth policies in Egypt

The development of the youth policies in Egypt had its ups and downs throughout history. Beginning from the 1970s and up until today; youth have moved up and down the government's priorities, depending on a number of factors but with the political one being one of the most important. Youth policies in Egypt can be traced back to its rise in the 1970s where the student unions in universities began their rise after Sadat's attempt to liberalize the economy that came together with some efforts for opening up political spheres. 1979 witnessed the establishment of the Council of Youth and Sports; that has kept on evolving back and forth until today. In 1981, Mubarak turned the Council into a Ministry, however, the 1980s and 90s "did not witness much youth contention; their activism was contained within closed university doors" (Sika, 2016). In the year 2000 with more power given to Gamal Mubarak, came the establishment of the Future Generation Foundation, that aimed to work as a tool for young people to be included within the policy-making process. The 2000s decade generally, witnessed a number of activist movements led by young people including "Kefaya" and 6<sup>th</sup> of April movements. However, they were contained again by the regime; through containing liberal and containable youth and imprisoning radical youth (Sika, 2016). Currently, the Ministry of youth and sports remains to be the one in charge of youth policies through which it cooperates with a number of state institutions such as: Ministry of



Education and Vocational Schools, Ministry of manpower and migration and different youth councils. There was an attempt in 2003 by the dissolved National Democratic Party to set a National Youth Policy but it was never adopted. The definition of youth in Egypt remains to be changeable as well depending on the context and the organization or institution defining it, where generally speaking it can range between 15 years old and up to 35 years old.

Through the interviews carried out main themes can be identified but which are also overlapping including: civic and political participation and employment and education. At this point for the analysis is important to identify the two categories of stakeholders interviewed:

Government on Youth: The interviews conducted within this category were two with currently two professors in a public university who have served as Ministers of Youth and Sports.

Youth on Youth: Youth working on youth issues expressed a slightly different point of view from the elder government officials working on youth policies. The first interviewee is a young person, part of the new policy to recruit young people as assistants to some ministers. In this case our interviewee is working as an assistant to the minister of youth and sports. The two other interviews were from representatives from UNICEF Egypt that worked as both Program officer and consultant in youth and Adolescence Development and Participation Program.

#### **4.2.1 Civic and political participation**

##### **a. Government on youth**

Both interviewed from Ministers highlighted that youth have become more active in their communities post the January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution. Participation has increased compared to the ordinary, and more calls for social and political changes started to emerge. One has mentioned that there has been a “Politicization” of Egyptian youth, where the involvement in politics has increased significantly. However, the inspiration began to fade away. One of the interviewees clearly stated that there has been a decline in the participation and it was witnessed through both: constitution referendum and presidential elections, and at the time

he expected that the decline would continue in the parliamentary elections, which turned out to be the case in the different rounds of the elections that took place in October-November 2015. However, the same interviewee mentioned that more participation from youth side would be expected in the Local Councils elections which have a quota of 25% for youth and allows youth as young as twenty-one years old to run for elections in local councils. Moreover, with regards to political participation and youth behaviour both interviewees agreed that youth failed to participate or form their own political parties as they failed to unite together.

### **b. Youth on youth**

The youth interviewed pointed out that January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution represented a gate of hope to most youth around the country, and it is that over-optimism that caused the disillusionment/de-motivation later on, that we still live in today. There was a boom of optimism among youth, and a general belief that they can make changes. Accordingly, youth activities increased in NGOs and a lot of youth groups and youth-led organizations appeared. Three- four years on, it is not the same, there is a feeling of disappointment, they are not as politically active as immediately after January 25<sup>th</sup>. However, they both agreed that something has changed as a consequence of January 25<sup>th</sup> to make youth more empowered and more recognized in their societies and in the country overall.

Moreover, one of the interviewees spoke about a problem of social exclusion, forcing youth to create their own worlds and produce their own culture such as the “Ultras” and the “Mahragant” songs. The other interviewee mentioned the reason of that pressing issue of social exclusion to be due to the fact that youth have no trust in the government and the society in general. Youth stakeholders do not exert much effort to understand youth problems and aspirations; therefore, they need to start dealing with them as partners. Finally, they both agreed as well that the educational system needs a long-term plan to ensure sustainability and a better quality to cope with future needs of market and society.

## 4.2.2 Employment: the main concern

### a. Government on youth

Both interviewees clearly stated that the number 1-10 challenge or problem that youth face today would always stem back to unemployment. Unemployment from their point of view is the main factor that initiates and moves other problems. They viewed unemployment as the catalyst to any other problem including: political and civic engagement, migration and more, including daily interactions and quality of life. Lack of employment as they put it causes a deep sense of injustice leading to hatred towards the country leading to extremism in different means. Moreover, they also spoke about the lack of youth with good calibre and skills that meet the market needs. An example was given of how Egypt is unable to meet its quota of migration for job opportunities in Italy through government partnerships due to the incompetent skills of its potential employees. Education here is *the* independent variable that results in the undesired outcome: un-employability.

### b. Youth on youth

They all agreed that the main challenge is unemployment; indeed for them it represents the major cause to all other challenges. It was also mentioned that Egyptian youth lack enough skills that would help their employability. Overall, they saw unemployment as the pressing challenge facing youth in Egypt. Unemployment is a very big problem; the available jobs are not matching with young people's education. There is still a tendency to work in the public sector that again causes another balancing problem. Moreover, the job market in Egypt has an informal sector that is dominating due to its flexibility in the working conditions and higher salaries, causing a loss of good calibre required for governmental positions.

## 4.3 Education, skills and employability in Lebanon

During focus-group discussions, a number of participants highlighted the importance of education in terms of facilitating further social cohesion amongst the youth in Lebanon.

Education provided the skills with which young people could develop their futures in employment and in society. It is somewhat poignant in this regard, that education in Lebanon is very much divided along socio-economic, gender and religious lines.

In Lebanon, a new school curriculum was established in 1998. It involved the training of 16,000 teachers in public schools and 6000 in private ones. However, the new curriculum maintained the capstone examination, which is called the Lebanese baccalaureate. As an example, this general national examination requires knowledge of History up to 1943, a date where the curriculum stops considering History with the independence of the Lebanese state because there is disagreement among various political and sectarian groups about the history of the country since then. This leads to lack of coherence in curriculum. The educational system has also suffered from structural problems. The teaching body has a long history of activism trying to improve working conditions. Often, school teachers go into strike over pay and pensions. The most recent strikes took place in 2014 during examination period. The government reacted negatively when the Minister of Education and Higher Learning issued a decree to allow all graduating students to pass. Since then a series of continued interruption in education of public school students has been occurring. The student body has also its own problems, mainly suffering from employment upon graduation. Indeed, Lebanon has a high unemployment level of young people, with a rate of 24% (Kawar & Tzannator, 2012), while 48% of Lebanese emigrating have university degrees (Yaccoub & Badre, 2011).

The Lebanese educational system is mixed; both the public and private sectors provide schools and universities. The Lebanese baccalaureate is compulsory for all Lebanese citizens—unless they have dual nationality. Most private schools offer the Lebanese baccalaureate as well other education programmes such as the French Baccalaureate, the International Baccalaureate or the American High School. Similarly, private universities offer degrees that are accredited by foreign and/or international educational bodies. For example, degrees offered by the American University of Beirut follow the same standards as those degree courses offered at U.S. universities. Lebanese citizens are able to choose between public and private universities. Our focus group participants discussed the differences between public and private education institutes in connection to the standard of education, highlighting the difference in standards between public and private education

institutions. Significantly, all of the participants from the focus group of stakeholders—including government personnel—considered the Lebanese University failing in terms of providing the skills required for students to enter into the job market. Many also pointed out that public schools and universities did not necessarily reflect the contemporary world: there was a general consensus that public schools and universities were often quite restrictive especially in terms of social development.

Amongst the site-oriented focus groups, the distinction between private and public education was raised by the young people in connection to the Arabic term for authority. Participants spoke of how state-run schools and universities followed a very rigid system. Young people spoke of how there was very little space for engagement and discussion. They felt that they were often expected to follow instructions from their teachers without questioning their authority. Although private schools and universities were considered to have more up to date standards and perhaps less exercises of “authority”, participants from all focus groups highlighted the disadvantages of the business and profit-making dimension of the private education sector. Students who attend private schools and universities were subject to pressure of over-performing in their examinations, and often expected to pursue university degrees in subjects such as engineering, business and medicine that did not necessarily interest them.

Young people who had attended public schools and/or universities expressed similar sentiment, noting that they were offered little career advice or any guidelines to assist them in making life decisions, such as entering into an appropriate vocation. Advice that was given seemed to have more to do with ensuring that young people were guided into jobs that were deemed as “socially” appropriate. For example, teachers at a public school in a predominantly Christian area advised a young lady who wanted to enter in hotel management that such a profession was not morally appropriate for women. Instead, she was advised to register onto a course for nursery school training.

Issues surrounding the learning of particular languages surfaced when participants began to discuss the types of opportunities they felt that young people had in life. Some participants particularly from the Ein El Remmaneh group expressed some sort of regret for not having the option to take other languages at school. One young person spoke of how they were unable to pursue a degree in medicine because courses were only available in French and

English, and she only spoke Arabic. Language barriers were often more complicated, with some university degrees at the Lebanese University that included compulsory courses in all three languages. Students felt that they were at times academically proficient in none of the languages. The repercussions of the minimal attention to the standardization of languages in connection to providing adequate conditions for social dialogue are self-evident. Many participants expressed the differences between the standards of public and private education as being mostly politically charged. For example, there was no agreed understanding of history in Lebanon—most especially during the civil war. As a result, many history books in public school officially end in 1945.

#### **4.3.1 Other social factors effecting employability**

The young lady who was dissuaded from entering into hospital management completed her training to work in nursery schools. However, she went into work as a secretary for an accountant at the main offices for Lebanon’s National Electricity Board. During that time, her boss had started to train her in accountancy. It is significant that according to Kawar & Tzannator (2013), accountancy is the lowest type of training skills offered by companies in Lebanon with the highest being soft skills, followed managerial training and then IT. Indeed, were it not for her benevolent boss, the young lady would not have had such opportunity. Yet this type of benevolence, as the young lady openly admitted, had a lot to do with the fact that both her and her boss were from the same religious sect. The young lady, and many other participants in our focus groups spoke critically of such practices of religious sectarianism. Many pointed out that social divisions through sectarianism often increased at university level—both public and private—where particular subjects were monopolized by teachers who were affiliated to particular political parties. Participants often raised the issue of “wasta”, or connections during the focus groups. Students and potential employees had to rely upon patron-client networks in order to get good grades or find a job. Lack of transparency was often a significant feature prohibiting social dialogue and also social cohesion.

#### **4.4 Youth in Morocco: socioeconomic integration and accessibility challenges the power of action**

A third of young people participating in the labour market (nearly a quarter in urban areas). The share of young people in employment falls: 15% of workers are young (25% in 2000). Young people are more vulnerable to unemployment: 19% of 15-24 year olds and 13% of 25-34 years are unemployed (against 9.2% of the assets of 15 and over in 2013). The situation of relatively young adults worsens: the gap between youth unemployment and adult is widening. Unemployment affects more graduates: 18.8% of university graduates are unemployed (4.5% among non-graduates assets) for job creation in the public sector fell sharply and general education diplomas not meet the needs of private enterprises. More than one in two is unemployed first-time job seeker: new entrants to the labour market face either the transitional difficulties, but indeterminate. Youth unemployment is dominated by long-term unemployment: two thirds of young unemployed have been unemployed for a year or more. Most young people working in non-wage jobs: almost 68% of young people under 25 active exercise unpaid activities not covered by the labour law in rural areas. The majority of youth work without contracts: young people and especially non-graduates are most affected by job insecurity: only 11% of young workers under 25 have a written contract of employment and 14.5% of non-graduates (against 79.8% for graduates with higher education) (2012). The desire to change jobs is important among the young people, reflecting dissatisfaction with the occupation performed, expressed by 17% of the working population, but this proportion is twice as large among youth 25 to 34 years and cover 62% of non-graduates (HCP, 2012, 2013).

##### **4.4.1 Social dialogue and public policy of the young**

Today, "the records specifically speaking youth and their interests are poorly treated or represented in the social dialogue with the government unions" reports one of the interviewed. The actors involved raise, for example, the interest to consider youth employment needs in the debate on pensions in Morocco. As part of this dialogue, issues for use by temporary platforms or in the call centre companies are asked, it concerns a large number of employees of which over 80% are young people "near around 50,000 young people working in this sector, in appalling conditions further decent work criteria in relation

to workplaces, number of hours worked and wages paid. UMT is one of the few unions to invest in defending the interests of this category of young employees", points out one informer." The labour value is underrepresented, and the rise of the idea of quick and easy gain and the search of the "Hmza"(or good opportunity to make easy money), reflect the ratio of young people at work. This report has changed considerably since it no longer seeks stability through employment which also impacts the ability of young people to create wealth ..." adds other interviewed.

The National Strategy for Integrated Youth (Snij) was also an opportunity to see the difficulty of the ministry of youth to want to position themselves as the appropriate unifying framework and coordinate all government policy on social integration of young "government launched in late 2015 a compulsory health insurance support program for students, as a measure incorporating this philosophy of action expected from the Snij but we found that on the other hand, for example in terms of law 2016 Finance, discussed and validated recently by parliament, this is competently Snij absent from the budget programming reserved for the Ministry of Youth, "adds an informer. So far this strategy launched by the government has not yet been operationalized due, among others, lack of vision and no concrete proposal on the Youth Advisory Council and associative action, provided for by the constitution as leverage tool for public policies on youth and their needs.

#### **4.4.2 Social participation and the power to act in youth**

The different street movements and citizen protest, now in Morocco, are crossed by a strong presence of youth. "Street events few weeks ago in Tangiers against the high cost of Water and Electricity bills (following the public decision to outsource the management of these services to society AMANDIS) had a strong presence of youth and neighbourhood associations, mostly led by young professionals' graduates unemployment" recalls one interviewed. This presence also shows a strong awareness and mobilization against local policies, despite the low frame rate of the young by political parties. These policies have offers that do not attract young people who are indifferent compared to partisan action. The same is unfortunately also noted the side of the unions that come to frame that less than 6% of the Moroccan working class. There is also the important question of challenging young people's access to power and decision-making positions within these partisan organizations



and trade unions, which poses a delicate problem in the Moroccan context marked by a difficult alternating between the generation of precursors and the young. The dynamic young people who have influenced and accompany the travels of the institutional and political change in the country in recent years, were often the result of initiatives supported by the associations acting locally or nationally.

#### **4.4.3 The role of local authorities in social cohesion for youth**

The new territorial configuration, even with a non-fully paid diagram of centralism and centrality of the state, offers significant opportunities for socio-economic development provided to adopt new mechanisms for management and territorial governance and public decisions locally. The new regionalization, as launched in Morocco in recent months must be accompanied by another movement regionalization fair skills and distribution of means, this to the extent that decentralization should also cover the education system which has remained centralized without opening the potential of these new territories ... regions must appropriate the power to decide public policies that concern the own population in each region depending on the specifics and resources of each territory, going towards the poles of economic competencies territories that could be beneficial to youth employment in particular (Marrakesh, tourism and services, Casablanca, pole educations and training centers in financial management, Nord adapt with the existence of industrial clusters and car manufacturing ...)

On another level, there is a need to develop processes that encourage municipalities to adopt "sensitive budgets to youth" and to their expectations and concerns. Given this and the difficulty of finding enough resources, the challenges of local development that policies often prefer to invest in public infrastructure such as roads that mobilize funds related to projects for young people specifically. Elected officials must assume this responsibility and develop consultative bodies and territorial dialogue that can enable these youth associations and citizens to have direct communication channels and negotiation with policy makers and local elected officials. At this stage Articles 13, 14, 15 and 139 of the Constitution of 2011 are clearly in favour of the establishment of a new participatory democratic pedagogy able to

support representative democracy process and bridge the gap communication and dialogue between citizens and public authorities.

#### 4.4.4 NGOs youth, positioning challenges

The Moroccan associative fabric has always been the land of privileged youth expression especially in urban areas. Youth disappointment at the choice of socio-economic policy makers is often expressed at the time of elections, the low level of youth participation. Young Moroccans are investing more the voluntary sector as political parties and trade unions, which has led in recent years by a growing number of youth associations in neighbourhoods and cities to make their voices heard face public policy makers and local politicians. The associations that specialize in these matters and that make the heart of their business Youth are becoming more numerous.

"By the end of 2015 and at the end of the sitting held at Rabat, 54 organizations and youth associations have organized themselves into national coalition called the Civil Council of youth organizations," added an interviewed, aiming to develop their plea deal the government and parliament, better share experiences and create centres of expertise particularly in regions and local authorities, and also clarified the bedrock of shared values that mobilize around issues of young people. This kind of experience is some added value for civil society by positioning itself as interlocutor of the government on the implementation of the Integrated National Strategy for Youth.

At local level, some interesting experiments have been launched several years ago in order to supervise the local social demand and facilitate dialogue with local decision makers. These experiences are cited local Youth Councils, in cities and working in parallel to the elected councils on issues of territorial development, youth employment and women in precarious situations. These are experiences that will aim to impact decision making it is national or local. "Unfortunately some experiences of these local Councils of youth have experienced some sort of manipulation by politicians and local elected officials. They continue all the ways to use youth as tools for electoral companions and exclude possibility of having access to political positions as candidates and stand for election... these young people if they are local elected officials will better defend their interests and talk about their problems it is in a city or in parliament" pointed out an informant.

## 5. Concluding remarks and recommendations

A lot of work must be done in order to improve the conditions for social dialogue and the facilitation of social cohesion within each of the AMCs discussed in this report. On a broad level, the EU must issue a more practical agenda with realistic goals. Further research must be conducted on the “ground” in order to consider what are the most achievable outcomes per country. Social dialogue should also be considered under the framework of social cohesion—a concept and methodology that can allow for heterogeneity within a community. To conclude, the following sections provide recommendations from each country.

### 5.1 Algeria

The recommendations we propose are divided into two groups. The first group regards strategic recommendations while the second group concerns practical recommendations.

#### 5.1.1 The strategic dimension of recommendations

- Develop a strategy encouraging socialisation institutions to accommodate changes at the level of social dialogue while maintaining the positive impact of the prevailing value system.
- Set a strategy that would be able to ensure social, psychological and cultural security for young, through social, economic and educational policy guaranteeing work and a decent life for young people, freeing them from the spectre of unemployment and the uncertain future.
- Building a strategy to ensure the cooperation between the governmental cultural institutions and organisations of civil society. It is also to enable and accelerate pace of realisation of this link in order to give the chance of success in the democratic transformations taking place.
- Consider a strategy for environmental education for young people at all levels of the national education system, accompanied by awareness and education programs for young people and the different segments of society for the preservation of environment with limited capacity in comparison to the demands of population growth and expansion of the use of means of comfort.

### 5.1.2 The practical dimension of recommendations

- Initiate spaces for social dialogue on the problems of young people of both sexes and listen to their concerns and ambitions especially in local communities.
- Encourage youth involvement in the formulation and setting of local development policy and meet their aspirations and their creative capabilities.
- Encourage and develop incentives for young people to contribute to local development through their membership in civil society organisations.
- Apply a development policy based on priority to youth employment in public and private companies, so they can have confidence in state institutions.
- Establish a referral policy in educational institutions and training that enables young people to have information about the projection of their future in terms of training and professions or jobs.
- Install an information system allowing young people access to information covering the religious, social, economic, educational, cultural and recreational issues.
- Create national bodies to the accompaniment of young people in difficulty of achieving social, work and family integration.
- Support and encourage families in strengthening ties between their members through dialogue in solidarity and support for the children in case of unemployment, disability or disease.
- Create a mediation structure that works to strengthen relations between young people and official bodies within the educational and cultural institutions, particularly at the poor neighbourhoods where there are no support structures for youth activities.

## 5.2 Egypt

### 5.2.1 Government on youth

Both interviewees who have served in the government previously started suggesting ideas of what the government should do and the role it should play. First of all, they believed that the government needed to acknowledge that youth need more than just sports to occupy their

free time. Second, the youth should be viewed as an important factor for political and social aspects and should be empowered in both sectors accordingly. Both mentioned also the need for a National Youth Policy document to guide policies towards youth and how to empower and utilize this asset and social force. They both mentioned as well that the document has been developed and discussed but it was never implemented or published. The National Youth Policy would be used as a tool to oblige all ministries which could impact on policies towards youth to consult together and coordinate. It is in this context that both former ministers mentioned the central but tricky role of the ministry of youth and sports, since it is expected to coordinate with all ministries in order to be able to come out with a proper outcome.

Finally, on the youth future and what they can offer to the country, both were quite optimistic to a certain extent. They believed that youth can still be capitalized upon, although the credibility of some youth groups as perceived at present by many sectors in society has declined to a certain extent. They mentioned that their (over-)politicized role has affected their image in the society negatively but the ruling elite remains to have a positive point of view, and that should be utilized. Moreover, they believed in the importance of NGOs and the different civil society organizations, as these remain to be the door for youth to work on the ground. The new trend of recruiting youth in governmental positions has not been criticized however; though one of the interviewees mentioned that youth empowerment is not only through offering high hierarchy positions in ministries, rather in giving them the space to innovate and work in the society and that is done through civil society organizations as well.

### 5.2.2 Youth on youth

There exists a lack of transparency that constitutes a challenge for the government towards youth, as the government is unable to build trust with youth. The interviewed went on to discuss that empowerment to youth in Egypt is very limited if compared to the number of youth around the country although different trainings are usually offered to a number of youth in the country but it is never enough to accommodate the huge number of youth all over Egypt. The ministry's main role is to try to improve skills and that is done through

trainings, however the budget is quite limited to accommodate such trainings. Moreover, he also mentioned the problem of not having a National Youth Policy document that should be available to guide policies towards youth. In this context, he mentioned that there should be some discussions/dialogue with some youth representatives in order to create such a document. Therefore, the role of youth in the country is being a watchdog of government policies. Also he believed that more initiatives and volunteering are required and that NGOs and civil society organizations should be capitalized on as they are the gates towards more active youth.

### 5.2.3 Youth within their communities

Finally, these are two local actors that influence social dialogue and represent a larger stratum among the youth category. It is worthy to note, that both interviewees are university graduates, one also attained a masters degree and is currently a PhD candidate. Both interviewees were active members of their institutions' student union, at a time when the country was at its climax of effervescence and political turmoil. As such they both have strong views and opinions as to factors affecting the socialization of people into their society today.

Alaa is a graduate of the American University in Cairo serving as president of the student union who was able to influence policy. His experiences reflect an interaction with the government teasing out some of the structural problems and highlighting the deficiencies of the policy. On a student level, the union was successful in mobilizing students as well as making them aware of the current political situation in Egypt. Alaa was also successful in reviving what was known as “The Egyptian Student Union” or “Etihad Tulab Misr” that brought together private and public university students that was inactive since the Sadat era. Alaa also pioneered several dialogues/discussions with government representatives in an attempt to implement and promote youth empowerment initiatives. Attempts of social dialogue were also coupled with mobilization waves to go down in the main streets of the capital to engage the youth in active participation and lobby to attain their aspirations. These aspirations pertained to a civilian president, an improved economy, anti-corruption etc. The revolution was believed to be a “path corrector” or something that would put the Egyptians

back on track. While Alaa saw hope at the end of the tunnel, similar members of the youth stratum like Sherif saw it differently, and decided to marginalize/side line political and social participation from his life.

Sherif shared the common perception about the revolution by having high aspirations. He identified the number one priority when it came to reform as constitutional reform. Seeing it as the main contract that governed interaction between government and citizens, Sherif believed that this was the best starting point. With the events of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013, Sherif was discouraged and preferred to quit political life since it was unworthy, and that government policies to exclude the youth and not integrate their political and economic demands continued.

While both disagreed in regards to continuing or quitting to engage and to participate in local political action, both Alaa and Sherif converged when it came to the idea of local councils. While local councils have been dissolved ever-since the uprisings of 2011, they have not been reformulated yet. Local councils seem to be a promising start for youth participation at this stage since the youth now have a 25% quota in the local councils with a minimum age of 21 years. This is the only opportunity that Sherif claims would bring him back into politics.

Alaa and Sherif also highlight the problems that currently face youth today limiting their opportunity when it comes to participation. The common factor in both youth cases is found in the bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is a strong problem in the Egyptian system that directly affects every local actor. Whether the interaction occurs at the governmental or non governmental level, it has become a problem that is became rooted into the Egyptian bureaucracy when interacting with parties. Youth empowerment is very slow in that sense, suffering from the lack of integration leading to failed transition periods on all levels. In Sherif's words "we do not know about what is happening or what has happened". If we apply this on all levels, one can conclude that indeed the problem of the uprising was the lack of leadership, or unity among the factions who were supposedly united for one cause against an unfair regime. Another problem among the youth today is the actual acknowledgment of the problem itself. In other words, youth today must acknowledge the bureaucratic regime that is vested in all aspects of the Egyptian society; only then can we actually come to a solution and act upon it.

Egypt continues to witness waves of high and low political engagement on behalf of its youth. While Egyptian youth seem to be more towards the discouraged end of the spectrum, there is indeed hope. Sherif is a strong believer in the power of the youth and is optimistic about the future. This is something that he witnesses daily when he interacts with youth from around the country in different developmental projects. Sherif adds that strong entrepreneurs exist in Egypt; it is time we actually used them and positioned them in the most suitable places. Sherif also witnesses from his work that the youth from Upper Egypt have huge potential and energy that is to be explored and put to good use. One should note that the government should be the main exploiter and organizer of such existing but unexploited energy, which is to be channelled in the appropriate developmental areas.

When it comes to youth in the decision making process, Alaa highlights that a huge percentage of Egyptian youth still lack basic skills and are somewhat unqualified to lead and formulate policies. Again, they stress that the government and civil society organizations need to have a clear vision of how to develop and efficiently use the power vested in those people. Alaa's main policy recommendation was to actually make use of those entrepreneurs that do exist, but need to be directed and encouraged. This way, Egypt can produce a calibre that can lead in all aspects of the future. While the government has recently attempted to recruit and encourage participation of youth assistants to several ministers, bureaucracy is still an obstacle that derails its effectiveness and delays its development.

#### 5.2.4 Current reforms

Almost all stakeholders have agreed that the government's policies have been changing slightly towards more inclusion for youth. The president is more aware of youth power and potential and that has been visible from his speeches and decisions. Although, there aren't specific laws for youth involvement in the country as highlighted by him as well, he did see some light and hope from the new elections law for both parliamentary and local councils, and believed that this is a positive step towards youth political empowerment.

The government policies towards youth have slightly changed, whether it is effective or not, but there is a real interest among ministries to collaborate and empower youth. There have been real steps and examples that include innovating the new position of a minister's advisor



for youth and the new program of forming youth leaders to play a role in the local government<sup>3</sup>. However, both interviewees again mentioned the need for the development of a National youth Policy that identifies youth problems, aspirations and a plan to address these challenges. The former NDP (National Democratic Party) has produced a national youth policy but it was never implemented.

### 5.2.5 The Presidential Leadership Program (PLP)

If we look at the current overall picture, Egypt seems to suffer from a youth structural problem that is projected on other aspects of social life. This vicious cycle starts from education to job opportunities to creating a calibre that is able to serve and efficiently develop his field of specialization. The solution appears to be vested in some type of governmental and non-governmental collaboration to offset bureaucratic obstacles and red carpet and efficiently produce the entrepreneur into a calibre that is able to lead. The very recent Presidential Leadership Program (PLP) that was introduced by the president is indeed a light at the end of the tunnel, or a microcosm of what is to be part of the solution. While the PLP was introduced after the interviews with the stakeholders were conducted, and is still too recent to be assessed, it is indeed a crucial point that can potentially act as a game-changer. The PLP is designed to attract youth between the ages of 20-30. It is basically a program that aims at training youth and empowers them in three main areas: political, social and managerial. This is an example of government intervention to regulate and produce the cadre that can lead in the future. The only prerequisite to join the program is to actually have a university degree. The program is offered free of charge and is expected to have a cycle of 8 months, with people graduating with a certificate to acknowledge their skills that are measured through different types of assessment. The program is expected to have a number of cycles. The first group of applicants are already going through the assessment and selection process and are expected to start the training beginning of year.

It is noteworthy that the present youth initiative is not the first of its kind in Egypt as the former NDP regime with Gamal Mubarak established a similar program. The interesting

<sup>3</sup> In this regard see the next section where the program is better explained. Note that at the time the interview was conducted, this program was not announced yet and has not started.

question, however, is how this new program functions and impacts youth after their being such a crucial political actor in the “Arab Spring”. A systematic comparison to answer this

### 5.3 Lebanon

It is apparent that the history of regional conflict is interwoven into the fabric that makes up the country’s education systems. Social and economic inequalities emerge most especially through the fact that schools and universities are divided along public and private funding. Also notable is the long historical relationship between privately funded education institutes and religious organizations (Farha, 2012 & more broadly, Makdisi, 2000). There is thus strong significance that the education standards in private schools and universities across Lebanon are often not consistent with each other, tending to follow guidelines set outside of the country—and consequently students are often taught in a number of different languages and of the histories of other countries and regions. Indeed, there is even a lack of consensus upon history education and this is especially in public schools where Lebanese history ends in 1945 (Makdisi, 2006; Farha, 2012 & Abu Assali, 2012). The stakeholder participants spoke of the need for a more holistic educational system that everyone in Lebanon could attend. There was in this regard a general consensus that the idea of public/state schools was not a bad one, but that there should be further focus on developing public schools and removing the social stigma attached to them.

The Lebanon team recommends that the EU pursue further research and coordination of policy in the following:

- Training programmes for career advisors
- Schemes to assist in the cooperation of non-academic initiatives for students
  - Work placements
  - Community service projects
- In attempt to reduce social stigma attached to state schools and universities in Lebanon, there should be further engagement between state run education institutes in Europe and Lebanon.

## 5.4 Morocco

Six main recommendations could be done from the analysis carried out in Morocco:

- The interconnection between economic, social and political dimensions has to be strengthened for professional integration programs to employment, and however remains open to both graduates and those who do not have degrees in matter of employment
- Develop and ensure access to bank loans for self-business initiatives
- Support alternative work models by funding tools and guarantee funds
- Develop synergies between all insertion devices towards an integrated public policy
- Develop youth access to information and training opportunities relating to vocational integration
- Review the takeover bid and public youth services, including design, vision and youth centres programs, to go to business incubators and mobilizing the potential of youth spaces towards employment.

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Researching  
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**Towards a New Social Contract**



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