Chapter 3

Towards a public governance framework for
effective and inclusive youth engagement

As a cross-cutting policy area, youth policy in the MENA region suffers from the lack of a strategic and co-ordinated approach. In the absence of an integrated framework to define the "why", "how" and "what for" of youth policy, government interventions tend to be symbolic. As policy outcomes in favour of youth suffer from weak co-ordination and impact-orientation, MENA youth express significantly less trust in government than the age group of 50+. Against the two-fold challenge – young people's exclusion from the policy cycle and the lack of mainstreamed youth concerns in public policies and strategies – this chapter argues that governments should apply a "youth lens" to open government tools and traditional forms of policy making and integrate youth in governance processes that are typically left at the discretion of policy makers.

The different dimensions of engaging youth

When youth stand on the side while political decisions are being made, policy outcomes are unlikely to reflect their particular interests and needs. With the marginalisation of the younger generation in public institutions and processes, youth remain trapped in an observer status. Indeed, when MENA youth make it to the headlines, they do so as "bulge" or "challenge" and yet remain pushed into a passive role when political decisions are made.

Tackling the root cause of this phenomenon would require governments to encourage and develop more open and inclusive governance arrangements. OECD evidence shows that good public governance and inclusive institutions are relevant to achieve more inclusive growth patterns which benefit all parts of society (OECD, 2015a and 2015b). The findings suggest that governments pursuing greater transparency, access to information and stakeholder engagement will be successful in delivering more inclusive and better tailored policy outcomes. In turn, a government that is responsive to the needs of its citizens is likely to enjoy increasing levels of legitimacy and trust.

A view at the trust levels of MENA youth in their government reveals that, in all countries for which data is available, young people express significantly less trust than the age group of 50+ (Figure 3.1). Interestingly, this pattern contrasts with the average of OECD member countries in which youth expresses slightly more confidence in government than the older generation, although at a very low level.

Figure 3.1. **Gap in confidence in government by age group in selected MENA countries, 2015 (or latest available year)**
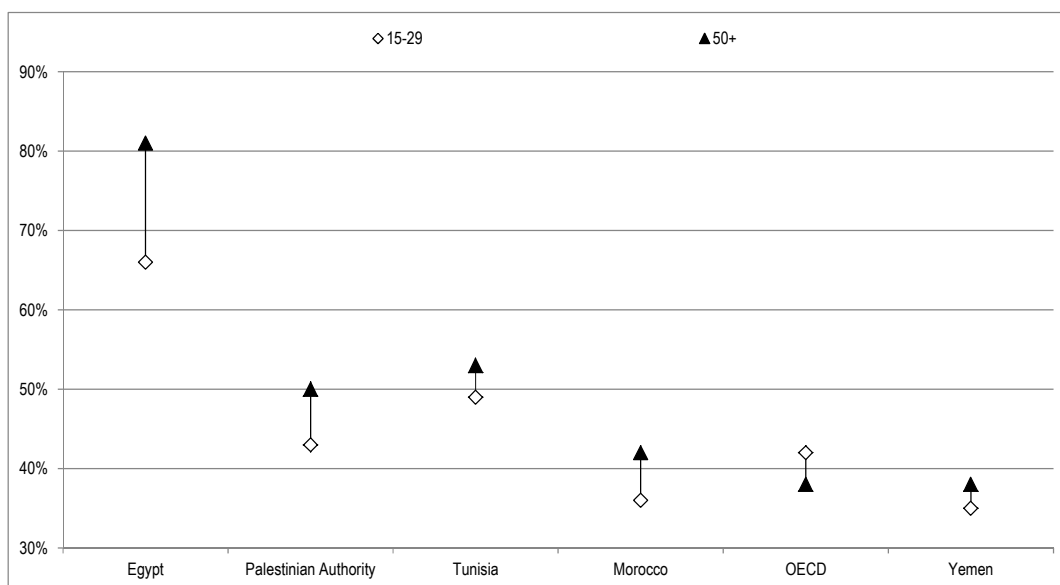
Note: Data for Egypt, OECD and Yemen relates to 2014; data for Morocco relates to 2013.
Source: OECD's own work based on data from the Gallup World Poll (2015).

Political engagement

Young people rightfully expect that governments will create conditions where all segments of society – poor and rich, male and female, urban and rural – can voice their ideas and demands. Youth associations, civil society and youth activists must be given real opportunities to engage in formal political processes with the power to shape policy outcomes and hold government officials accountable for their promises. Public consultation processes should be designed in such a way that they make it easy for young people to participate, including using both online and offline mechanisms. This is particularly critical given that the way political systems function in MENA countries and elsewhere frequently favours their marginalisation (e.g. voting age).

Social and economic empowerment

The need for a new public governance model is nowhere as obvious as in the failure of current arrangements to create economic opportunities for the young generation. The strategy of previous decades, which guaranteed government jobs to graduates, proved ruinous to the fiscal health of governments, economic growth and to the quality of government services. An alternative model in which the private sector would be the main job provider for skilled graduates does not seem to have emerged. The result has been a mismatch of youth needs and economic possibilities, leading to the withdrawal from economic activity of too many youth, particularly women, long periods spent searching for jobs, and the funnelling of many more youth into insecure, dead-end jobs in the informal sector. Queuing for jobs has important implications for social life, for instance when the lack of economic independence makes it impossible to leave the parental home and start a family.

Figure 3.2 proposes a set of ten questions to summarise what MENA youth should be able to expect from their governments. It points to the critical role public governance arrangements play for young people to engage, be empowered and benefit from policies and services that are tailored to their demands.

Figure 3.2. **Applying a youth lens to governance priorities: 10 key questions for policy makers**

1. Are government institutions sufficiently **open and transparent** to enable youth to hold government accountable?

2. Do youth enjoy opportunities to systematically **engage and participate** in decision making and public consultation processes?

3. Do governments make effective use of digital technologies and non-traditional channels to promote **youth engagement**?

4. Do legal frameworks and policies take into account the specific needs of young **women**, minority groups, and the disabled?

5. Are governance arrangements creating the conditions for **economic progress** that is both **inclusive and sustainable**?

6. Do governance frameworks translate economic progress into **economic opportunities** and **quality employment for youth**?

7. Are public services sufficiently **tailored, responsive and accountable** to the specific needs of young men and women?

8. Do **education, health and other public services** equip and support youth in making successful transitions to adulthood?

9. Are local governance frameworks allowing youth to participate in the identification of needs and promoting **communities** where youth can enjoy good quality of life?

10. Are solid frameworks for **integrity and the rule of law** in place to avoid misuse of public resources intended to serve youth purposes?

Engagement

Openness
Transparency
Accountability
Trust

Social justice

Economic opportunity
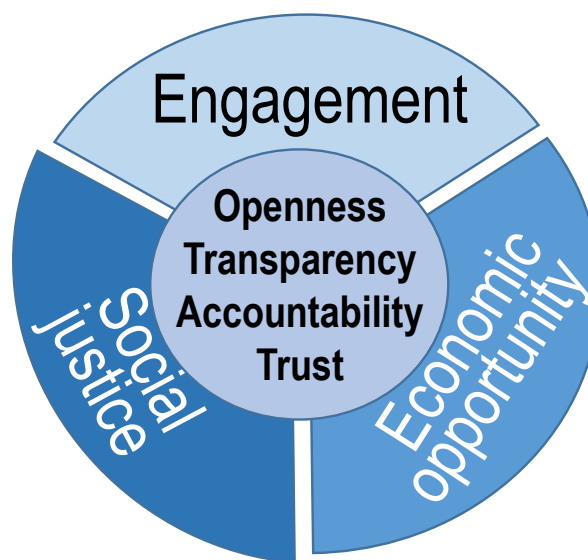
Source: OECD's own work.

A spotlight on public governance frameworks in MENA countries

The following sections provide a first analysis of the maturity of governance frameworks to bring youth in and mainstream their demands in the formulation and implementation of policies and services. By mainstreaming youth considerations, this report refers to the flexibility and capacity of any national social, economic and cultural policy framework to embed specific youth needs while pursuing general single- or multi-sector policy objectives, such as public health or job creation.

A whole-of-government approach to youth engagement and policy

As a cross-cutting policy area youth policy risks weak institutionalisation and co-ordination across departments and agencies. Youth programmes at sector level typically suffer from weak co-ordination between departments pursuing their own mandates and operating within their own organisational structures.

A whole-of-government (WoG) approach with strong leadership is vital to break up silo-based approaches and roll out youth policies and deliver youth services in a coherent manner across administrative boundaries. In line with the global trend, some of the selected MENA countries are currently formulating or implementing national youth policies with a view to incorporating sectoral strategies in favour of youth in a strategic policy document. Based on a vision for youth over a multi-year horizon, a national youth policy can improve coherence, stress areas where specific horizontal and vertical co-ordination mechanisms are required and assign clear mandates to key internal and external players that could be called upon to partner in setting and implementing the policy and its associated programming over time. By integrating youth in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of a holistic youth strategy, governments can ensure that related programmes and services are indeed responsive to their demands. Robust performance evaluation frameworks are required to assess whether the strategy delivers the intended results and, where adjustments are necessary, change course in order to achieve better results. However, the lack of youth-disaggregated data is a major obstacle to youth-sensitive programming. Without supportive data and information on the specific circumstances in which young men and women are living, public policies and services are likely to neglect their distinct demands as well as the heterogeneity of their interests.

The need for a co-ordinated approach to deliver youth policy is particularly evident in the transition of youth from education to employment. As youth move from school or university into the workforce, they rely on educational institutions to help them make career choices and gain the right skills. Therefore, the overall educational process should be linked with support from job placement programmes so that students gain access to internships, part-time work, or other skill-building opportunities. For example, industry development units and government placement programmes could interact with secondary or tertiary educational institutions to help shape curricula and provide information to students. Workforce development boards, such as the examples referred to in the *OECD Territorial Review of the Chicago Tri-State Metropolitan Area* (OECD, 2012) can place around a single table businesses, labour unions, governments and training service providers (e.g. schools and private sector firms) to link jobs to skills, tailor training curricula to meet actual job requirements and generate apprenticeship possibilities for first-time jobs.

Reality on the ground in MENA countries shows a different picture. Previous efforts have been characterised by significant challenges to move from formulation to effective

implementation due to unclear responsibilities, limited capacities for co-ordination and the absence of effective accountability mechanisms. Formal responsibility for youth policy and programme co-ordination typically lies with the Ministry of Youth, a ministry with often combined portfolios such as youth and sports, and so far fairly limited capacities to steer and co-ordinate a national vision for youth across administrative boundaries. The lack of adequate capacities raises serious barriers to programme effectiveness. Limited resource control and oversight responsibility have impeded mainstreaming youth concerns across the policy spectrum and translating plans into action.

The legal foundations for youth engagement and policy

Whereas youth-related provisions in the Constitution only provide a first indication of a country's commitment to promote youth engagement and policy, the different extent to which MENA countries refer to youth is striking.

Table 3.1 shows that the most recently drafted constitutions in Egypt (2014), Tunisia (2014) and Morocco (2011) are the most progressive in terms of assigning rights and freedoms to youth. Young people have been strong advocates for constitutional change and the positive outcomes on paper can be attributed to their unprecedented visibility in the public debate. In Morocco, with the pending creation of the Advisory Council of Youth and Associations (*Conseil Consultatif de la Jeunesse et de l'Action Associative*), the participation of youth is expected to become institutionalised in formal terms. Moreover, the Constitution requests local authorities to take into account the concerns of young people whose active participation shall be facilitated through associations and municipal youth councils (see Chapter 4). In the wake of the popular movements in Tunisia, the adoption of the decree 2011-88 on the formation and funding of associations has resulted in a mushrooming of youth-led civil society organisations and youth associations (EuroMed, 2013).

The provisions addressing youth endorse their active role in various areas of life stressing the need to create an environment in which they can fulfil their potential and assume responsibilities. Youth are pictured as a source of creativity, innovation and energy. The most recent adjustments highlight an increasing understanding of the need to institutionalise young people's representation – either by assigning a minimum share of seats in local councils in Egypt, the creation of a consultative council for youth in Morocco or a more vague reference to an appropriate representation of youth in local councils in Tunisia and the first House of Representatives in Egypt. The Libyan interim Constitution of 2011 and the 2003 Basic Law in the Palestinian Authority discuss the obligation of the government to take care of adolescents in the context of supporting the family as the basis of society.

Table 3.1. **References to youth in the constitutions of selected MENA countries, 2014 (or latest available year)**

Egypt (2014)	*Article 82* The state guarantees the care of youth and young children, in addition to helping them discover their talents and developing their cultural, scientific, psychological, creative and physical abilities, encouraging them to engage in group and volunteer activity and enabling them to take part in public life. *Article 180: Election of local councils* The law regulates other conditions for candidacy and procedures of election, provided that one quarter of the seats are allocated to youth under 35 years old. *Article 244: Representation for youth, Christians, disabled persons, etc.* The state grants youth, Christians, persons with disability and expatriate Egyptians appropriate representation in the first House of Representatives to be elected after this Constitution is adopted, in the manner specified by law. *Source:* www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf.
Jordan 1952 (amended in1984)	-
Libya (2011)* * Libyan interim Constitutional Declaration	*Article 5* Family shall be the basis of society and shall be protected by the State. The State shall protect and encourage marriage. The State shall guarantee the protection of motherhood, childhood and old age and look after children, young people and persons with special needs. *Source*: www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Libya_2011.pdf.
Morocco (2011)	*Article 33* It is incumbent on the public powers to take all the appropriate measures with a view to: • stimulate and make general the participation of youth in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the country; • aid the young to establish themselves in [an] active and associative life and to give assistance to them in the difficulty of scholarly, social or professional adaptation; • facilitate the access of the young to culture, to science, to technology, to art, to sports and to leisure, all in creation of propitious conditions for the full deployment of their creative and innovative potential in all these domains. A Consultative Council of Youth and of Associative Action [Conseil consultative de la jeunesse et de l'action associative], is created. *Article 170* The Consultative Council of Youth and of Associative Action [Conseil consultatif de la jeunesse et de l'action associative], created by virtue of Article 33 of this Constitution, is a consultative instance within the domains of the protection of youth and of the promotion of associative life. It is charged to study and to follow the questions [of] interest to these domains and to formulate the proposals on any subject of economic, social and cultural order [of] direct interest to youth and associative action, as well as the development of the creative energies of youth, and their inducement [incitation] to participation in the national life, in the spirit of responsible citizenship. *Source*: www.constitutionnet.org/files/morocco_eng.pdf .
Tunisia (2014)	*Article 8* Youth are an active force in building the nation. The state seeks to provide the necessary conditions for developing the capacities of youth and realising their potential, supports them to assume responsibility, and strives to extend and generalise their participation in social, economic, cultural and political development.. *Article 133* The elections law shall guarantee the representation of youth in local authority councils. *Source*: www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Tunisia_2014.pdf.
Palestinian Authority (2003)* *Basic law is to function as a temporary constitution	*Article 48* The state shall guarantee care for families, motherhood, and childhood. It shall care for adolescents and the youth. The law shall regulate the rights of the child, mother and family in accordance with the provisions of international agreements and the "Charter of the Rights of the Arab Child." In particular, the state shall seek to provide protection for children from harm, harsh treatment, exploitation, and from any work that would endanger their safety, health and education. *Source*: www.palestinianbasiclaw.org/basic-law/2003-permanent-constitution-draft.

Countries may not refer to youth in their Constitution, but encourage their empowerment through a set of policies or a distinct national youth policy. In OECD countries, references to youth in the Constitution are few and completely absent in countries like Australia, Canada and France. In Germany, the Basic Law refers to the protection of young persons to justify the limits and possible restriction of basic principles such as the freedom of expression and movement (Deutscher Bundestag, 2012). Positive rights granted by the Constitution exist in Italy (Art. 31: protection of mothers, children and the young by adopting necessary provisions)[1] and Spain (Section 48: The public authorities shall promote conditions for the free and effective participation of young people in political, social, economic and cultural development).[2]

The formulation and implementation of a national youth policy

Youth as a public policy field cuts across many different policy areas including employment, education, health, justice and sports. National youth policies have emerged as a guiding framework to shape a vision for youth and to mobilise and co-ordinate political support beyond one-time events by stressing synergies between youth policies and other strategic policy documents. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the 2010 national youth strategy, "Positive for Youth" develops a vision for a youth-friendly society along three key parameters (i.e. supportive relationships, strong ambitions, good opportunities). Designed for youth aged 13 to 19, the strategy sets out a series of policies and government initiatives with the objective of unlocking social mobility, tackling child poverty, preventing youth crime, and reducing health inequalities. The strategy puts a strong emphasis on local partnerships between communities, charities, local businesses and local councils to apply youth policy in a place-based fashion. It features a plan to monitor and evaluate programme implementation (UK Government, 2011).

Box 3.1 presents the Irish cross-Government "National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making 2015-2020". Ireland was the first country in Europe to develop a strategy across the government dedicated to strengthening the voice of children and young people in political decision making.

Box 3.1. The Irish cross-Government National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (2015-2020)

In the formulation process of the strategy, youth stakeholders were invited to participate in the identification of objectives and activities including:

- a national consultation with 66 700 children and young people

- a public consultation with over 1 000 stakeholders

- bilateral consultative meetings with relevant government departments and state agencies

- bilateral consultative meetings with relevant independent statutory agencies, such as the Ombudsman for Children and the Mental Health Commission

- bilateral consultative meetings with children's and youth non-government organisations

- a literature review to assess progress to date and identify gaps and areas for development

- an audit of existing nationwide activity enabling children and young people's participation in decision making

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Box 3.1. **The Irish cross-Government National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (2015-2020)** *(continued)*

- a review of monitoring and evaluation reports of children's participation initiatives in the previous ten years

- commissioned targeted research on children's participation in decision making.

The strategy, launched in June 2015, presents the following objectives and priority areas for action:

1. Children and young people will have a voice in decisions made in their local communities.

2. Children and young people will have a voice in decision making in early education, schools and the wider formal and non-formal education systems.

3. Children and young people will have a voice in decisions that affect their health and well-being, including on the health and social services delivered to them.

4. Children and young people will have a voice in the Courts and legal system.

The strategy contains a series of additional objectives, which include:

5. Promoting effective leadership to champion and promote participation of children and young people.

6. Development of education and training for professionals working with and on behalf of children and young people.

7. Mainstreaming the participation of children and young people in the development of policy, legislation and research.

The priority action in the strategy for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) is the establishment of a Children and Young People's Participation Hub, as a national centre for excellence. The Hub will support Government departments and other organisations in implementing the strategy through training, documenting best practice and working with education institutions to oversee the development of education on children's rights for professionals who work with and for children and young people. The Hub will also host a comprehensive online database of practical resources and literature.

The DCYA has a dedicated Citizen Participation Unit, the role of which is to ensure that children and young people have a voice in the design, delivery and monitoring of services and policies that affect their lives, at national and local level. It collaborates in this endeavour with other government departments, statutory bodies and non-government organisations.

Source: Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015), "National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making, 2015–2020", Government Publications, Dublin, http://dcya.gov.ie/documents/playandrec/20150617NatStratParticipationReport.pdf (accessed on 23 March 2016).

Although no single, unified framework exists to guide policy makers in setting, implementing and monitoring youth policy, Bacalso and Farrow (2016) notice "a growing international consensus on principles for youth policy making". Building on international frameworks such as the 1998 Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes and the 2007 World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) as well as individual

contributions to the debate, such as by Peter Lauritzen (1993),[3] their paper extracts a set of eight principles to guide the development and performance evaluation of youth policies. They are summarised in Box 3.2. The principles identified by the two authors are similar to the eight principles identified by the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies (2014), which were identified by over 700 participants from 165 countries in the First Global Forum on Youth Policies on 28-30 October 2014 in the capital city of Azerbaijan.

Box 3.2. **Towards a set of guiding principles for (national) youth policy**

1. Democratic and participatory: Legitimised through a democratically elected Parliament; inclusion and full participation of actors such as youth professionals, civil society, youth organisations and movements as well as young people; participation in the design and implementation; genuine sharing of power between decision makers and young people; inclusive delivery from state, private and non-profit sectors.

2. Cross-sectoral and transversal: Holistic approach cutting across all policy domains, and going beyond typical "youth" issues; recognition of the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, needs and aspirations within the "youth" demographic; participation and empowerment of vulnerable youth.

3. Coherent and co-ordinated: Consider viability in the current political context; clear framework, based on rights, needs and well-being to ensure consistency; inclusive, multi-level and multi-stakeholder co-ordination of policy.

4. Researched and evidence-based: Ongoing, consistent, independent youth research; long-term documenting of developments and changes, skilled researchers and a body of national knowledge on youth sociology; evidence-based policy making; inclusion of objective and subjective measures.

5. Fairly budgeted and fairly financed: Allocated resources linked to objectives of youth policy and the demands of young people; independence of youth and youth focused organisations; remuneration of youth sector professionals.

6. Competent and professional: Recognition of youth work as a profession; quality standards for youth work and youth sector professionals at national level.

7. Monitored and evaluated: Effective monitoring mechanisms to evaluate policy performance and strengthen accountability; incorporation of youth-led research; organisational and institutional feedback and learning processes; national and local indicators to measure the success of policies; inclusion of external, independent evaluators; effective follow-up based on performance outcomes.

8. Open and freely accessible: Announcement of decision-making processes (renewal of policies); participation of young people, experts and stakeholders with opportunities to influence decisions and processes fairly; transparency through publication of information on decisions, budgets, beneficiaries and evaluations.

Source: Bacalso, Cristina and Alex Farrow (2016), "Youth policies from around the world: International practices and country examples", *Youth Policy Working Paper*, No 1, March 2016, www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/Youth_Policy_Working_Paper_01_201603.pdf (accessed on 10 April 2016).

At regional level, the African Youth Charter, issued by the African Union in 2006, provides guidance for the elaboration of a holistic national youth policy. As of 2016, 36 member states have ratified the Charter including Tunisia (2011) and Libya (2008). Egypt has signed the Charter but has not ratified it. Beyond the principles outlined above, the Charter stresses that the national youth policy should be framed within a country's national development framework. It highlights the institutional aspects of young people's representation in decision-making processes and suggests the appointment of youth focal points in government structures, as well as the establishment of national youth co-ordinating mechanisms. Most notably, the Charter calls for effective and inclusive co-ordination mechanisms for young men and women to engage across the policy cycle.

Table 3.2 offers a summary of the status and main features of youth strategies in the selected MENA countries. As of April 2016, Morocco and Jordan have formulated a national youth policy. In Tunisia, the government announced its intention to organise a series of consultations with youth at regional and local levels to prepare an integrated national youth strategy covering a multi-year horizon. National youth strategies have been formulated in Jordan and the Palestinian Authority in previous years, however, moving from planning to implementation has turned out to be a major challenge. In fact, many initiatives have been donor-driven with limited follow-up and accountability mechanisms in place. In Yemen, the serious deterioration of the security situation has resulted in a virtual standstill of the implementation of the youth policy for 2006-15.

The institutional representation of youth

The governments of the countries covered in this report have taken parallel approaches to organise the co-ordination of youth policies across government departments and agencies. Table 3.3 summarises the available information on bodies with responsibility for youth affairs. The principle option chosen is a dedicated ministry – regularly including sports as a second portfolio. The representation of youth issues through youth federations does not have a strong tradition as the largely donor-driven creation of these councils has not turned out to be sustainable.

Table 3.2. **Does a national youth policy exist in the selected MENA countries?**

Country	Status and main features of youth policy articulation
Egypt	The 2010 Human Development Report for Egypt, focusing on youth, outlined a National Policy for Youth developed in 2009 by the National Youth Council, but this organisation has now been disbanded.
Jordan	National youth strategies were developed in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the 2005-09 period and a national employment plan giving priority to youth employment was developed with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) for 2011-20. The former identifies nine priorities: youth participation, civil rights and citizenship, recreational activities and leisure time, culture and information, information technology and globalisation, education and training, employment, health, and environment. Reportedly, the National Youth Strategy was reviewed and launched anew in 2010 for the period of 2011-15. A National Youth Strategy for 2016-18 has been developed.
Libya	Libya ratified the African Union Youth Charter in 2008. The current situation in Libya has prevented advance in plans to develop a youth policy to build on the constitutional declaration's call for the state to play a lead role in taking care of children, youth and the handicapped.
Morocco	The Integrated National Youth Strategy (*Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse*, SNIJ) 2015-30 was published in 2014 by the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the General Direction of Local Communities with support from international organisations. The strategy "is part of a general ambition to place young people at the heart of public policies" and to address the relevant provisions in the new 2011 Constitution. It claims to provide an integrated strategic vision for youth-related planning and programming and to integrate the different sectoral actions in place. It identifies five fields of intervention: *1)* increasing economic opportunities for young people and promote their employability; *2)* increasing access and quality of basic services for youth and reduce geographic disparities; *3)* promoting the active participation of youth in social and civic life and in decision making; *4)* promoting respect for human rights; *5)* strengthening the institutional arrangements for communication, information, evaluation and governance. The implementation of the strategy will be facilitated by an Action Plan (2015--30) outlining priority measures, performance indicators, responsibilities and a budget framework.
Palestinian Authority	Although a National Youth Policy Planning Document was prepared in 2005 and a Youth Cross-cutting Strategy was drafted in 2011, both of these processes are currently on hold. The latter plan sets out four strategic objectives: participation, citizenship and rights, empowerment, and access.
Tunisia	Tunisia ratified the African Youth Charter in 2011. Tunisia is currently organising a consultation process with youth to inform the formulation of an Integrated National Youth Strategy.
Yemen	Yemen issued a youth policy covering the 2006-15 period specifying interventions for children and youth. Interventions for Yemenis in the 15-24 age group included: *1)* creating a National Youth Employment Environment and Plan; *2)* strengthening national identify, youth inclusion, and participation; *3)* increasing leisure options and creating child/youth friendly urban planning; and *4)* preventing early pregnancy and reducing the risks to reproductive health.

Source: Youthpolicy.org (n.d.), "Factsheets", www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets (accessed on 12 April 2016); Ministry of Youth and Sports in Morocco (2014), *Stratégie Nationale Intégrée de la Jeunesse 2015-30*, www.mjs.gov.ma/sites/default/files/strategie-morocco.pdf; EuroMed (2014), *Le travail de jeunesse et l'employabilité des jeunes en Jordanie*, June, http://euromedyouth.net/IMG/pdf/def_on_line_jorda_de_roule__jordanie__fr.pdf (accessed on 1 April 2016).

Table 3.3. **Bodies with formal responsibility for youth affairs in selected MENA countries, 2016**

Country	Ministry	National youth council	Youth federation
Egypt	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**	*(Disbanded)*	*(Revolutionary Youth Council disbanded)*
Jordan	**Ministry of Youth**		Jordan Youth Innovation Forum (40 organisations)
Libya	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**		Libyan Youth Forum
Morocco	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**	*(National youth council included in 2011 Constitution, but not yet operational)*	
Palestinian Authority		**Higher Council for Youth and Sports**	*Palestinian Youth Legislative Council (donor initiative; apparently under reorganisation)*
Tunisia	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**		*Tunisian Union of Youth Organizations (UTOJ; disbanded)*
Yemen	**Ministry of Youth and Sports**		National Youth Council Committee representing local youth councils (donor initiative)

Note: The principal entity responsible for youth policy and programme co-ordination in each country is shown in **bold**. Disbanded entities and those mandated, but not yet operational, are shown in *italics*.

Source: Youthpolicy.org (n.d.), "Factsheets", www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets (accessed on 12 April 2016) and organisational websites.

In several countries, the youth portfolio is assigned to a Ministry of Youth and Sport although the youth portfolio itself is generally not well-funded. Cross-cutting youth councils, which existed in some MENA countries in the past with the objective to facilitate co-ordination across youth-oriented organisations, generally did not have a mandate permitting them to direct the activities of line ministries, nor did they benefit from a powerful link to the Centre of Government, such as the office of the Prime Minister or President. In light of these experiences, the case for a clearly mandated responsibility centre for youth policy is obvious. The lead institutions should be assigned adequate capacities and competencies to fulfil their role in co-ordinating the identification of youth needs and delivery of services, both vertically and horizontally across the government. The cross-cutting nature of youth policy requires a clear definition of the mandates for each entity involved, with these mandates communicated broadly across the administrative system and the public, and effective co-ordination mechanisms to avoid fragmented coverage. An institutionalised link to a higher office in the Centre of Government can facilitate the exercise of control over the range of activities necessary to integrate youth-related programming. For instance, since 2015, with the appointment of the Prime Minister as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth in Canada, youth is a part of the Prime Minister's portfolio. In the absence of a performant lead institution, when demands for reform to address unmet youth needs arise, they are too often met by making marginal changes, such as reassigning smaller units from one ministry to another.

Effective vertical co-ordination is critical to ensure that the national vision for youth indeed translates into better access to quality employment, education, health and other services on the ground. In turn, strong links between the different levels of government are critical to ensure that local public authorities and non-government stakeholders, starting with youth groups themselves, are fully integrated into the process of policy design, delivery and evaluation.

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life provides useful guidance for strengthening the institutional framework to mainstream a cross-cutting policy field (see Box 3.3).

Box 3.3. **The Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life: The institutional framework to mainstream gender equality**

Establish an institutional framework to ensure the effective implementation, co-ordination and sustainability of the gender equality and mainstreaming strategy, by:

1. Establishing clear roles, responsibilities, mandates and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies in implementing gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives.

2. Bolstering the capacities and resources of gender equality institutions to facilitate a consistent response at appropriate levels of government and to develop, implement and monitor gender-sensitive programmes and policies throughout the government, based on gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators. Effectiveness of gender equality institutions can also be strengthened by placing them at the highest possible level in the government.

3. Ensuring the capacity and resources of public institutions to integrate gender equality perspectives in their activities, for example, by identifying gender equality focal points across governmental bodies, by investing resources in training and promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres to produce gender-sensitive knowledge, leadership and communication, by ensuring the collection of gender and gender-disaggregated statistics in their areas of responsibility and by providing clear guidelines, tools, communication and expectations to public institutions in this area.

4. Strengthening vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for policy coherence across governmental bodies and levels of government that involve relevant non-governmental stakeholders to ensure synergies and effective implementation of gender equality initiatives.

Source: OECD (2016), *2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264252820-en.

In some MENA countries, youth houses or centres (*maisons de jeunes*) provide yet another institutional framework for the government to reach out to young people. In Morocco, a network of around 500 youth houses exists to support the capacities of registered youth organisations and encourage the social inclusion and participation of young people in local sport, cultural and leisure activities. With an annual budget of less than EUR 300, the youth houses suffer from inadequate capacities to provide the kind of services and activities that young people hope to have access to. Moreover, the existing youth houses are distributed unequally across the territory. Youth houses in Tunisia, which provide non-formal education opportunities and serve as community centres for non-governmental associations engaged in youth work, face similar challenges (EuroMed, 2013). A network of youth centres also exists in Jordan.

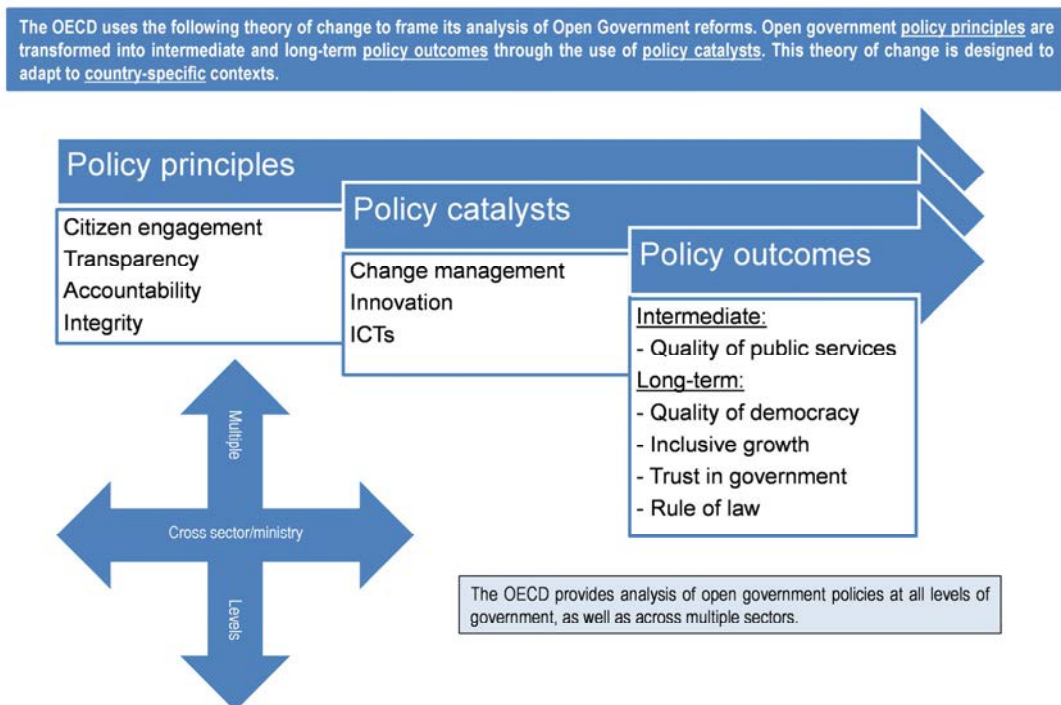## Applying a "youth lens" to public governance arrangements

This section sets out the analytical framework of this report. It suggests that public governance, the system of strategic processes and tools, as well as institutions, rules and interactions for effective policy making, can impede or further inclusive and effective youth engagement and policy.

Two challenges of the youth-public governance relationship in MENA countries stand out. First, the exclusion of young men and women from the political arena and decision-making processes is leaving them at the margin of the public debate with little scope to shape policy outcomes in their favour. Their marginalisation in public life risks reproducing a vicious cycle of frustration with the performance of government officials, decreasing levels of youth trust in government, and a gradual disengagement from politics. This is a challenge the selected MENA countries share with many OECD member countries. Exclusive governance arrangements tend to favour narrow elites at the expense of transparency and accountability as well as a fair distribution of social and economic benefit among the generations. Second, in the absence of youth at the decision-making table, they deplore a weak integration of their concerns in strategic policy documents and the delivery of public services.

This report is the first of its kind to apply a "youth lens" to public governance arrangements. Against the background of this two-fold challenge – the exclusion of young people from the policy cycle and the lack of mainstreamed youth concerns in public policies and strategies – it argues that existing public governance arrangements need to be readjusted towards the demands of the younger generation.

The analytical framework builds on the OECD approach to open government which argues that more open, transparent, inclusive and accountable government can boost more inclusive policy outcomes and inclusive growth (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. **The OECD open government theory of change**

The OECD uses the following theory of change to frame its analysis of Open Government reforms. Open government <u>policy principles</u> are transformed into intermediate and long-term <u>policy outcomes</u> through the use of <u>policy catalysts</u>. This theory of change is designed to adapt to <u>country-specific</u> contexts.

Policy principles

Citizen engagement
Transparency
Accountability
Integrity

Policy catalysts

Change management
Innovation
ICTs

Policy outcomes

<u>Intermediate:</u>
- Quality of public services
<u>Long-term:</u>
- Quality of democracy
- Inclusive growth
- Trust in government
- Rule of law

Multiple

Cross sector/ministry

Levels

The OECD provides analysis of open government policies at all levels of government, as well as across multiple sectors.

Source: OECD (2015c), "The OECD - A partner in open government", www.oecd.org /mena/governance/open-government.htm; www.slideshare.net/OECD-GOV/open-government-brochure.

Open government redefines the way in which government processes, policies and data should be produced, used and made available to the public. Opening up information and decision-making processes to a broader audience will lead to better informed policies and services. Institutional reforms to achieve greater transparency and public participation have a crucial role to play in increasing public scrutiny and oversight and fighting corruption. MENA countries have started to commit themselves to promoting more open and inclusive policy making and institutions. Through the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and with the assistance of the OECD, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Libya, the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon have begun to engage in a dialogue with civil society. Tunisia and Jordan have consulted with civil society in drafting and implementing their OGP Action Plans.

The ongoing reform processes offer an opportune moment for governments to apply a "youth lens" to open government tools (e.g. access to information frameworks; citizen engagement; digital technologies) and traditional forms of policy making. By applying a youth lens to access to information frameworks, for instance, this report refers to concrete measures that would tailor government information to youth needs and bring youth into the process of collecting, sharing and scrutinising youth-disaggregated data. Applying a youth lens to open government tools redirects the focus from a rather abstract notion of "citizens" to an immediate beneficiary (and potential contributor to the elaboration and implementation) of public policies and services.

Moreover, a shared understanding would be necessary that public governance frameworks set the framework in which youth seek opportunities in economic, social and

public life. So far, the restrictions for young people to engage set by existing institutions, rules and interactions for policy making are not yet discussed in the public debate to the extent that was necessary.

By integrating youth in governance processes that are typically left at the discretion of policy makers, such as the allocation of public budgets, governments can work towards mainstreaming youth considerations across the whole of government. A youth-sensitive approach to the allocation of public expenditures, for instance, could provide a space for youth to identify their needs, co-design programmes and co-decide on spending priorities. Their engagement across the policy cycle, before the allocation of public funds to specific programmes, is just one example of various areas in which young men and women can play a much more active and constructive role than is currently the case.

Figure 3.4 introduces the analytical framework for applying a youth lens to public governance.

Figure 3.4. **The analytical framework: Applying a youth lens to public governance**
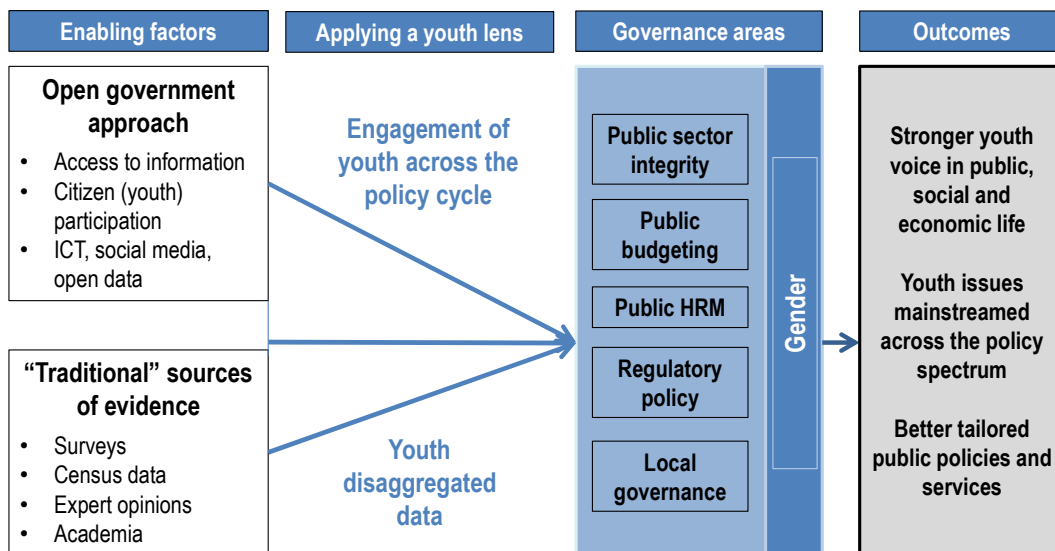
Source: OECD's own work.

The analytical framework is discussed in greater detail in the following two chapters. Chapter 4 highlights the positive outcomes of applying a "youth lens" to open government tools and traditional forms of policy making before Chapter 5 outlines some of the public governance processes and areas (e.g. public sector integrity, regulatory policy, public budgeting, public human resource management, local governance and gender) in which young men and women can play a more active role to ensure their considerations are mainstreamed in the formulation and delivery of public policies and services.

As the youth-governance connection has received limited attention heretofore, this discussion will be exploratory.

Notes

1. *Senato della Repubblica* (Constitution of the Italian Republic), adopted in 1947, www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf (accessed on 1 April 2016).

2. *Congreso de los Diputados* (Spanish Constitution), adopted in 1978, www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/Congreso/Hist_Normas/Norm/const_espa_texto_ingles_0.pdf (accessed on 1 April 2016).

3. In 1992, Lauritzen (1993) identified eight indicators, which together make up a national or international youth policy: 1) legislation concerning young people; 2) financial resources within the state budget; 3) non-governmental infrastructure; 4) some voluntary and professional training structure; 5) independent research into youth matters; 6) advisory bodies to the government; 7) communication network at national, regional and local level between authorities, youth movements and agencies; 8) opportunities for innovation and development.

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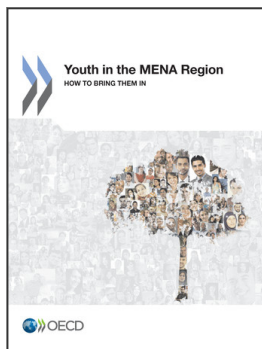
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