Chapter 4

Open government: A lever to engage youth

Open government tools remain a fairly untapped opportunity to improve the context for youth to raise their voice and engage in public life. This chapter outlines pathways through which applying a youth perspective to open government tools can capitalise on young men and women's demand for having real impact in decision making.The chapter analyses how access to information, the creation of formal institutions for participation and new technologies can break down the barriers for young people to engage with their governments.

Open government tools and policies can be used to improve the context for young people to raise their voice and play a more active role in shaping decisions that affect their future. However, as of today, open government remains a fairly untapped opportunity to bring youth to the negotiating table.

If youth knew: Access to information policies

When young people have easy access to quality information they are better informed and can play a more active role in the public debate. Strong legal provisions and institutional capacities can make a significant difference in providing what youth hope is complete, objective, clear and reliable information. In turn, for policy makers to provide tailored solutions to the challenges faced by the younger generation, they need to rely on disaggregated and youth-specific data and information in various policy areas.

In most OECD countries, citizens enjoy a distinct right to access information. For this purpose, specific procedures have been established to regulate the proactive disclosure of information and the way information should be provided, among others (see Box 4.1).

Box 4.1. **An overview of access-to-information frameworks in OECD countries**

In 2011, 31 out of 34 OECD member countries had an access-to-information policy. In 25 countries, the policy covers information which is produced at the central and sub-national level. All countries oblige the executive to make information available while only 16 countries include the legislative and the judiciary. Private entities are covered by 18 countries.

The principle of maximum disclosure of information applies in all OECD countries. Exceptions are based on the class test (e.g. national security, international relations, personal data, commercial confidentiality, public order) or the harm test (e.g. persons, defence of state, commercial competitiveness). All OECD countries are publishing information proactively.

The right to know is ensured by provisions that guarantee the protection of the privacy, integrity, and anonymity of parties and individuals requesting information. In three out of four countries, civil servants have a formal duty to assist requestors. Less than half of all countries facilitate access for the disabled.

OECD countries offer multiple channels for citizens to submit requests (e.g. written/oral form, on line, via phone, in person) with standards in place to ensure a timely response (often 20 days). In around 25% of the countries, the information request is tracked on line and can be followed by the dispatcher.

Central online portals exist in 81% of OECD countries in parallel to other channels and online portals, such as the websites of individual ministries. Most OECD countries share an obligation that requires information to be published in re-usable formats.

Source: OECD (2011a), *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-en.

The right of young people to access information has been recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Recently, driven by the demand of youth and the aspiration of some MENA countries to deliver on the commitments made in the framework of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the need to strengthen the respective legal and institutional frameworks has gained the attention of policy makers and non-governmental actors.

After having passed a decree law on access to administrative documents in 2011, Tunisia adopted an organic law on access to information in spring 2016. This law presents an important step for more transparency as it limits the exceptions to access to information and creates an access to information authority to support the effectiveness of the right. Morocco's constitution guarantees access to information. A draft law was adopted by its first Chamber (the Chamber of Representatives). To become effective it still has to be voted by the House of Councillors. In Jordan, an amendment to the 2012 law granted access to information to non-nationals. Jordan was the first country in the MENA region to enact the right to information if a legitimate reason exists, however, existing legislation such as the protection of state secrets and Documents Provisional Law can supersede the right.

The information young people request to manage key transitions in their lives can be distinct from information requested by the representatives of other age cohorts. They may wish to find information on school performance and education services, reproductive health, family planning and employment opportunities, to name but a few. The demand for youth-specific evidence is challenging policy makers to be responsive to it, in line with the good practice of many OECD countries in providing government services through a life events approach.[1]. Even less obvious areas can be of great interest to youth. Given the heavy impact of the allocation of state revenues on the availability and quality of public services information on youth-related expenditures should be accessible to increase accountability. For young people to be able to absorb this information and make effective use of it, it must be relevant, accurate, well communicated, and portrayed in a timely, easily understandable and accessible manner.

Policy makers in the MENA region should keep track of youth habits for accessing information to effectively reach out to them. With an increasing number of digital natives and an unprecedented uptake of mobile use, any government strategy should exploit the full range of information and communications technologies (ICTs). Obstacles to using ICT should be removed to avoid creating new divides. Traditional approaches, especially in remote rural and marginalised urban areas (e.g. roundtable discussions, counselling services), should complement more innovative forms of engagement. Recent initiatives use an explicit rights-based approach to advocate for young people's access to information. One example is the "Information Right Now!" campaign in Box 4.2.

Box 4.2. **The "Information Right Now!" campaign**

The Information Right Now! campaign was launched in 2012 by the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) and the Council of Europe to promote a rights-based approach to ensure young people's access to information.

The campaign targeted young people, decision makers and the media throughout Europe to raise awareness among all stakeholders that youth indeed have a right to information. In Macedonia, youth and youth workers met with the presidents of the municipality councils; Croatia organised youth information fairs; and youth in Sweden gathered to celebrate the right to information in a street art festival.

Source: European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (2012), "Information Right Now!", www.informationrightnow.eu (accessed on 12 April 2016).

A second aspect that deserves the attention of policy makers and civil society is the paucity of youth-specific data.

Young people are by definition in a transitional period in their lives during which they move from school to work and leave their families to take their place as adults in society. Data must be sufficiently disaggregated to support conclusions about policy-relevant subgroups – the rich and the poor, men and women, rural and urban, educated and illiterate, able-bodied and the disabled – and to examine the interactions among these characteristic and the lives of the nation's youth. The integration of data plays a crucial role in this regard. Information on reproductive health issues, such as adolescent pregnancies, for example, if linked to information on workforce participation, schooling, income, and other social variables, could provide important elements to policy makers to effectively shape initiatives to target specific problems from a holistic perspective. Employment data should be brought together with educational, social, and income data to provide the basis for evidence-based policy making as well as assistance programmes.

The collaboration between Egypt's central statistical agency, CAPMAS, and the Population Council, a private research organisation, offers a good example of the type of cross-cutting analysis that can inform decision making with regard to youth (see Box 4.3). The Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE), first conducted in 2009, was repeated in 2014. It provides a detailed picture of how the economic, social, and attitudinal characteristics of young Egyptians have evolved over this five-year period.

Box 4.3. **Improving evidence for youth policy formulation:
The Survey of Young People in Egypt**

The gap of detailed, comprehensive and reliable information for youth motivated the Population Council in Egypt to assemble a broad coalition of public and private institutions in 2006 to conduct what became the Survey of Young People in Egypt. SYPE undertook a nationwide survey of health, education, employment, international migration, marriage and family formation, social issues, values, civic engagement, time use, and attitudes toward gender roles.

SYPE adopted a design to capture variation within the youth population, including particular attention to incorporation of informal settlements (slums), which house a majority of Egypt's urban residents. Detailed, age-group-specific questionnaires including an aptitude test were administered to more than 15 000 youth. The sample was developed in close collaboration with Egypt's official census body, the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS). In addition to CAPMAS and the Population Council, SYPE engaged the National Center for Examinations and Educational Evaluation and the Information and Decision Support Center in the Prime Minister's office. SYPE's final report was issued in 2011, but SYPE data continue to be used for research and analysis both because the dataset is the most comprehensive one on the topic and because the Population Council has made the data available for any researcher to use.

SYPE has demonstrated its value for policy analysis and decision making through numerous studies and publications. The experience shows the value of taking a sufficiently broad approach to data collection to permit key relationships to be analysed, such as those between work and education, health and family life, and values and gender attitudes. It underscores the need to invest in data collection and the importance of mobilising a broad-based, public-private coalition of institutions to carry out the necessary comprehensive and large-scale analysis. The challenge is to institutionalise this type of data-driven work to permit it to be replicated as the basis for sound policy making and youth-responsive public governance.

The SYPE 2014 team was able to trace many of the participants in SYPE 2009, providing unique large-scale panel data that offer insights into how youth's lives have changed.

Source: Population Council West Asia and North Africa Office (2011), *Survey of Young People in Egypt: Final Report*, January; Dr. Ghada Barsoum, SYPE Principal Investigator, private communication, October 2014.

Set youth in motion: Opportunities and challenges for youth engagement

Providing systematic opportunities for citizens to engage is a fundamental component of open government strategies. It refers to the existence of formal and informal mechanisms for all segments of society to participate in the different stages of the policy-making cycle. Despite an unprecedented emergence of youth-driven and youth-focused associations in the region, capacity shortages and a general scepticism towards youth associations, present some of the obstacles to the successful organisation and mobilisation of youth interests (EuroMed, 2013).

Engagement can take different forms, such as proposing legislation, launching petitions and commenting on draft legislation through online or traditional consultations (OECD, 2015b). Specific measures designed to encourage young people to participate in these processes can lift some of the burden that discourages many from taking a more active stance. However, in many aspects, the political commitments for more open government in MENA countries still need to translate into opportunities that allow all segments of society, including youth, to get engaged on a broader scale.

Opportunities for youth to influence policy decisions can help legitimise the process and policies and provide a means for youth to hold government accountable (OECD, 2015c). OECD evidence suggests that expressing one's political voice and contributing to the political functioning of society is essential to individual well-being (OECD, 2011b). Furthermore, youth engagement in the MENA region allows young people to acquire individual skills, such as public speaking, agency and a sense for active citizenship and democratic principles. However, as one commentator convincingly argues "[b]y making the desired outcome individual improvement, rather than social change, we make every form of participation a success story while achieving very little in terms of political, social or economic change" (Farrow, 2015). Therefore, the intention of policy makers to strengthen youth skills is as important as pushing for institutional and legal reform to make the existing governance arrangements more youth-friendly.

### A glance at youth engagement in MENA countries

In its most standard version, civic or political engagement is measured by looking at the turnout of voters. The OECD Better Life Index further incorporates the level of government transparency in the process of drafting legislation. Broader definitions refer to grass-root activities such as volunteering and attending public demonstrations and formal forms of engagement, for instance being a member in a civil society organisation or participating in public consultations.

This report embraces a broad definition of engagement. It takes into account the fact that traditional ways of participation in OECD and MENA countries are on the decline. Low turnout at national and local elections should not mislead policy makers to assume that the younger generation is disinterested in politics. Tech-savvy youth in the MENA region have made unprecedented use of social media, blogs, and other informal channels to raise their political voice, which fed into the civil uprisings that became known as the Arab Spring. It reflects that youth are a heterogeneous group with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds as well as different preferences and means to engage with government. The case for a broader definition of participation has been made before by the Council of Europe's *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* (2013).[2]

Two recent studies underline the pertinence of looking at both formal and informal political activities. Both the 2014 SYPE study in Egypt and a targeted study of youth participation in Tunisia conducted by IWatch, a civil society organisation from Tunisia, found that, contrary to what many expected in the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings, MENA youth rarely choose traditional forms to participate in public life. Although they are among the active leaders in the region's leading civil society organisations, the IWatch survey found that only 5% are members of a political party and just 3% of them are active members . The results from this study are discussed in Box 4.4. SYPE found much lower levels in Egypt than those in Tunisia, with the share claiming membership in a political party, syndicate, NGO, or trade union falling below 1%. In Morocco, a 2012 survey carried out by the High Commission of the Plan revealed that only 6% of young people are members of a civil society association and that only 1.3% is affiliated to a political party or trade union (El Mnasfi, 2013).

Box 4.4. **Attitudes towards political engagement among Tunisian youth**

I Watch, a Tunisian civil society organisation, surveyed 600 Tunisian youth (aged 18-35) to measure their attitudes toward political participation and participatory democracy. Their overall findings underscore the weak connection to formal political activity among young Tunisians after the Jasmine Revolution. In the words of the study, "[t]hree years after the revolution, the Tunisian youth has little faith in politics as well as in political institutions." They found that youth were substantially more interested in informal mechanisms for participation, such as signing petitions, attending protests, or participating through social media, with almost two-thirds reporting having taken part in a protest during the past year.
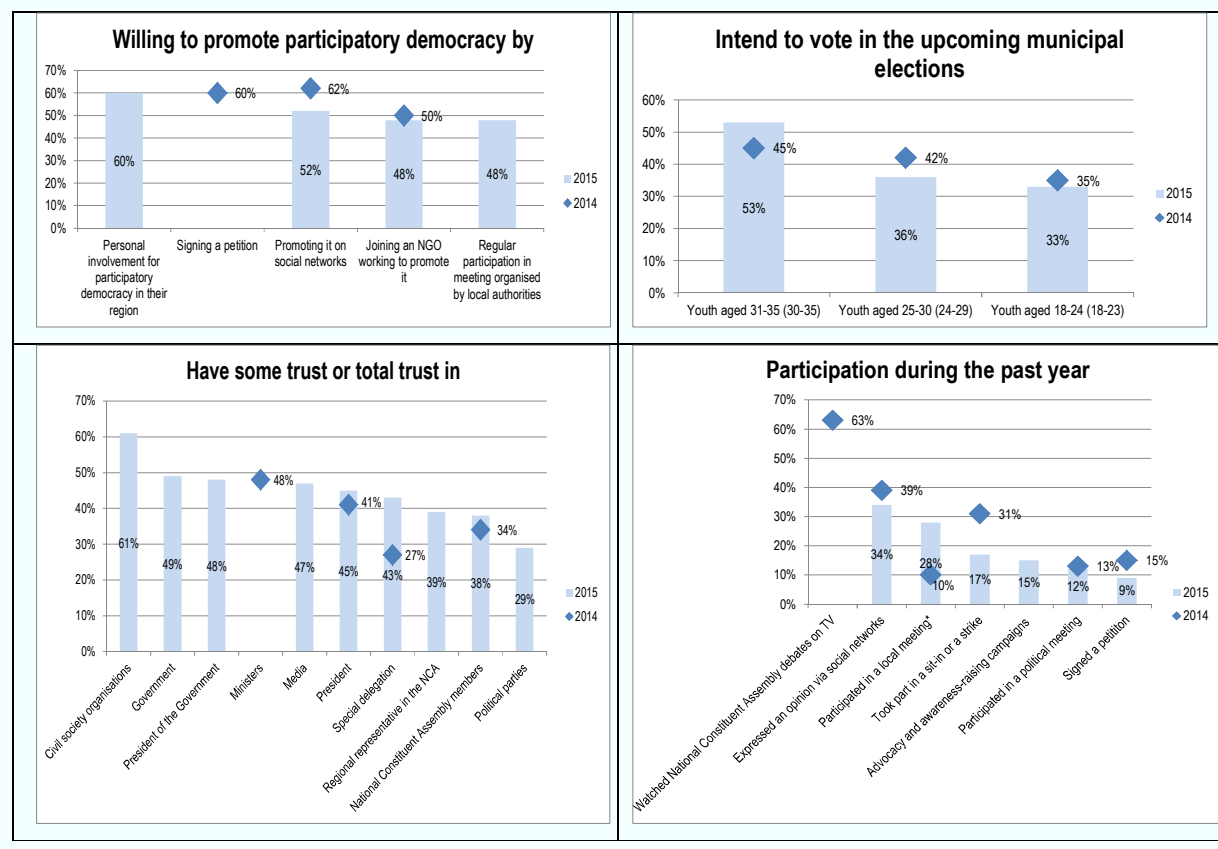
Box 4.4. **Attitudes towards political engagement among Tunisian youth** *(continued)*

Only a minority of youth reported that they planned to participate in the upcoming municipal elections. The survey data suggest, however, that interest in formal political participation through voting increases with age, at least within Tunisia's youth cohort. This finding is consistent with international experience. Recent data from the 2015 survey suggests that despite a few positive exceptions (e.g. youth participation in local meetings; trust in some of the public institutions), youth show decreasing levels of engagement in the categories covered by the report.

Source: I Watch (2014), "Survey on youth perceptions of participatory democracy", I Watch, Tunis; Ballingen, Julie (2002), "Youth voter turnout", in López Pintor, Rafael and Maria Gratschew (eds.), *Voter Turnout: A Global Report*, IDEA, Stockholm, pp. 111-114; I Watch (2015), Perception de la démocratie participative chez les jeunes Tunisiens, www.drive.google.com/file/d/0BxAb-uoXEIUtdnZxanpvYV9kWkU/view?pref=2&pli=1 (accessed on 10 April 2016).

These initial findings imply important policy implications, especially since other MENA countries do show similar participation patterns. For today's youth, using a mind-catching hashtag may have a quicker and more direct impact on mobilising their peers for a common cause than going through a political party which tends to be dominated by older cohorts. By addressing youth in networks where they feel comfortable expressing themselves, governments can reach out to those who are more reluctant or do not have the means to engage in formal processes. However, as final political decisions are being made in more formal arrangements, the appeal of traditional channels should increase by allowing youth a genuine say and impact in the process. Public officials should acquire the relevant skills to interact with youth in both online and offline networks. Clear communication guidelines as well as an upgrade of the technical and financial resources are critical to communicate how young people's ideas and feedback were taken into account to close the feedback loop.

The average active youth in MENA is male, well educated, informed and connected

To better understand existing divides in youth civic participation, Mercy Corps, a global humanitarian agency, conducted a study across MENA countries (Mercy Corps, 2012). In line with this report, the study assumes that the visibility of public activism among youth outside formal arrangements displays their frustration with the existing institutions and norms. Using data from the Arab Barometer, the study finds that the average activist is male, rather well educated, interested in politics, and regularly uses news and media sources, including the Internet, to obtain information.[3] The study concludes that household socio-economic status stands out as a major factor to determine the level of civic and political participation among youth in MENA.

What is "good" youth engagement?

Engagement differs in terms of the degree of formalisation (i.e. formalised versus informal ways), ownership (i.e. youth-driven versus government-driven approaches), scope (i.e. specific project versus long-term engagement or representation of youth needs) and thematic orientation. While this list of dimensions is not exhaustive it suggests that an evaluation of the quality of youth engagement eventually depends on the format and the expected outputs and impact.

The most well-known concepts to assess the quality of youth engagement are inspired by classic participation theories, such as Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969). Arnstein declares that citizen participation is citizen power and that, therefore:

> *"[i]t is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled [sic!] out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society."*

Building on Arnstein's model, former UNICEF staff Roger Hart developed a ladder of children participation in the early 1990s, which is commonly referred to as the ladder of youth participation (Box 4.5). Hart argues that a nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved, particularly at the community level. For him, citizen engagement is a learning process in which "[t]he confidence and competence to be involved must be gradually acquired through practice. It is for this reason that there should be gradually increasing opportunities for children to participate in any aspiring democracy, and particularly in those nations already convinced that they are democratic" (Hart, 1992). He concludes that despite opportunities for children and youth to participate in different degrees around the world, "it is often exploitative or frivolous".
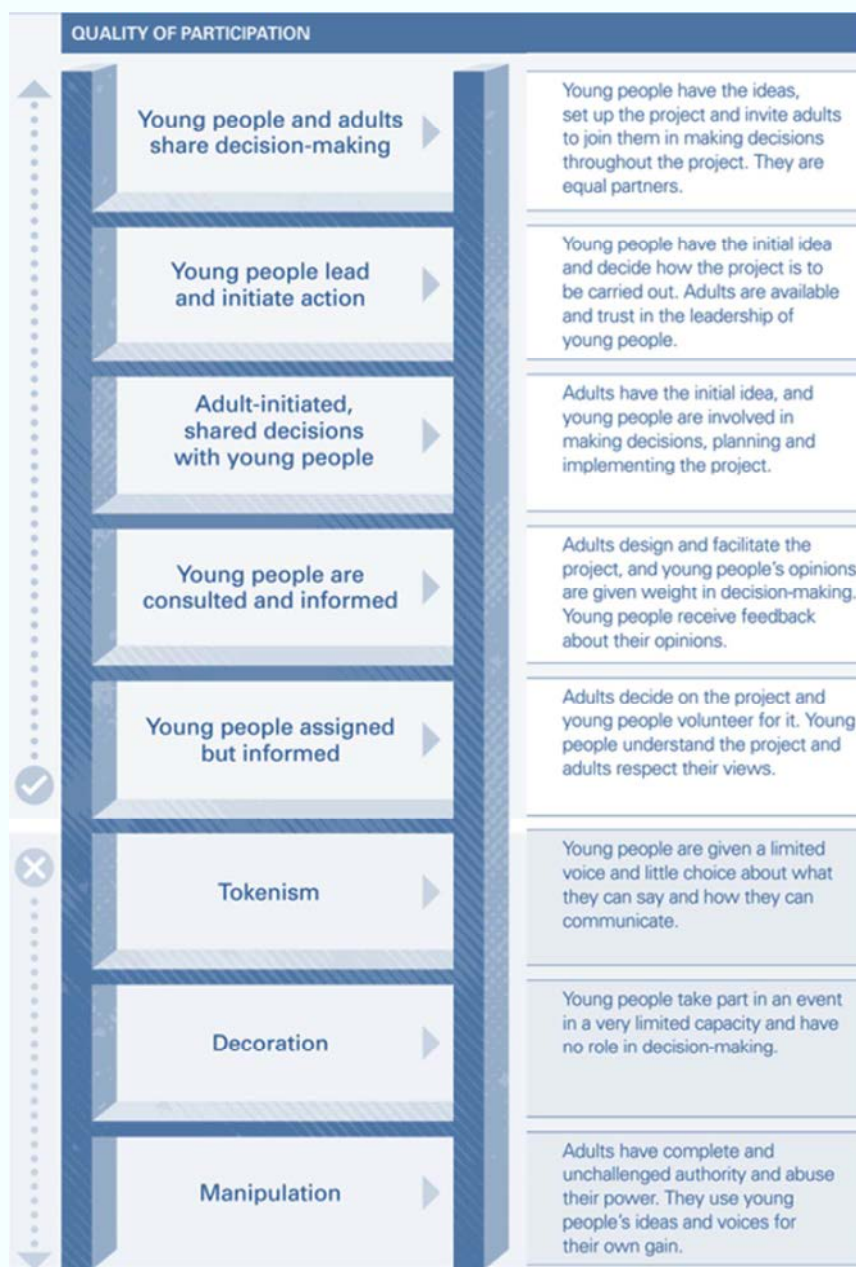
Shier's Pathways to Participation (2001) (Figure 4.1) identifies five levels of participation. In the most rudimentary form, governments provide formal arrangements to listen to young people; the most advanced settings allow for an equal share of power and responsibility between youth and government officials in decision making. For each level, Shier identified three stages of commitment (e.g. openings, opportunities and obligations).

In line with the definition of "active participation" (as compared to information and consultation) by the OECD report "Citizens as Partners - Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making" (2001), the two models outlined above stress the importance of a partnership approach between youth and the government, in which both sides share responsibilities and powers. Although the responsibility for the final decision or policy formulation rests with government, an equal standing in setting the agenda, proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue characterises advanced forms of engaging young men and women.
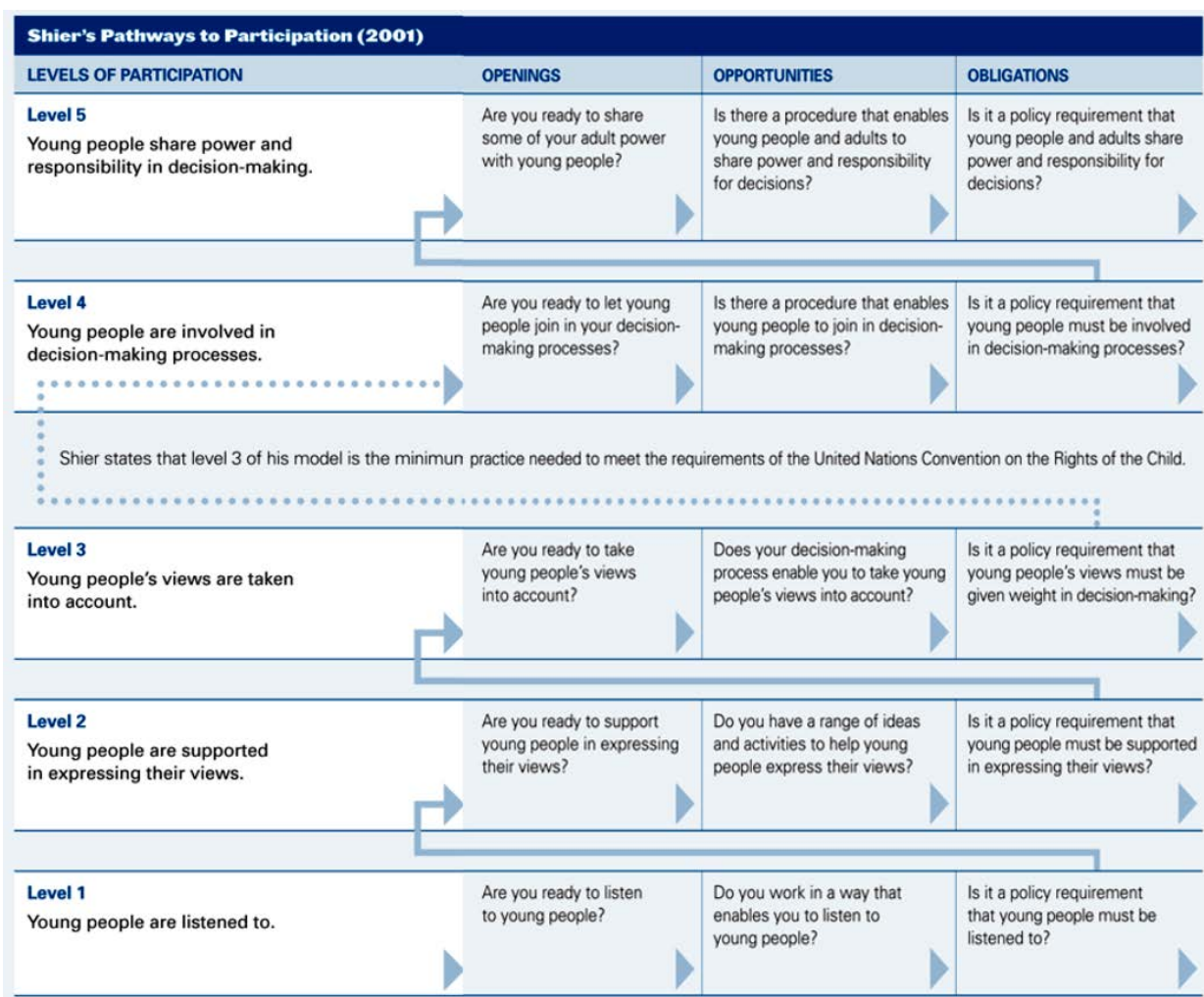
Box 4.5. **Reviewing the quality of youth participation: Hart's Ladder revised**

Hart's Ladder, as the model is referred to, is a seven-step scale to assess the degree of youth engagement in decision making. At the lowest step, adults/governments have complete and unchallenged authority and abuse their power ("manipulation") whereas youth are equal partners on the top of the ladder ("young people and adults share decision making"). It is evident that not every government project may be suitable for the highest level of youth involvement. As a first and crucial step, governments could aim for a minimum level of participation, characterised by overcoming the neglect of youth concerns or pseudo-forms of participation.

QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION

Young people and adults share decision-making	Young people have the ideas, set up the project and invite adults to join them in making decisions throughout the project. They are equal partners.
Young people lead and initiate action	Young people have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available and trust in the leadership of young people.
Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people	Adults have the initial idea, and young people are involved in making decisions, planning and implementing the project.
Young people are consulted and informed	Adults design and facilitate the project, and young people's opinions are given weight in decision-making. Young people receive feedback about their opinions.
Young people assigned but informed	Adults decide on the project and young people volunteer for it. Young people understand the project and adults respect their views.
Tokenism	Young people are given a limited voice and little choice about what they can say and how they can communicate.
Decoration	Young people take part in an event in a very limited capacity and have no role in decision-making.
Manipulation	Adults have complete and unchallenged authority and abuse their power. They use young people's ideas and voices for their own gain.

Source: Hart, Roger (1992), *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf; Government of New Zealand (n.d.a.), "Hart's Ladder", Ministry of Youth Development, www.myd.govt.nz/documents/engagement/harts-ladder.pdf (accessed on 1 April 2016).

Figure 4.1. **Shier's pathways to participation**

Involving youth in public consultations

A power-sharing approach between governments and youth may not always be feasible or the most effective approach to bring youth in. Depending on the policy issue at stake, involving youth in public consultations can be a viable alternative. If mechanisms to consult citizens exist in MENA countries, however, they typically suffer from an underrepresentation of youth. While many may simply not be aware of this opportunity to express their opinion, others may find it too difficult or meaningless to use a mechanism, which often comes without a clear follow-up procedure. If youth feel their input makes no difference to policy outcomes, they are unlikely to get involved. The MENA-OECD Practitioners' Guide for Engaging Stakeholders in the Rule-Making Process (2014a)

provides useful guidance for governments to address frequent questions as to what form of consultation should be chosen, at what time and who should be involved.

Some notable initiatives have emerged over the past few years. In Northern Ireland, the Participation Network of Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI), formulated eight standards for policy makers and delivery units of public services for children and young people to increase their engagement. The "Ask First" standards, presented in Box 4.6., build on the input of children and young people, public sector personnel, the views of child and youth organisations and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Guidance for Public Authorities, and were endorsed by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Box 4.6. **Standards for children and young people's participation in public decision making: "Ask First" standards in Northern Ireland**

- **A**ppropriate methods: Children and young people will be engaged in a variety of ways, based on what is best suited to their age and level of development/maturity. In particular, play-based methodologies will be developed for involving preschool children.

- **S**upport: Children and young people will be provided with the support needed to engage effectively in the decision-making process.

- **K**nowledge: Children and young people will be provided with the knowledge they need to engage fully in decision-making processes. Information will be easily understood, child-friendly and produced in a range of accessible formats.

- **F**eedback: Children and young people will be told about the outcomes of their involvement and how their input has been considered. Where their ideas have not been taken on board they will be told why this has happened.

- **I**nclusion: All children and young people will be facilitated to engage in public decision-making processes. Particular measures will be put in place to ensure the involvement of those who are vulnerable and marginalised, in line with Section 75 and UNCRC obligations.

- **R**espect: Children and young people will be treated with respect. They will decide the nature and extent of their involvement, including the option not to participate.

- **S**enior people: Children and young people will have direct contact with senior people who are in a position to make decisions and take action in relation to their ideas, views and experiences.

- **T**iming: Children and young people will be involved at the earliest possible stages of policy and service development, including processes to establish the need for service or policy initiatives.

Source: Summary taken from Leeson, Maurice (2014), "Involving disabled young people in the development of regional child and youth services", presentation at the UK Conference on Child Poverty and Well-being on 16 December 2014, Cardiff, www.childreninwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Maurice-Leeson.pdf (accessed on 1 April 2016).

Youth representative bodies: Youth councils, parliaments and fora

Outside the realms of government-driven consultation procedures, national youth councils (NYCs), youth parliaments and other youth-dedicated fora have emerged as a space for youth to express their opinion *vis-à-vis* government institutions. In almost all OECD member countries, NYCs or similar arrangements exist.

The mandate of national youth councils can vary considerably depending on the organisation and the degree to which they are independent from the government. While some NYCs are entirely youth-run and operate autonomously from government, such as in Belgium, Germany and Lithuania, NYCs in Costa Rica and the Philippines are integrated into the government structure. Whereas autonomous youth councils facilitate the co-ordination of national youth organisations, councils integrated into the government structure typically manage the state-youth relations (TakingITGlobal, 2006). While autonomous youth councils provide a national platform for youth organisations to more effectively represent youth concerns, integrated councils work as a link between youth organisations and the government with the aim of ensuring better communication and co-operation, more permanent youth participation and a smooth implementation of youth programmes. The influence over the decision-making process NYCs are able to exert thus varies. In the Slovak Republic, youth hold permanent seats in the Department of Youth of the Ministry of Education. In Latvia and Slovenia, NYCs were invited to write youth laws and hand them over to the parliament for approval. In OECD countries, NYCs have participated in monitoring the implementation of youth laws.

One of the most effective mechanisms for NYCs to shape policy outcomes exists in Lithuania (see Box 4.7).

In MENA countries, the Tunisian Young Parliaments and Lebanon´s Youth Forum for Youth Policy (see Box 4.8) curbed a space for active citizenship. Conversely, such interventions can be a barrier to progress if they are limited to token public relations activities or, most important, are presented as a solution to youth problems and therefore seen by the government as a substitute for tackling the structural barriers to youth engagement.

Box 4.7. **Lithuania Youth Council**

The Lithuania Youth Council (LiJOT), founded in September 1992 for the purpose of creating a co-ordinating structure to represent the interests of youth to the state, has gained recognition for establishing one of the most effective youth participation structures. After overcoming some initial challenges, such as obtaining legal recognition for youth policy and pushing for the Concept of State Youth Policy, LiJOT was successful in advocating the creation of a State Council for Youth Affairs, a body specifically responsible for youth affairs.
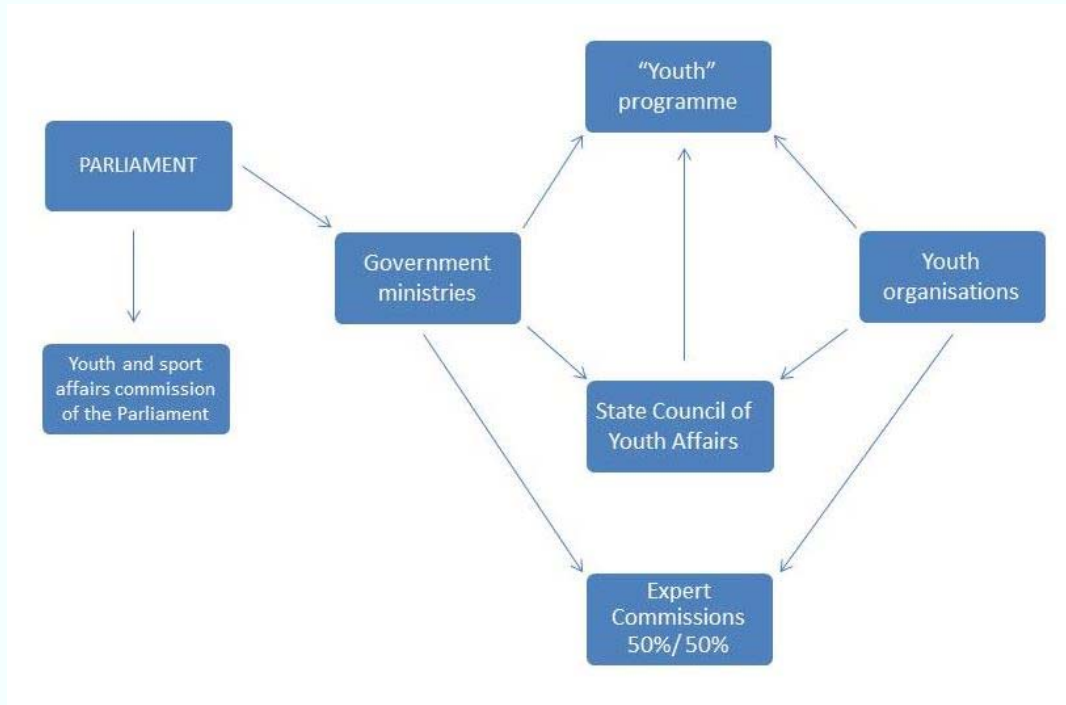
Based on the principle of "co-management" and "co-decision making", the State Council of Youth Affairs gathers an equal number of representatives from different ministries with a stake in youth-related issues upon the appointment by the Prime Minister and LiJOT. This permanent structure allows youth representatives to voice their concerns and take active part in decisions that affect youth policy and programmes.

Source: TakingITGlobal (2006) "National youth councils - Their creation, evolution, purpose, and governance", http://acdn.tigurl.org/images/resources/tool/docs/762.pdf (accessed on 10 April 2016); OECD's own work based on the Lithuania Youth Council.

Box 4.8. **Tunisian Young Parliaments and Lebanon's Youth Forum for Youth Policy**

Inspired by the European Youth Parliament – a European platform for political debate, intercultural encounters, civic education and the exchange of ideas among young people – the Tunisian civil society organisation Tun'Act organised the country's first Tunisian Young Parliaments in2013 and 2014. The Tunisian Young Parliaments have made an important contribution to providing a space to young people for embracing active citizenship and promoting a culture of democratic debate.

The Tunisian Young Parliaments brought together young men and women (aged 18-30) from different regions to gather in different thematic committees (e.g. environment, economy, international relations, social security and health, terrorism, culture, education, and human rights). Each commission was tasked with preparing a resolution in English, French or Arabic that was eventually adopted by vote. The participants were encouraged to give speeches, express personal opinions, and participate in voting procedures, which allowed them to acquire knowledge about the parliamentary process, foster respect for different opinions, strengthen teamwork and seek compromise. Many participants reportedly felt encouraged to be more active in civic, social and political life. The final resolution of the first Tunisian Young Parliament was brought to the attention of the party leaders.

The organisation of the third Tunisian Young Parliament is currently on hold due to a lack of long-term donor support. However, plans exist to strengthen mechanisms for follow-up on the conclusions, such as by discussing resolutions with relevant parliamentary committees in the future.

Similar efforts have been made in Lebanon. The Youth Forum for Youth Policy, a broad-based umbrella organisation of civil society and political parties' youth wings, manages five task forces that develop sectoral policy recommendations, which are brought together into an integrated policy document and are presented to the cabinet, most recently in 2011. An earlier example of good practice was the Youth Shadow Government, established by the Naharshabab Association, an affiliate of Nahar newspaper.

Starting in 2006, this programme brought together 30 youth leaders (one-third of whom were women) to form a shadow cabinet, with each person holding shadow ministry portfolios, reviewing government policies and promoting dialogue. It appears that the shadow ministry programme has not continued, however.

Source: Tun'Act (2016) http://tunact.org/; Youth Forum for Youth Policy (2016), www.youthforum-lb.org/en/ (accessed on 12 April 2016).

Recommendations

In line with the 2010 OECD Guiding Principles for Open and Inclusive Policy Making, MENA governments could encourage and build youth engagement in public life by:

1. **Promoting a whole-of-government approach**. Youth concerns are typically dealt with by a broad range of government units, therefore, strong horizontal and vertical communication and co-ordination mechanisms are critical to mainstream youth considerations in public policies and strategies and avoid fragmented delivery.

2. **Formulating national, integrated youth policies** in collaboration with youth associations, civil society organisations and activists outlining clear objectives, performance indicators, realistic timeframes and necessary financial, technical and human resources for effective and coherent youth programming across ministries and departments. While no single, unified framework exists to guide

the formulation, implementation and evaluation of youth policies, policy makers seeking guidance can consult the African Youth Charter (2006) and the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies (2014).

3. **Creating or strengthening the role of youth representative bodies (e.g. national/local youth councils) and allowing for new forms of youth engagement** (e.g. use of digital technologies) to engage youth across the policy cycle. In case a partnership approach of shared duties and responsibilities between youth and government representatives is not feasible but opportunities for public consultations exist, they should be designed such that young people feel encouraged to get involved. The MENA-OECD Practitioners' Guide for Engaging Stakeholders in the Rule-Making Process (2014a) provides useful guidance as governments are facing difficult choices with a view to the purpose and scope of youth consultation, the identification of youth representatives as well as the channels through which consultation can be most meaningful.

4. **Providing full access to information for youth**, especially in areas of particular importance to them (e.g. reproductive health, family planning, education services, employment opportunities, school performance). Active disclosure of information on the performance of government services is also of interest to youth and will strengthen accountability mechanisms. Data should be portrayed in an accessible, re-usable and easily understandable format (e.g. youth budget). Youth-led organisations can advise governments on the way information should be communicated and which channels should be used to make sure it is shared effectively. Governments should also consider establishing a regular cycle of sharing information using blogs, social media (e.g. Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Youtube podcasts) and mobile applications to inform youth about government programmes and solicit their views through feedback mechanisms.

5. **Collecting youth-disaggregated data** to tailor public policies and services to their needs. Ideally, data is sufficiently disaggregated to support conclusions about policy-relevant subgroups such as the rich and the poor, men and women, rural and urban youth, the educated and illiterate and the able-bodied and disabled.

Digital technologies as a potential "game changer" for inclusive policy making and service delivery

Previous chapters have already touched upon the potential of digital technologies to strengthen an inclusive approach to policy making. The 2014 OECD "Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies", calls on governments to use technologies for improving social inclusiveness, partnerships and government accountability. It acknowledges that the new digital environment offers opportunities for more collaborative and participatory relationships to shape political priorities and design and deliver public services through a partnership approach (e.g. citizen-driven approach). As youth are increasingly growing up as "digital natives",[4] social media and online networks may become a source for more regular youth-government interaction while open data may offer new economic opportunities for the tech-savvy generations.

A new generation of digital natives

In the context of a rapid expansion of Internet use and connectivity, new opportunities to access information, communicate and interact with public authorities are emerging. Internet use has been expanding at an average of 12.3% annually over the 2009-13 period in the selected MENA countries, led by increases of 17.9% in Egypt. Many more young people have become Internet users in the past five years (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2. **Internet use in selected MENA countries and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country average, 2005, 2009 and 2013**

Percentage of adult population

	Libya	Yemen	Tunisia	Jordan	Palestinian Authority	Egypt	Morocco	GCC average
2005	3.92	1.05	9.66	12.93	16.01	12.75	15.08	21.89
2009	10.80	9.96	34.07	26.00	32.23	25.69	41.30	47.62
2013	16.50	20.00	43.80	44.20	46.60	49.56	56.00	77.62
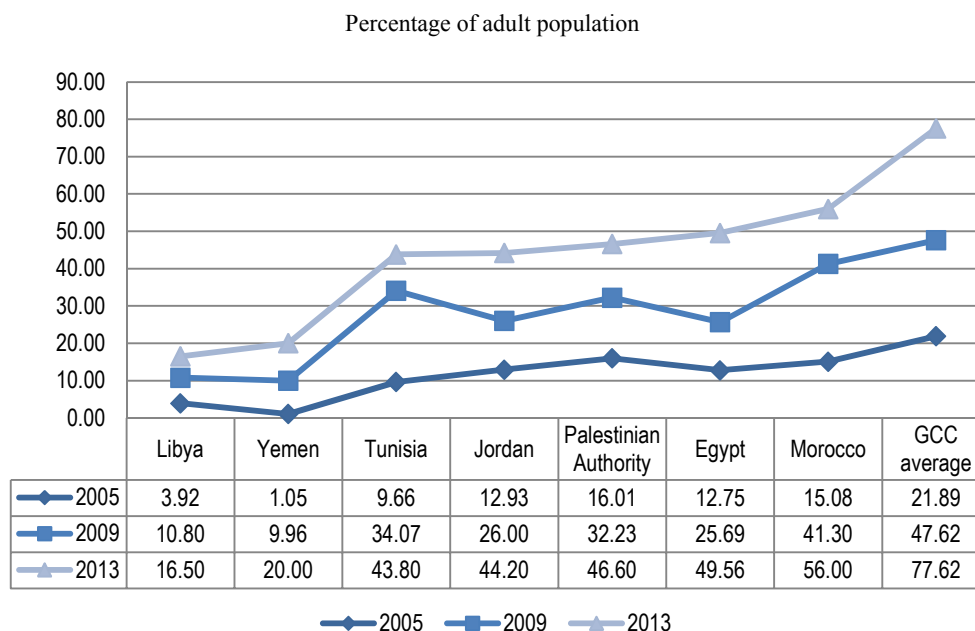
Source: World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database (2016), http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/wtid.aspx (accessed on 1 April 2016).

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) estimates the share of youth who can be classified as "digital natives". Table 4.1 presents the figures for 2013 and the unweighted average for GCC countries. Except for Libya and Yemen, more than one-third of young people in Egypt and Tunisia, and more than two-fifths of young men and women in Jordan and Morocco, are digital natives. While their share as part of the total population is still marginal, there is no doubt that future generations will increasingly use and request ICT solutions.[5]

Table 4.1. **Number of digital natives and as percentage of total and youth populations, 2013**

Rank	Country	Number of digital natives	Total population	Youth population (aged 15-24)
79	Egypt	5 532 746	6.6	34.9
55	Jordan	542 817	8.4	40.4
136	Libya	122 917	1.9	11.4
52	Morocco	2 829 799	8.7	45.8
81	Tunisia	700 044	6.5	36.7
127	Yemen	665 487	2.6	12.0
88	Total/average	10 393 810	5.8	30.2
73	GCC	4 952 201	7.0	47.8

Source: ITU (2013), *Measuring the Information Society*, ITU, Geneva, www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2013/MIS2013_without_Annex_4.pdf (accessed on 2 April 2016).

The use of mobile devices has seen an even bigger surge over the recent years. In Yemen and the Palestinian Authority, 69 and 74 out 100 people, respectively, had mobile cellular subscriptions in 2013, compared to only 37 and 46, respectively, in 2009. In Libya, the number of mobile phones exceeds the total population (165 mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people) (World Bank, 2013). However, sex-disaggregated data suggests that women are facing constraints in using the new digital tools and channels to the same degree men do (OECD, 2015b).

The widespread use of web 2.0 technologies and mobile devices has changed media behaviour in the Arab region. In a recent study with a focus on Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, 35% of the respondents said they were following news by using online sources and portals. Some 30% rely on traditional media to follow the headlines and 28% on social media platforms (Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, 2014a).

The digital transformation is often referred to as a potential "game changer" for the interaction between governments and citizens. Indeed, the digital era introduces new channels and tools for government to inform (e.g. government websites, podcasts, RSS feeds), and interact with citizens (e.g. publication of draft regulation on line, surveys/consultation, e-petitions). The digitalisation of the public administration and related processes can reduce the costs and other barriers of public service use. As youth are typically among the first to exploit web-based channels, today's generation of digital natives can be a partner of government in designing user-friendly platforms.

Promising initiatives while significant challenges need to be overcome

MENA countries have stepped up efforts to increase their digital presence through government websites, online portals and experiments to consult with citizens on line. For instance, citizens in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia were invited to comment on the draft access to information law. With a view to fighting corruption in public procurement, Tunisia developed the electronic procurement system TUNEPS with OECD support. Morocco established an online portal for whistleblowers to encourage the reporting of fraud and corruption. In Egypt, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology established "IT clubs" in schools, universities and youth centres to provide open access to technology and ICT tools to low-income populations (OECD, 2013a). The

Court of Cassation has announced the design and implementation of an automated case management system to increase access to court data. With an update of the e-government policy strategy and the development of a medium-term implementation plan, the Palestinian Authority has laid the ground for a whole-of-government strategy to use ICT tools. Youth-led initiatives, such as Zabatak (www.zabatak.com) and HarassMap (www.harassmap.org) have become popular among young men and women for engaging users in reporting criminal activities and sexual harassment.

This progress has been reflected in the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) by the United Nations E-Government Survey 2014. The EGDI is a composite measure of three dimensions of e-government: telecommunication connectivity, human capacity and provision of online services. Due to significant advancement in each country studied in this report, they jumped from an average position of 131 (2012) to 98 (2014), out of 193 countries. The comparison of two of the above introduced indexes against the OECD average (see Figure 4.3) reveals that, while the study countries lag considerably behind in terms of available ICT infrastructure, countries like Jordan, Libya and Tunisia can rely on a rather well-educated and ICT-literate population.

Figure 4.3. **Comparison of selected MENA countries' scores based on the UN e-government indicators for ICT infrastructure and human capital, with the OECD average, 2014**
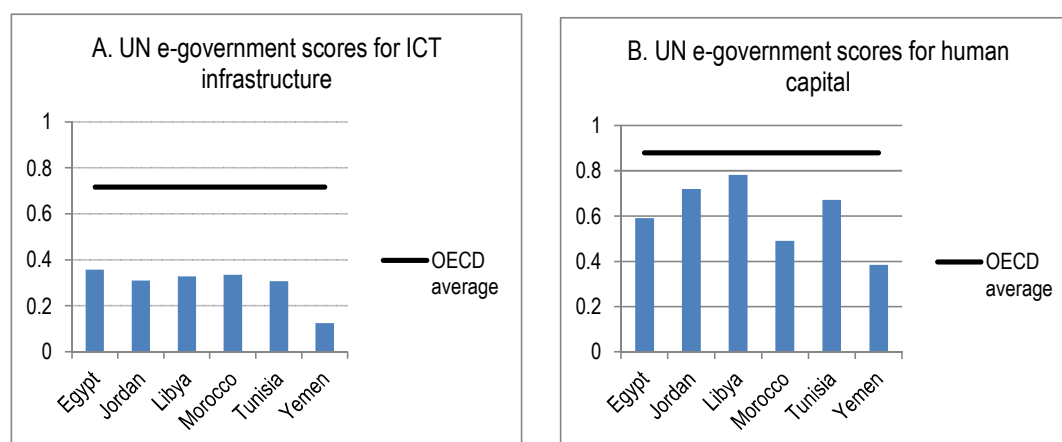
Note: The figure shows two composite indicators ranging from 0 to 1. Human capital is weighted by 2/3 adult literacy and 1/3 gross enrolment standard scores. The infrastructure index is a weighted average of standard scores on Internet users, mobile telephone subscriptions, telephone lines, fixed Internet subscriptions, and fixed broadband.

Source: UN (2014), *United Nations E-Government Development database*, http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2014.

Figure 4.4 compares the performance of selected MENA countries in using ICT to increase participation and deliver services against the OECD average. According the UN survey, Morocco ranks above the OECD average in the e-participation index while Tunisia follows closely behind. These results illustrate the successful steps made by both countries in recent years to provide public information and access to information online (e-information sharing) and, to a lesser degree, by offering a space where citizens can contribute to the deliberation on public policies and services (e-consultation). In Morocco, youth can find important information on the conditions and necessary documents related to marriage, pregnancy/giving birth, driver's license and the creation of an enterprise on the service portal of the government. It offers access to FAQs

("frequently asked questions" sections) and an opportunity to submit questions on line or through a call centre.

The OECD Open Government Reviews for Tunisia (2016) and Morocco (2015) find that e-consultation presents a largely untapped field in both countries and that a more structured and institutionalised approach was needed. More advanced interactions, such as submitting income taxes or registering for a business on line, will yet need to gain the full attention of public service providers to materialise. It should also be noted that the UN indicator does not provide information on the actual uptake of these opportunities by citizens.

The role of digital channels for civil society to inform, mobilise and co-ordinate initiatives is evident, not least since the civil uprisings for democratic reform that swept through some MENA countries. While many of the spontaneously founded networks disappeared, opengov.tn and tnOGP in Tunisia were established to strengthen the voice of civil society in the process of the country's membership in the Open Government Partnership. By reflecting a greater range of positions and interests and an enlarged geographic reach, the networks have strengthened the representativeness and credibility of CSOs in the consultation process for the country's OGP Action Plan.

Figure 4.4. **Comparison of selected MENA countries' scores based on the UN e-government indicators for online services and e-participation index, with the OECD average, 2014**
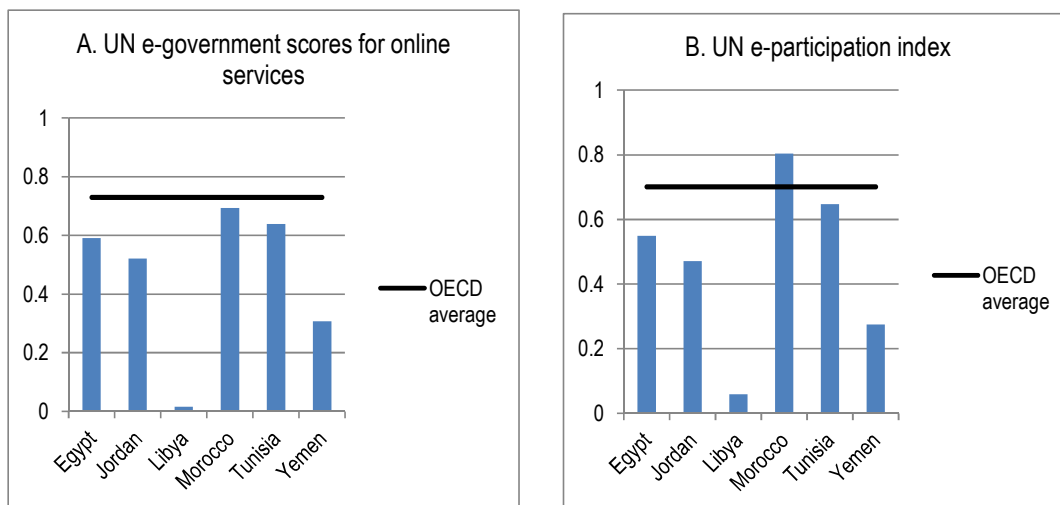
Note: The online services component assesses the technical features of national websites as well as e-government policies and strategies applied in general and by specific sectors for delivery of services. The e-participation index focuses on the use of online services to facilitate provision of information by governments to citizens ("e-information sharing"), interaction with stakeholders ("e-consultation") and engagement in decision-making processes ("e-decision making").

Source: UN (2014), *United Nations E-Government Development database*, http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2014.

A reality check in European countries demonstrates that simply putting up web-based content adds little to improve the interaction of youth with the public administration. Only 40% of young Europeans were using online services to interact with public authorities over the last year (Mickoleit, 2014). Large variations between individual countries (e.g. uptake rates vary between 20% in Italy and 70-80% in Slovenia, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) suggest, however, that countries with ICT-skilled public officials and capacities to design youth-tailored content are more successful in reaching out.

A glimpse into the potential of digital technologies for youth-tailored public policies and services

Over the last few years, OECD countries have made increasing use of online solutions to share information, consult with citizens and deliver public services. Although many government portals and websites still lack a youth-tailored presentation of information, the increasing expectation of young people to fill administrative documents on line and access relevant information with a simple click has led to the creation of new initiatives led by government, civil society and the private sector.

The South Australian consultation programme "YourSAy" (see Box 4.9) uses the Internet and in particular social media to involve citizens in public consultations. When the state reviewed its Strategic Plan for Development in 2010, "YourSAy" engaged local communities and citizens in discussions about environmental protection, housing provision, and, most notably, children and youth services.

Box 4.9. **YourSAy: Engaging youth in policy making in Australia**

What started as a simple experiment to engage young people at community level is now considered an important element of the policy-making process by the Government of South Australia. Today, more than 12 000 people are part of the online community, getting closer to 1% of the state's population. Through YourSAy, youth were recently invited to discuss the qualifications of a future Commissioner for Children and Young People, the state's Late Night Code following community concern about alcohol-fuelled incidents, and the governance arrangements in public schools and preschools.

YourSAy is very active on social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube) where users can find information on upcoming consultations and youth-tailored surveys.

Source: Government of South Australia (2016), yourSAy, http://yoursay.sa.gov.au/ (accessed on 1 April 2016).

Matching jobseekers with employment opportunities presents a major challenge in MENA countries. Few co-ordinated services exist to facilitate young people's entry into the labour market. A group of young Palestinians partnered with Souktel, a tech venture, to create a mobile-based technology to bring youth and potential employers together (see Box 4.10).

Box 4.10. **JobMatch: A SMS-based job matching system in the Palestinian Authority**

JobMatch, uses a mobile-based technology developed by young Palestinians to close the job identification gap for unemployed youth not being reached by public employment services. It enables employers to post openings, receive applications, and make contact with jobseekers, who are able to search jobs, post brief resumes, and apply to listed positions. Souktel reports that their pilot programme in the Palestinian Authority was able to match an average of 40 youth/month with jobs or internships (approximately 500/year). Most matches were in sales, office support, information technology (IT), and construction and 7% of those matched were still in the positions at the three-month point. Youth reported a 75% reduction in the time needed to find a job, while employers reported halving the time and costs associated with hiring.

> Box 4.10. **JobMatch: A SMS-based job matching system in the**
> **Palestinian Authority** *(continued)*
>
> A study by Accenture and Vodafone found that "during the [Souktel JobMatch] pilot, 25% of users found roles, with the average job search reduced from 12 weeks to 1 week. Employers reported a 50% reduction in hiring time and 64% of workers reported an increase in salary." The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) also reported using Souktel to identify and hire hundreds of young Palestinians to participate in research projects.
>
> It remains uncertain whether Souktel can establish the scale of operation to achieve financial sustainability beyond the donor-funded contracts that have thus far enabled it to grow. From its start-up in 2007, it has expanded to serve projects in 30 developing countries in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, enabling it to create a strong technical and business management team composed primarily of young Palestinians.
>
> *Source:* Global Business School Network (2014), "Souktel and MIT bring digital outsourcing work to youth in Palestine, via mobile," 23 April, www.gbsnonline.org/blogpost/760188/186221/Souktel-and-MIT-Bring-Digital-Outsourcing-Work-To-Youth-in-Palestine-Via-Mobile; Souktel (2009), "Souktel: Mobile technology that helps youth find jobs and training", PowerPoint presentation, December; Vodafone (2013), "Connected worker: How mobile technology can improve working life in emerging economies", April, https://www.vodafone.com/content/dam/vodafone-images/sustainability/downloads/vodafone_connected_worker.pdf (accessed on 1 April 2016).

While youth are less likely to be involved in legal controversies than adults, they can be particularly vulnerable as they struggle to find information about their rights and legal advice. YouthLaw Aetearoa, a New Zealand-based project, addressed this challenge by providing free legal counsel to youth on line (see Box 4.11).

> Box 4.11. **New Zealand: Free legal online services for children and young people**
>
> YouthLaw is a free community law centre for children and young people across New Zealand. It provides free legal services to anyone below 25 who is unable to access legal help elsewhere. YouthLaw is primarily funded by the Ministry of Justice, but is independent of the government.
>
> YouthLaw publishes legal information and education on a website and social media (www.facebook.com/YouthLaw) and provides legal advice offline (e.g. nation-wide free legal advice over the phone). The website covers areas of particular relevance to youth, such as home and family, relationships, school, shops and purchases, health and well-being, police and courts, driving, work, flatting, bullying and violence, welfare and benefits, and human rights. In the harassment section, for instance, the website explains what kind of behaviour is considered harassment and provides both concrete examples and links to the relevant laws and regulations.
>
> Through interactive workshops in the offline world, YouthLaw has contributed to raise awareness among youth, associations and teachers for young people's rights and the importance of rights-based education.
>
> *Source*: YouthLaw Aoearoa (2016) www.youthlaw.co.nz/ (accessed on 23 March 2016).

Social media and open government data: Potential for new forms of interaction and economic opportunities

In 2014, an estimated 81 million people in the Arab world used Facebook, up from 54.5 million just a year before. As shown in Figure 4.5, youth constitute around two-thirds or more of all Facebook users in the selected MENA countries. In line with the findings of the uptake rates on mobile phones, however, young women are significantly under-represented. The use of LinkedIn, a network system for professionals, is lower, but rising quickly. Moreover, Twitter is increasingly used as a communication tool with around 5.8 million active users, with the highest penetration rates reached in Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority (Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, 2014b).

Figure 4.5. **Youth social media use in selected MENA countries, 2014**
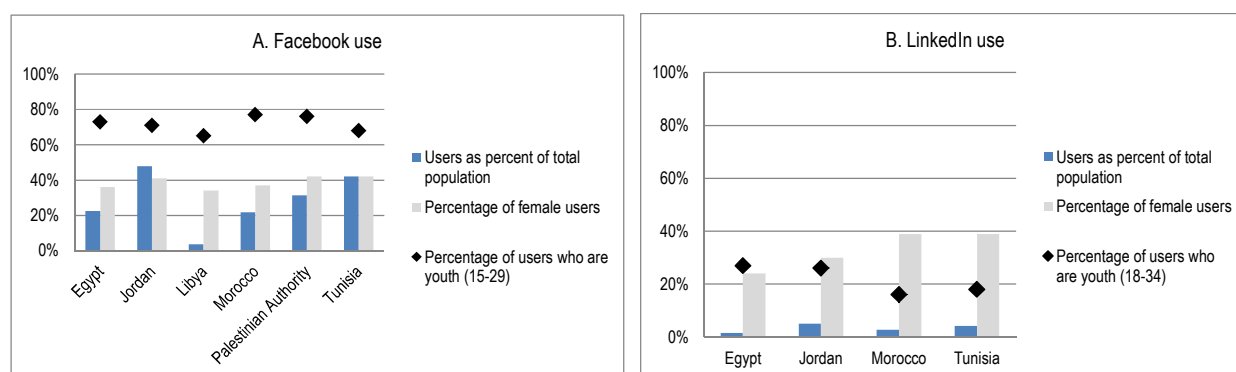
Note: Panel A refers to youth as young people between the ages of 15-29, whereas Panel B refers to young men and women between the ages of 18-34. No information is available for Libya and the Palestinian Authority for Panel B.

Source: Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (2014b), "Citizen engagement and public services in the Arab world: The potential of social media", 6th edition, June, www.mbrsg.ae/getattachment/e9ea2ac8-13dd-4cd7-9104-b8f1f405cab3/Citizen-Engagement-and-Public-Services-in-the-Arab.aspx (accessed on 1 April 2016).

Social media and mobile apps are essential tools in young peoples' lives to connect with friends and make sense of the world. They provide an easy-to-access space to seek information and advice, dialogue, or simply entertainment and distraction. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, MySpace and Tumblr pick up on the desire of young people to socialise and participate in viral activities by allowing them to build their own online communities and share interests with like-minded fellows. In both MENA and OECD countries, social media provide a space to exchange advice on taboo themes in society (e.g. sexuality, mental health) and hence presents an important source for young men and women to establish contacts and foster mutual encouragement (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2013). Online blogs cover all parts of youth life and have been crucial to voice opinions and mobilise for common causes. Young people have been using social media to create social and political change during the Arab Spring, in Brazil prior to the World Cup, in the Occupy Wall Street Movement and during the Taksim Square Protests in Turkey (Smith, 2013). And yet, the new (mobile) technology is still unaffordable for a significant part of the younger generation which puts them at risk of social exclusion.

In the formulation of policies and the design of public services, governments need to take the new realities into account, simply because the online sphere is the place where young people mingle and seek information. If social media can encourage young people with little interest in participating through traditional channels, or if the online networks rather provide another pitch for the already active ones, however, is a matter of ongoing debate (Livingstone, Couldry and Markham, 2007).

Many civil society organisations in the Middle East and North Africa rely on a Facebook page instead of a more formal website given the ease of use which is free of charge and offers a form of two-way communication. Hundreds of informal youth groups were active on Facebook in Egypt and other MENA countries in the months following the January 2011 uprising, using their pages to organise protests, mobilise for local initiatives, and communicate on political developments, as well as for social purposes (Bremer, 2011). However, the reality check of social media use in Europe shows that while 85% of 16-24 year-old Europeans on average used social media in 2014, less than one-fifth used it to discuss political or civic issues (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6. **Youth social media use: General vs. political/civic issues, 2013**
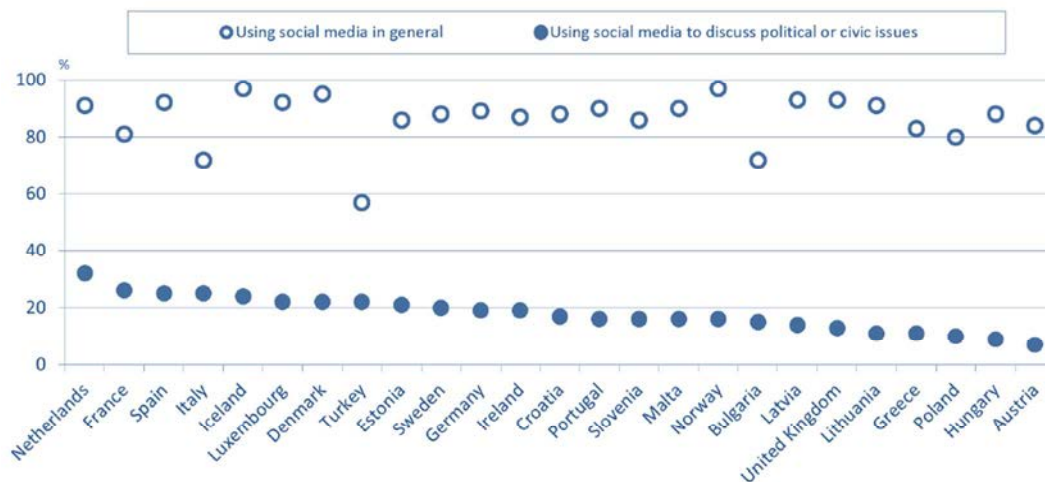
Source: Mickoleit, A. (2014), "Social media use by governments: A policy primer to discuss trends, identify policy opportunities and guide decision makers", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 26, OECD Publishing, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jxrcmghmk0s-en.

In line with the trend in European countries, a recent study finds that almost half of young people in MENA countries do not use their accounts to discuss government performance. Those who do use social media to access government information (75%) whereas only a minority provides feedback (10%) and suggestions for improvements (7.5%) or communicates directly with senior government officials (5%) (Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, 2014b). According to another study targeting residents of 22 Arab countries, only 7% use social networking websites primarily to contribute to the community and society and less than 5% to share opinions and inform about political activities. Instead, the main use of social media was dedicated toget news, information and advice (27%), to stay in touch with family and friends (27%) and to find a job, freelancing and consulting opportunities (14%) (Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, 2014a). These findings point to the importance for governments to clearly

define the purpose of their social media initiatives with effective follow-up and feedback mechanisms in place. The latter is particularly important as frustration can grow when youth feel that their input is not taken into account. Moreover, too many government websites bear the signature of public officials with little expertise in presenting information to distinct audiences. Governments can increase the appeal of their digital presence by partnering with young IT experts.

Beyond the positive impact of open data on transparency, accountability and public engagement (Ubaldi, 2013), access to government data and databases (e.g. legal information, business information or social data) can spur innovation and encourage the creation value-added services in collaboration with government. In Canada, Niew Labs, a group of graduated engineers and developers from the University of Toronto, designed "CareerPath" (Niew Labs, 2016). CareerPath, which can be accessed via a website and a mobile app, allows Canadian youth to search 40 000 job titles and view visualisations of projected employment statistics and job prospects based on data from Employment and Social Development Canada. The service ties the user's research to actual job opportunities and hence provides helpful advice to young jobseekers.

Recommendations

In line with the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies, MENA governments could exploit the potential of digital technologies to engage youth and tailor public services to youth needs by:

1. **Strengthening governance frameworks to further build up ICT infrastructure** as it presents one of the areas in which MENA countries lack considerably behind the OECD average. In light of the existing "digital divide", which puts vulnerable youth (e.g. women, rural, poor) at a significant risk of social exclusion, initiatives to build up the technical infrastructure should be sensitive to the specific needs and requirements of these groups.

2. **Investing in the skills of public officials** to interact with youth via social media and other online platforms. The trainings could be included in the annual training plans for public officials and involve youth representatives to ensure that government information is provided in a way that young people find appealing. Social media engagement could be embedded into the description of job positions and work plans to ensure that adequate time, capacities and resources are allocated to this task.

3. **Conducting an analysis of public services of particular interest to youth** that could be made available on line at low cost and with relatively little effort, such as free legal counsel.

4. **Strengthening the use of ICT-based methods to expand consultation with youth**, including online user surveys or opinion research and new forms of interaction via social media. Governments should complement online activities with more traditional forms of interaction (e.g. roundtables) to make sure that youth without access to digital technologies can raise their voice and contribute to the decision-making process. Through feedback mechanisms, the participants should be informed about how their input was taken into account.

5. **Investigating the reasons for the existing gender gap in using digital technologies** to provide similar opportunities for men and women.

6. **Using mobile technologies to facilitate the matching of job applicants with employers** and other forms of promoting youth participation in economic life as demonstrated by Souktel in Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and elsewhere (see Box 4.10).

Notes

1. See www.digitalgov.gov/2015/05/15/government-services-through-a-life-events-approach/.

2. The *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* states: "Young people have the right and should have the opportunity to have a real say when decisions affecting them are being made at local and regional level. They should also be supported and given the space to be involved in all kinds of activities and actions."

3. The Arab Barometer is a multi-country survey designed to assess citizen attitudes about public affairs, governance, and social policy in the Arab world, and to identify factors that shape these attitudes and values. Its objective is to produce scientifically reliable data on the politically relevant attitudes of ordinary citizens, to disseminate and apply survey findings in order to contribute to political reform, and to strengthen institutional capacity for public opinion research (www.arabbarometer.org/).

4. "Digital natives" refers to youth who have been using the Internet for at least five years, according to the definition of the ITU.

5. It should also be noted that these estimates naturally underestimate the number of youth with Internet experience, because they exclude young people with less than five years of such experience.

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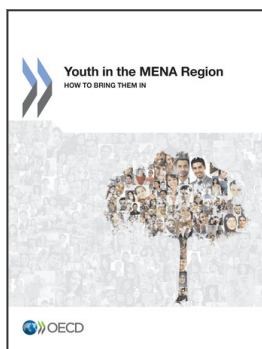
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