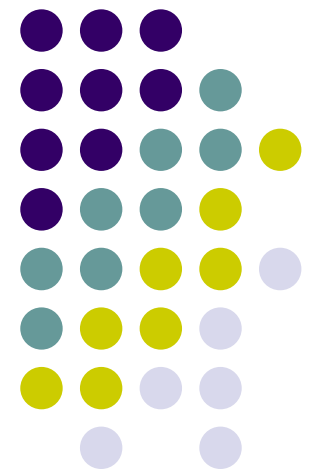




YOUTH IN THE MENA REGION

WORLD YOUTH REPORT 2007
Young People's Transition to
Adulthood: Progress and
Challenges



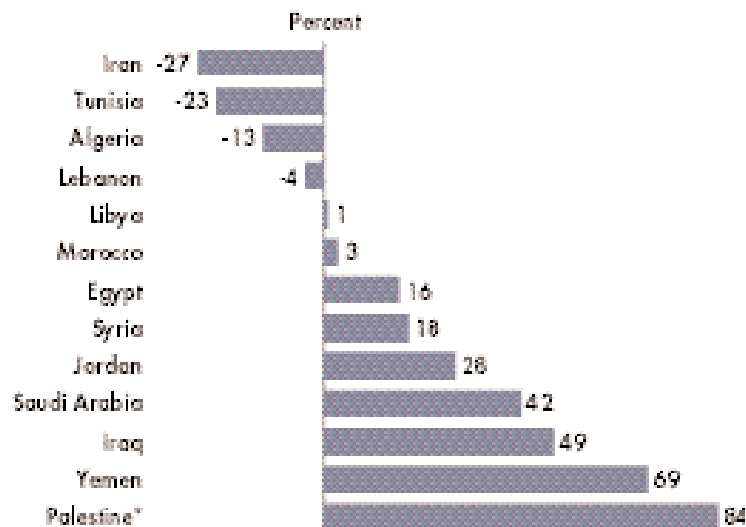


Youth in MENA Region

Basic Statistics:

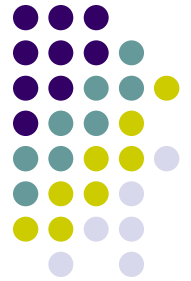
- one in five people living in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is between the ages of 15 and 24
- 95 million in youth population in 2005 – the ‘Youth Bulge’

Percent Change in Size of Youth Population in Selected Countries in MENA, 2005-2025



S O U R C E : United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision* (New York: UN, 2005).

*Palestine includes the Arab population of the West Bank and Gaza



Youth in MENA Region

Global and Regional Environment

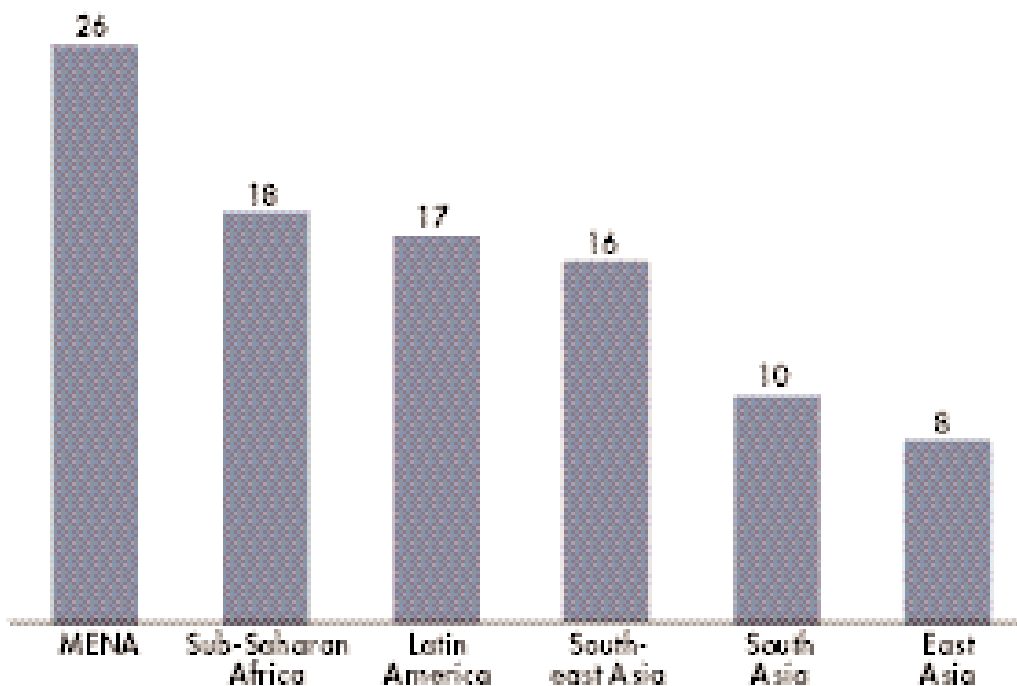
- Globalization and the impact of the Global economy.
- Political Instability and the incidence of Conflict.
- Hi level of population growth affecting economic growth and employment levels (sub-regional variations)
- Labor migration and its impact on youth employment
- Gender Imbalances in access to opportunities (education, employment)
- Rise of conservatism in majority of countries resulting in more traditional life-styles affecting gender equity/equality
- Withdrawal of young women from the public space.
- Labor Market constraints facing Youth
- Youth poverty and marginalization – rise of socio-political movements/militancy
- Feminization of Youth unemployment



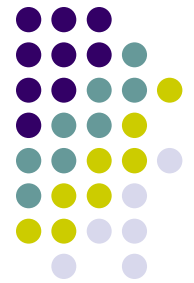
Youth Unemployment in MENA

- Unemployment rate for youth exceed adults in most countries.
- Young people constitute one third of the working age population in MENA but account for almost half of the unemployed.

Unemployment Rate among Youth by Selected World Regions, 2005



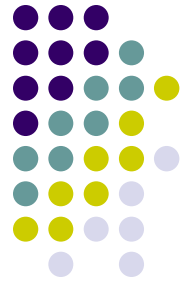
S O U R C E : International Labor Organization (ILO), *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (Geneva: ILO, 2006)



Youth Unemployment in MENA

Limiting Factors: (WYR2007)

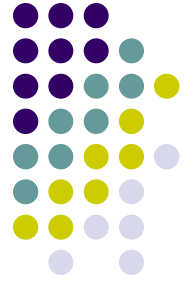
- Demographic shift and transition (variant)
- Education and transition to employment (inverse correlations, the gender gap)
- Macroeconomic factors (global labor market, conflation of public sector)
- Role of the informal economy as a safety net.
- Role of migration and the brain drain phenomenon.
- Impact of political unrest and conflict
- Vulnerable youth (youth with disabilities and young women)



The Feminization of Youth Unemployment

Overriding Factors:

- Patriarchal social structure and perception of gender roles
- Rising conservatism and increase in the Limitedness of access to the public sphere
- Unequal access to the labor market
- Women's unpaid work (domestic, agricultural)
- Legal and institutional hindrances that impact young women's employment
- Unequal valuation of female work
- Lack of empowerment and skill development options



What may be done

General

- Rethinking education and competence building (Life long Learning, and skill development out of school)
- Youth and gender sensitive labor market reforms
- Inclusive and enabling environment
- Investing in the youth dividend

Gender specific

- Attitudinal and behavioral change: a social paradigm shift
- Addressing Patriarchy through development interventions
- Gender equality/male involvement
- Women as active economic agents
- Legal and institutional change (top-down approach)