Translating Research Into Scaled Up Action: Evidence Symposium on Adolescent and Youth in MENA
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ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH
PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT IN THE MENA REGION

November 2017
INTRODUCTION

This document consolidates available evidence on adolescent and youth participation and civic engagement in MENA. It provides clarification of relevant concepts, and, in addition, compiles three key documents, as follows:

a) **Synthesis Report: Systematic Participation of Adolescents and Youth in Programming (MENA Region) - Nothing about us without us!**

This report analyses existing networks/advisory groups, promising interventions and other mechanisms/pathways that systematically encourage adolescent and youth participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of programmes, benefiting adolescents and youth. Building on these, the paper outlines challenges, gaps, and develops standards and guidelines, and makes recommendations for capacity development and establishing systematic engagement mechanisms of adolescents and youth in MENA at organisation/programme, national and regional level.

b) **Evidence brief: Adolescent and Youth Civic Engagement in MENA**

This paper aims at: a) exploring the latest evidence on adolescent and youth engagement in the region – what the evidence tells us about the current levels of adolescent and youth civic engagement, good/promising practices, the drivers and barriers for adolescents and youth engagement; impact at individual and community level; b) highlighting challenges and evidence gaps, and c) providing recommendations for policymakers, researchers, implementers/practitioners, donors and the youth themselves on how to support sustainable and scaled up adolescent and youth civic engagement programmes in MENA.

c) **Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement in MENA**

This toolkit responds to the needs identified in MENA for a simple and easy to use ‘How to Guide’ for understanding, implementing and monitoring adolescent and youth engagement programmes.
CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION: WHO ARE “ADOLESCENTS” AND “YOUTH” AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THEM TO “ENGAGE”? ¹

Across agencies and NGOs in the MENA region, the concept of participation is understood in multiple, different ways. As a result there is not a common understanding to what encompasses adolescent and youth participation and what does not. For many individuals, policy makers and organizations, it appears to be a challenge to view participation as anything other than ‘to take part in’.² Additionally, the words ‘engagement’ and ‘involvement’ seem to be used interchangeably. ‘Empowerment’ is less ambivalent yet carries the disadvantage that it may be perceived as somewhat aggressive and political.³

This section on definitions and concepts aims to clarify some of the confusion and provides some key definitions as points of reference. Definitions and concepts listed are excerpted from two recent UNICEF papers: “Conceptual Framework for Measuring Adolescent Participation” (UNICEF, 2017) and “Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategic Framework” (UNICEF, 2017). The definitions and concepts in these documents derive from a literature review and a consultation process with thematic experts, young people, national, regional and global experts working with adolescents and youth.

ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Adolescent Participation can be defined as adolescent girls and boys (individually or collectively) engaging with opportunities to form and express their view and to influence matters that concerns them directly or indirectly. A key outcome of participation is the empowerment of adolescents – both in an individual capacity (increased self-esteem; confidence in own ability etc.) as well as a collective capacity (to build strength through collaboration, and to actively engage in the realisation of their rights).⁴ In other words, the process begins with an adolescent building a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy that they are both entitled to and deserving of the right to be listened to and taken seriously.

Participation leads to different types of empowerment, as observed on Figure 1:

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² Humanitarian mapping reports (2016) and Systematic Participation of Adolescents and Youth (2017); Participatory Action Research among adolescents and youth in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan (2016, 2017)
³ Synthesis Report: Systematic Participation of Adolescents and Youth in Programming (MENA Region) - Nothing about us without us!, UNICEF, 2017
ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

The enabling environment addresses the wider context necessary to support adolescents’ participation rights. In particular, in order for adolescents to effectively and meaningfully participate, four specific obligations need to be fulfilled by adult duty-bearers under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 12. As shown in Figure 2, these obligations can be summarised by stating that meaningful adolescent participation requires that young people can voice an opinion in a safe space where their audience is open and receptive to their influence. It is key to note that meaningful participation requires that adolescents have influence on both horizontal relationships with peers—which are often, but not always, egalitarian and mutual—and on vertical relationships with parents and other adults, which may be more hierarchical and authoritative.

Figure 2: Features of meaningful participation

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Meaningful adolescent participation is a complex and multifaceted process, governed by not only the individual agency of a young person but also the contextual realities and structural barriers (e.g. gender barriers) that could counter adolescent participation. Therefore, it needs to be understood in terms of its core features as well as levels, spheres, and forms through which it takes place. For example, if vertical relationships do not recognize the voice of adolescents, it will be challenging for them to voice their opinion in a safe and positive manner.

**ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

Adolescent and youth engagement can be defined as “the rights-based inclusion of adolescents and youth in areas that affect their lives and their communities including dialogue, decisions, mechanisms, processes, events, campaigns, actions and programmes – across all stages, from identification, analysis and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.”

“Engagement” is closely linked to “Participation”, though differs in being a broader articulation of the public-facing aspect of participation. Participation is a fundamental human right as noted in guiding conventions on children, women and people with disabilities (e.g. the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)). Participation serves to build citizenship, strengthen capacities and confidence, promote democratic engagement and the rule of law, and enhance policymaking. Engagement includes both these deeper and more sustained activities as well as broader activities. Some of the broader activities included in the concept of engagement are reflected below in Box 1. Others are mentioned throughout this document as promising practices. In order to create a supportive environment, all youth-centred engagement efforts should include activities with parents and broader families, community members, and policy makers.

*Box 1: Examples of Engagement efforts*

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7 Adolescent and Youth Strategic Engagement Framework, UNICEF, 2017
8 Ibid
Adolescent and Youth led Civic Engagement interventions are those interventions that support young people to make a difference in their communities. This includes activities aimed at developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes of young people to (a) identify issues affecting their own or their communities’ wellbeing, and (b) define and implement activities that address those issues.

Some civic engagement initiatives led by young people focus on Social Cohesion to produce more resilient and more cohesive communities. Efforts include initiatives aimed at reinforcing social capital and developing peaceful and supportive social interactions. Cultural and sporting events and youth-led community dialogue, for example, can promote peace and harmony.

Adolescent and Youth led Economic Engagement interventions strengthen the employability of youth and provide them with opportunities for economic self-empowerment. These include creating forums for youth to generate economic or social value for them as individuals—or for their peer groups and communities. Initiatives also include providing seed funding to support youth-led entrepreneurship projects as well as the more direct creation of jobs.

Evidence indicates that successful engagement programmes can help adolescents and youth to develop a sense of self-worth/self-esteem/efficacy and capacity for making decisions\(^9\), as well as increase opportunities to influence decisions at local and national levels, and contribute to addressing socio-economic challenges in their communities. When young people are supported and encouraged with policies and services attentive to their needs and capabilities, they make positive choices and have the potential to break long-standing cycles of inequality, poverty, discrimination and violence\(^10\).

**AGE AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS\(^11\)**

Adolescence is globally recognised as a pivotal period in shaping individuals’ adult trajectories\(^12\). But how can we best define adolescence? UNICEF and other authoritative sources use the following categories but also recognize that “adolescence” and “youth” are not just demarcated by age, but also by changing role patterns and (expected) social behaviour.

*Figure 3: Age range “adolescents”, “youth” and “young people”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young People</th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th>Young adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adolescents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- **Early Adolescence (10 to 14 years)** is biologically dominated by puberty and by brain development and is a time of identity formation and development of new interests-- including an emerging interest in sexual and romantic relationships. Nascent research suggests that the years between 10 and 14 may be a ‘sensitive period’ for sociocultural processing, meaning that young


\(^10\) UNICEF (2017) Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement in MENA

\(^11\) UNICEF follows the WHO definition of adolescents. The detailed definitions offered in this section are directly from the UNICEF Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategy Framework (p. 6-7).

adolescents have a low resistance to peer influences. Young adolescents also have a poor capacity for future orientation and low risk perception, which can lead to increases in risk taking behaviour and poor self-regulation. Given this, safe and supportive school, family and community environments are critical during this period. The gendered pathways along which children are forced in early adolescence play out in many ways in the MENA region. For example, boys are often afforded more freedom—and have more opportunities for socialising with peers. Girls, on the other hand, see their lives made smaller, as parents restrict their mobility to keep them and the ‘honour’ of the family safe.

- **Late Adolescence (15 to 19 years)** covers the period of transition into young adulthood. It is the time during which young people develop the requisite skills, knowledge and networks that will enable them to fully engage with broader society and higher education and/or employment. The latter half of the second decade is characterized by pubertal maturation, and continued brain development of the executive and self-regulatory skills, which leads to greater future orientation and an increased ability to weigh the short- and long-term implications of decisions. Family influences may become distinctly different during this phase of life, as many adolescents enjoy greater autonomy, although in the MENA region, where intergenerational hierarchies remain strict, this may be less likely. The threats that boys and girls face continue to diverge in late adolescence. Boys throughout the region often leave school to begin working. Girls are more likely to stay in school, but are at risk of child marriage.

- **Youth**: The UN definition of youth is 15 to 24 year old—which encompasses the period of late adolescence and young adulthood.

- **Young People**: This is the umbrella term for adolescents and youth, aged 10-24 years old.

**ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MENA**

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This paper aims at a) exploring the latest evidence on adolescents and youth civic engagement in the region – what the evidence tells us about the current levels of adolescent and youth engagement, good/promising practices, the drivers and barriers for adolescents and youth engagement; impact at individual and community level; b) highlighting challenges and evidence gaps, and c) providing recommendations for policymakers, researchers, implementers/practitioners, donors and the youth themselves on how to strengthen adolescents and youth engagement and participation and the existing evidence in the years to come.

**UNDERSTANDING THE MENA CONTEXT FOR ENGAGEMENT**

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16 Participatory Action Research, UNICEF, 2017
Youth dividend: One in five people in the Middle East and North Africa is an adolescent (see Figure 4), offering a window of opportunity to bolster prosperity and social well-being in the region by capitalising on the energy and rapid expansion of the labour market that a demographic dividend can generate. Nevertheless, countries in the MENA region have thus far been unable to translate growing knowledge about adolescents—and their needs for education, health care, protection, and civic and economic engagement - into scaled action.\textsuperscript{17} As a result, young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, continue to remain socially, economically and politically excluded. According to the latest ILO data, the MENA region is plagued by the highest unemployment rates in the world, with rates exponentially high for women. For young women in the region, their unemployment rates are the highest worldwide at 48.7 per cent in the Middle East and 38.7 per cent in North Africa.\textsuperscript{18}

**Figure 4. Youth population by age groups as a percentage of total population**

![Youth population by age groups](https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/


Age hierarchy: Arab cultures emphasize generational hierarchies\textsuperscript{19} with adolescents seen as immature and in need of monitoring and control\textsuperscript{20}. For example, in the recent participatory action research young people across Syria, Jordan and Lebanon expressed frustrations with the perceptions and attitudes that communities and families tend to have of young people.\textsuperscript{21} A key frustration was that communities do not value and listen to them, they are viewed in negative ways, and that their

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Arab Human Development Report: Youth and the prospects for human development in a changing reality, UNDP, 2016
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Source: ILOSTAT, 2016
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Presler Marshall 2017, “Adolescent Girls in Jordan: The State of the Evidence”.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Participatory Action Research with Young People in the MENA Region, Regional Report, 2017. UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, Adolescent and Youth Researchers, Aoun, JOHUD, NRC, Masar Association.
\end{itemize}
right to be involved in decision-making is ignored. A recent report in Gaza highlighted that there is little room for younger generations to participate in family decisions.22 Parents stress traditional values, including obedience and interdependence, and adolescents are expected to uphold family honour by doing as they are told23. In Jordan, USAID’s National Youth Assessment found that Jordanian and Syrian adolescents and young adults feel that adults do not listen to them; young people feel pessimistic about making change happen.24 There is, however, some evidence of space for adolescent decision-making. Smetana (2015)25 found that adolescents in Jordan are increasingly “normative” and see parental control as “bounded”. That is, while it is perceived as legitimate in some contexts (e.g. those that are risky or touch on morality), teens – regardless of age, parental education and socio-economic status – are increasingly unlikely to bow to their parents’ wishes about how they choose for friends or spend their leisure time.

**Gender Norms:** Girls across the Middle East are not only restricted by their age, but also by their gender, given that regional gender norms limit females’ physical mobility, largely preclude their access to the labour market, and often prevent them from participating in both household and public decision-making.26 As noted in the Participatory Action Research in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, traditional and conservative perceptions of young girls and women’s roles in society and in the family significantly affect the type of opportunities and choices they have in the future. For research participants below the age of 18 years old, male family members have a determinant role in their possibilities of continuing their education and deciding the course of their life, including marriage.27 In Gaza, for example, among young people aged 15–29, only 20% of females report that they make decisions about their own lives by themselves. Nearly 60% report joint decision-making with others in their household. This is stark contrast to their male peers, of whom 62% report making their own decisions and only 17% report shared decision-making. Similarly, in Jordan, girls indicate that their mobility and decision-making power is often restricted. They report feeling “infantilised” by society. Another study, including Jordanians and Syrian refugees, found that girls are expected to obey their parents, dress modestly, speak softly and politely, and attend to “home business”.28 This is particularly the case for married girls. In Jordan, of all married girls between the ages of 15 and 19, only 43.4% were allowed input into decision-making regarding their own health care, mobility and

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household purchasing (compared to 65.1% for all women aged 15-49). Girls who attempt to access agency may face backlash, with honour killing representing the most severe form of that backlash.

There is some evidence that gender norms in the MENA region are becoming more conservative—not less. Young men from Morocco, Palestine and Egypt who were included in the IMAGES study held mostly inequitable views regarding women’s roles. This is probably related to the general climate of religious conservatism under which those young men have been raised.

“Waithood”: Waithood is a term often applied to young adults, particularly young men, in the MENA region. While they are of an age to be assuming adult roles, such as taking on full-time employment, getting married, and starting their own families, due to the region’s high unemployment rates, they are trapped in their parents’ homes waiting for adulthood. With traditional routes to adulthood blocked, some young adults are adopting risky coping strategies—such as drug use, illegal work including smuggling, risky migration, or joining extremist groups. A study on the effects of cash transfer programmes for Syrian refugees in Jordan, for example, found that Syrian adolescent boys often have dangerous work arrangements. Several studies, including the humanitarian mapping and documentation of adolescent and youth engagement programmes and the recent Participatory Action Research (2017), highlight that when adolescents and youth are empowered to play meaningful roles in their communities—and given a sense of purpose—they adopt positive behaviours and make positive choices.

METHODOLOGY

The summary of evidence herein presented draws on Participatory Action Research conducted by adolescents and youth, as well as studies by the UN (UNICEF MENA Regional Office, UNHCR, UNFPA, OCHA, UNESCO) and NGOs and think tanks (Mercy Corps, SAVE, NRC, Overseas Development Institute and the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence programme). This includes recent desk reviews that extensively document the situation of adolescents and young people in the MENA region, work that highlights regional good practices, evidence gathered in “Our Future: a Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing”, and other key documents which provide insights into the current state of affairs with regards to adolescents and youth. To access a full list of key search terms used to conduct the desk reviews, please access the documents consulted. Documents reviewed are found as part of the footnotes.

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35 We have prioritized documents already reviewed as part of the development of the “EVIDENCE BRIEF: THE SITUATION FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: WHAT DO WE KNOW FOR SURE?” Commissioned by the UN: NGO Evidence Symposium Adolescents & Youth in the Middle East and North Africa, during the preparatory stage of “Translating Research into Scaled up Action Evidence: Symposium on Adolescents and Youth in MENA”.

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LIMITATIONS

• Although some of the studies and desk reviews included surveys in Arabic and review of Arabic language texts, most of the studies and the desk reviews were limited to surveys in English, searches on English databases and using English search words, introducing an un-intended bias.
• Adolescent and youth involvement occurred only in the review and finalization of the document and not throughout the process due to lack of research studies and documents in Arabic and limited time for translating the studies.
• There are no nationally or regionally agreed frameworks to measure participation or sectoral monitoring systems at national level which integrate adolescent participation indicators. This lack of data collection systems and limited availability of age disaggregated data made it difficult to source baseline data on adolescent and youth participation at country level.

FINDINGS-WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH CIVIC AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE MENA REGION?

POSITIVE FINDINGS: STUDIES FROM THE REGION SHOW THERE IS NASCENT PROGRESS TOWARDS SUPPORTING ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT.

• Based on data collected through NGO and UN partner data systems, approximately 1 million adolescents and youth in in the MENA region, lead and/or involved in civic and economic engagement programmes. Interventions that involve young people address a range of issues—including violence, social cohesion, human rights, and safety and security—and have included research, communication and advocacy.
• Adolescent and youth led engagement interventions are being implemented through a wide spectrum of delivery platforms. This includes services such as health, justice, education and recreation, as well as multi-service platforms such as Jordan’s Makani and Syria’s Multi Service Centres. Interventions have also been delivered with and through families, in communities, and using youth networks and digital and non-digital communication platforms.
• Young people aspire to use their acquired competencies for contributing to the wellbeing of their society—rather than simply to support their own individual futures. A study of young people in Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen, for example, found that they viewed positive civic engagement as a means to bring benefits for society as a whole. Some stated that the desire to promote social cohesion was more important to them than personal objectives, such as employment. Other studies have found that adolescents and young adults view volunteering or helping others as a part of their religious, national or ideological duties.
• Engagement with digital and social media is providing young people with new ways to engage. In Gaza, for example, a study indicated that a significant percentage of girls and young women spend some portion of their leisure time using ITC devices and communicating with friends via social media.

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36 Mapping data from the MENA UN:NGO Adolescents and Youth Group, November 2017.
37 Multiple publications – informed by the Evidence Brief, 2017.
38 Mapping data from the MENA UN:NGO Adolescents and Youth Group, November 2017.
39 Desk review: Key Drivers of Young People’s Engagement in MENA, UNICEF, 2017
40 Ibid.
media. Younger cohorts are especially likely to use these new tools—which are providing them with a way to offset restrictions on their physical mobility. Some young women have reported that online forums provide them with opportunities to become actively engaged in public discourse and opinions. That said, not only are some groups of young people less likely to have access to ICT than others—in Gaza 78% of boys between the ages of 15 and 17 have their own phones compared to 38% of girls—but social media is surely a doubled-edged sword. It has been implicated in bullying, sexual violence, and trafficking. Research also shows that social media is crucial in understanding how ISIS attracts today’s tech savvy youth. High definition videos, social media accounts, internet in general are the new norm for groups like ISIS.

REMAINING CHALLENGES: SCALED-UP AND SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT IS A LONG WAY OFF IN MENA

- Civic engagement among young people in the region is the lowest in the world, with a median of only 9 percent of youth across Arab countries volunteering with a civic organization in a given month, compared with 14 percent in the next lowest region, sub-Saharan Africa. As noted in the data from the Arab barometer, in Egypt and Jordan only a very small percentage of youth are member of civic groups (4.9%, and 5.8%, respectively). See Figure 5. This is in part because young people are disillusioned with political systems and with the lack of action on their key concerns. It also reflects a national legislation and policies enabling adolescents to raise their voice in a meaningful manner.

![Figure 5: Percentage of youth who are members of civic groups, by sex, by country](image)

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42 Desk review: Key Drivers of Young People’s Engagement in MENA, UNICEF, 2017
45 http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejis_jan_apr_16/Urtak.pdf
46 Silatech, Gallup, 2013
47 It is important to highlight, however, that the World Youth Report, 2016, highlights Egypt as a case study for youth engagement. The report mentions that most youth political activism in Egypt has taken place though informal channels, with much of the activity occurring in the civil society arena. Young people have a huge presence in this sphere, ranging from youth movements with tens of thousands of members to individual activists who might be lawyers, labourers, bloggers or graffiti artists.
48 Civic groups are those concerned with improving ones’ local community or society in general (Mercy Corps 2012).
• Despite efforts by UN and NGO supported programmes to ensure equal participation among boys and girls, gender differences are large—and favour males—in all countries, except for voting, which is fairly equitable. The widest gender gaps regarding civic group memberships are in Palestine, and the most equal levels between young men and women in Algeria. For example, according to the PCBS (2015) Youth Survey conducted in Gaza, Palestine, while over 47% of adolescent boys leave home on a daily basis, less than 33% of girls do so. Furthermore, only 13% of female youth participate in volunteer activities, in contrast to 30% of male respondents, and while 12% of young men reported volunteering, less than 2% of young women volunteered. In addition, once married, older adolescents and young women in Gaza are far less likely to exercise agency in their marriages than men. Nearly 60% of young women reported that they share decision-making responsibilities with their husband, but only 17% of surveyed husbands agreed with this perception of mutual authority.

• Girls are not the only marginalised group—refugees, those with disabilities, and the poor also have few opportunities for participation. Household socio-economic status stands out as a major factor that predicts levels of civic participation among Arab youth, with young women, and youth who are less educated, unemployed, and from rural areas the least likely to be civically engaged. It is often these very groups whose voices are underrepresented in public debates and decisions, contributing to their further marginalization.

• Given conflict in the region, which has focused goals more on life-saving, humanitarian relief, there are few longer term programmes aimed at civic engagement. Programmes specifically targeting adolescents are especially few—as it is often assumed that they are covered by school-based interventions. This is very often not the case, even for in-school adolescents, due to inequalities and challenges in the region’s schools and education system. Furthermore, less than 20% of programmes that target adolescents include them in assessment/planning/implementation/monitoring. Adolescent- and youth-led engagement interventions are rarer still. For example, over three-fourths of the youth interventions in the 3RP assessment did not provide young people with any sort of consultation or engagement in the development, implementation and monitoring of the

53 Humanitarian Mapping Reports (2016-17), UNHCR, OCHA and UNICEF
programme. That said, there are plans for national level adolescent and youth volunteer programmes (Jordan) and an operational volunteer platform targeting adolescents and youth in Palestine.

- There are few safe spaces where young people can create and enjoy their own worlds. This is particularly the cause for girls in the Middle East who due to social honour rules and “safety” reasons are often kept at home. A research study in Gaza has shown that girls from conservative families spend much time inside of their houses often watching television. This was also found to be the case for Syrian adolescents living in Jordan.

- There is little consensus about whether young people’s civic engagement is even desirable. On the one hand, there is evidence that engagement increases voting. A study by Mercy Corps, for example, showed that youth across seven Arab countries who are members of civic associations were 7 times more likely to attend a political campaign or rallies and 2.3 times more likely to have voted in the last election. On the other hand, according to some critics, programmes promoting civic engagement and citizenship among young people in the region - which were implemented after the series of Arab uprisings that were witnessed since 2011 - are used as a tool to promote the geopolitical agenda of the West and do not empower young people’s political participation in the society but rather highlight civic engagement and citizenship as a way to overcome corrupt and weak governments, thus promoting “depoliticized citizenship”. In addition, a study done in 2011 on young men in Beirut pointed out that civic engagement has the potential to increase violence among youth, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It was shown that young people might form “gang-like bonds” as means of overcoming many obstacles in their lives which increases the likelihood of being involved in physical fights.

OUTCOMES OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION AT INDIVIDUAL, HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY LEVEL

While the rights-based rationale for adolescent and youth engagement is strong, there are few studies that systematically document its impact – for instance, the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing highlights that few studies examine the effects of adolescent and young adult engagement on health outcomes. Below, some key conclusions we can extract from the evidence available:

- A study by Mercy Corps indicates that civic engagement can have an impact on generating interpersonal trust (young people who have joined others to draw attention to an issue or sign a petition are more likely to feel that people can be trusted, than those who have not); youth’s

55 [http://palestinevolunteers.org/](http://palestinevolunteers.org/)
perceptions of government performance (youth who had joined together with others to draw attention to an issue or sign a petition were more likely to feel that their government fails to provide all citizens with services, compared to youth who did not); and on young women’s attitudes towards domestic violence (Egyptian young women who are civically engaged were found to be half as likely to think that a husband is ever justified in beating his wife than those who are not—the logic found in this finding, is that this may be a reflection of more liberal social attitudes).

- Young people’s lack of access to traditional pathways to adulthood is a potential driver of conflict, with exclusion and lack of recognition shown to lead to frustration, disenchantment and acts of violence and conflict. A study in Palestine shows that the lack of services and recreational activities in Palestine causes adolescent boys to be more vulnerable to the lures of extremism; and the lack of decision making power for girls – in both the household as in the society – a cause for depression and fear for adulthood.

- Civic engagement has a positive impact on adolescents and young people employability. These results suggest a vibrant civic society may be the foundation of a vibrant business environment. A study from Egypt also confirms this outcome, showing that Egyptian youth who volunteer are twice as likely to be employed as those who do not, and Egyptian youth who are members of civic groups are 2.6 times more likely to have a permanent (versus temporary) job, than youth who are not members.

- Peer education, or the promotion of healthy behaviours for young people by young people, is a common engagement strategy (see Figure 6). Such interventions have shown positive outcomes for the young people conducting the programming (i.e., the peer educators themselves). Peer promoters themselves have greater self-confidence, improved communications, leadership and interpersonal skills, higher aspirations, and lower rates of health risk.

- Adolescent and youth-led participatory action research that involves adolescents in analysing and improving their communities provides important developmental opportunities for them to identify as leaders with a sense of purpose. Research thus far demonstrates that young people-led participatory action research can promote civic and political engagement, relevant skills in research and advocacy, and positive attitudes towards school, as well as expand opportunities for adolescents to influence and address inequalities in health, education and other systems.

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64 Abu Hamad, Jones, Gercama, forthcoming, “Palestine: Baseline data collection with adolescents”, Gender and Adolescence Global Evidence programme.

65The Silatech Index: Voices of Young Arabs; January 2010.


67It is important to highlight that the study does not provide information about the influence of other factors such as personality/demographic characteristics, in supporting employment access.


can also contribute to increased self-esteem, increased intergenerational and cross-cultural understanding, and increased belief of parents in the adolescent’s ability\textsuperscript{70,71}.

**TEXT BOX 2\textsuperscript{72}: MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS ASSOCIATED WITH ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

At present there are no nationally standardized tools or data systems that systematically monitor and measure adolescent and youth civic engagement. UNICEF, in collaboration with global, regional and national experts has initiated the process of development of indicators for measurement.\textsuperscript{73} Within MENA, UNICEF in partnership with implementing partners has developed an online monitoring tool called the Engagement Monitoring System (EMS). EMS is based on a set of tools\textsuperscript{74} that have been developed, tested and refined with the support of UNICEF Country Offices and its implementing partners in State of Palestine, Jordan and Syria.

The EMS has been developed to track the three aspects of the programme based on the Positive Adolescent Development Theory of Change:

- **Programme Coverage**/Are we reaching the most vulnerable: by generating real-time data on the number of young people reached by UNICEF implementing partners and analysing whether marginalized/vulnerable young people\textsuperscript{75} are being reached through the programme.
- **Programme outputs**/Assessing the self-perception of adolescents and youth on their knowledge and skills acquired and measuring the actual actions taken by young people to address issues facing them or their communities. This is achieved through the assessment of engagement of young people in the planning, implementation and monitoring of their civic, social and economic engagement initiatives.
- **Programme Delivery**/Quality: Assessing the quality of the programme service delivery by different groups: young people receiving the programme, partners (Governments/NGOs) delivering the programme and programme/technical focal points overseeing programme progress and implementation.

The monitoring activities involve systematic quantitative and qualitative data collection throughout the project; this enables stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of project implementation in


\textsuperscript{70} GAGE Palestine Pilot in Abu Hamad, Jones, Gercama, forthcoming, “Palestine: Baseline data collection with adolescents”, Gender and Adolescence Global Evidence programme.

\textsuperscript{71} Participatory Action Research with Young People in the MENA Region, Regional Report, 2017. UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, Adolescent and Youth Researchers, Aoun, JOHUD, NRC, Masar Association.

\textsuperscript{72} UNICEF MENARO ADAP and HIV Section (2016). Engagement Monitoring Framework: Monitoring Framework for the Adolescent and Youth Social Cohesion, Civic Engagement and Entrepreneurship/Economic Engagement Programme

\textsuperscript{73} Conceptual Framework for Measuring Adolescent Participation, UNICEF, 2017

\textsuperscript{74} The tools from the partners in Palestine (Maan, PalVision, Injaaz, Al Nayzak, and TAMER) were used to develop the civic engagement tools. Entrepreneurship tools were developed after reviewing the Kosovo Innovation Lab tools and the Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit. All tools have been adapted to the country context in collaboration with UNICEF implementing partners in Jordan, Palestine and Syria.

\textsuperscript{75} Age categorization as per UN Definition: Adolescents: 10-19 years; Youth – 15-24 years; Young People: 10 – 24 years. Definition of vulnerability and marginalization is contextual e.g. young people living close to and having to cross check points in Palestine; in conflict with law, socio economic vulnerability in Lebanon and Jordan; girls, refugees, working children, children living with disability, etc., in other contexts.
real time, identify strengths and weaknesses, learn from success and challenges to improve the quality of the programme and be accountable for programme performance results. By doing so, implementers will be able to make informed decisions to improve the ongoing adolescent engagement programmes and enhance the formulation of future engagement interventions. The online tools can be revised to measure different types of engagement interventions including influencing decisions at local and national level.

- Documentation of civic engagement programmes and data collected through the Engagement Monitoring System (EMS) (see Text Box 2 above) reveals that adolescents and youth perceive positive changes in communication skills, collaboration and team work skills following capacity development, and an increased sense of belonging and purpose following implementation of civic engagement initiatives (see Figure 6). Focus group discussions among parents, community leaders and teachers following implementation of civic engagement initiatives reflects a change in perception on the roles of adolescents and youth in the community shifting from viewing young people as problems to seeing them as a valued asset to the community.76

Figure 6. EMS The graphs and table are samples of the data generated by EMS (based on data from young people who were registered in the EMS between May-November 2017 (data for Palestine, Jordan and Syria).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of Implemented Civic Engagement Adolescent and Youth Led Initiatives

With regard to measuring, it is important to acknowledge, however, that challenges remain to identify indicators that can be used to measure empowerment at scale; and to compare empowerment among adolescents and youth in formal programmes versus those in more natural civic spaces. Further research on measurement of adolescents and youth engagement is therefore required.

76 UNICEF EMS Data (Jordan, Palestine and Syria).
GOOD PRACTICES ON ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN MENA

Two good practices were identified in the field of civic engagement through a documentation initiative commissioned by the United Nations Inter-Agency Technical Task Team on Young People (UNIATTTPY) of the Middle East and North Africa region in 2014:

- **Adolescent-Friendly Spaces (AFS) United Nations Children's Fund Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (2004-2013):** This initiative had the goal to fulfill the rights to self-development, education, protection and participation of Palestinian adolescents (age 10-18 years) living in the State of Palestine and in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, in collaboration with government authorities and other key actors in society, including young people themselves. The programme objectives were to facilitate networking among Palestinian adolescents; build the creative and critical thinking skills of adolescent boys and girls through life skills training and recreational activities; promote adolescent participation at the community level through the implementation of adolescent-led initiatives. The evaluation results showed specific outcomes at the individual level such as: enhanced skills, positive changes in self-perception, greater independence, development of more positive attitudes towards and commitment to school, increased emotional resilience, improved odds of seeking non-violent solutions, and increased sense of hope and future-seeking. Components of the programme have now been integrated in the AFS through the HCYS, Palestine. The challenge has been to ensure the scaled implementation of the AFS.

- **Y-PEER (UNFPA) (2001-ongoing):** The goal of Y-PEER is to enhance collaboration among youth-led and youth-serving organizations to promote youth participation in sexual and reproductive health issues. This includes advocacy for development of national policies and strategies for young people, as well as sectoral policies, laws and strategies addressing the needs of young people. Y-Peer’s overall objectives are to ensure that young people, on an inclusive, equitable and universal basis, are actively learning in formal or non-formal education systems. It also works to improve their access to sexual and reproductive health information and to make sure that the rights of young people are recognized and upheld. Y-Peer aims to create opportunities for young people to transition smoothly between key developmental milestones, eventually securing decent work and income over the life cycle in order to contribute to a virtuous circle of poverty reduction, sustainable development and social inclusion. To accomplish these goals, Y-Peer works to include young people in political and decision-making processes at local, national, regional and international levels. Evaluations conducted to date have concluded that the initiative has been successful in establishing youth networks across the region; strengthening capacity of country youth services; and impacting on the quality of peer education. Young people involved have been empowered, developing leadership and communication skills. The initiative is supported by UNFPA; the challenge has been to ensure the implementation of sustainable model.

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77 Good Practices Documentation [https://goodpracticesite.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/1-good-practices_compressed1.pdf](https://goodpracticesite.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/1-good-practices_compressed1.pdf)
Best bets that encourage youth engagement were summarized based on a thorough analysis of programs across themes included in the good practices that had high meaningful youth engagement and those showed to be the following:78:

- **“Creating safe spaces for youth** to share their thoughts and feelings, have dialogues and learn. This element indicates clear commitment to listening to youth and acknowledging their value, assets and promise.

- **Youth presence and voice**: involvement of youth as program implementers or as facilitators and mentors. This element indicates an approach of positive youth development and empowerment of youth. It also is likely linked to sustainability.

- **Documented need**: through a needs assessment, youth are indirectly engaged in setting the objectives of the program and the activities required to achieve those objectives.

Several promising practices have been documented by other organizations, however some of these programmes lack robust data on effectiveness and impact*:

*Note: there are many practices being implemented in all countries across the region. The following list is not exhaustive.

- **JORDAN**:
  - In the “child friendly city” of the Greater Amman Municipality, children’s rights are reflected in policies, laws, programmes and budgets. The voices and opinions of young people are taken into consideration through the Child Municipality Councils, enabling them to engage with and influence decision makers and decision making processes; Sports or arts initiatives implemented by Generation for Peace reduce tensions between local and refugee communities by actively engaging them.79
  - “Jeel962” is a digital network that strengthens civic engagement skills of young people, and links them with decision makers on local and national level.80
  - The Makani approach – aimed at increasing the physical, cognitive, social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people - links interventions in education (learning support services), child protection (psychosocial support services), adolescent and youth participation (life skills and innovation labs) and also integrates health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Each Makani centre also has a community outreach component as well as referral services to refer special cases to appropriate services and works with parents and other adults in the community.81

- **LEBANON**:
  - Search for Common Ground’s FURSA programme aims to increase the social cohesion and participation of Syrian and Lebanese adolescents. The project provides access to livelihood opportunities, training on basic economic skills, support for the participants’ psychosocial well-being, and occasions to build understanding and empathy between the two groups.82

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78 Ibid
PALESTINE:
- Through adolescent and youth-led initiatives in the West bank, Palvision enables young people to practice active citizenship and to participate in decision-making processes at local level.83
- Ma’an Gaza builds capacity of Community Based Organizations and has is working to foster social cohesion. www.youtube.com/watch?v=5s1Wbq89x5k;
- The NGO Sawa has established “Let’s Talk!” to facilitate communication between parents and adolescents leading to improvement in intergenerational understanding84
- The Tamer Institute for Community Education seeks to increase young people’s cultural and social participation by organising theatre projects, writing competitions and the publishing of a youth newspaper called “Yara’at”85.
- Additional initiatives include those implemented by Save Youth Future; the Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation (PYALARA) and Aisha.

SYRIA:
- Sports for Development approaches have supported young people to increase their emotional resilience: http://childrenofsyria.info/2015/10/20/away-from-war-sports-bringing-hope-again-to-re-engage-syrian-children-with-their-childhood/

SUMMARY OF SUPPORTIVE FACTORS AND BARRIERS FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE REGION

The table below summarises the factors that contribute to effective adolescent and youth participation in MENA, and common barriers faced by adolescents and youth engagement in the region. It is important to highlight that both barriers and enablers can be context specific. This table does not intend to list exhaustively all possible factors associated with engagement, but illustrate the reader with the most common ones, per the evidence consulted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive factors and enablers</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Partnership with adults: this involves rejecting the presumption that adults know best, training young people to speak, training adults to listen, promoting shared decision making and more egalitarian relationships86.</td>
<td>• Patriarchal system hinders adolescent and youth engagement and participation. Gender inequality and restrictive social norms are the primary driver for obstructing opportunities for adolescent girls and young women in the Middle East92.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Giving adolescents and youth greater level of control and responsibility whilst supporting them to build skills and experience87.</td>
<td>• Not being taken seriously within the household (girls) community (both boys and girls) and local governance decision making (both boys and girls): a survey conducted by the UN IANYD in August 2012, a majority of 13,000 respondents expressing their</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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83 Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7TBm2WA38w Accessed November 2017.
86 UNICEF (2017) Toolkit for Adolescent and Youth Engagement in MENA
87 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive factors and enablers</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Access to education and skills training initiatives: The likelihood of Arab youth being civically active generally increases with higher education levels.</td>
<td>voices from 186 countries (including MENA countries) highlighted that the main challenges for youth were limited opportunities for effective participation in decision-making processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to work: Young people in the MENA region who are employed full-time have higher civic engagement rates and are more likely to help strangers than underemployed or unemployed peers. Equally, young people who are civically engaged, seem to have higher opportunities of economic engagement, however the causal direction of this relationship is still unclear.</td>
<td>• Disillusionment with political systems and with the lack of action on their key concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal motivation/civic knowledge: UNICEF has found that the desire to promote social cohesion tends to override perceived personal benefits of volunteering, such as possible employment.</td>
<td>• Lack of (the implementation of) national legislation and policies enabling adolescents to raise their voice in a meaningful manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Availability and accessibility of social media: Social media provides a major avenue for young people’s expression of creative and non-violent political views in societies where they most often feel excluded from political dialogue and decision-making. It is however important to note that internet usage of adolescents, and in particular girls, is often strictly supervised by adults in some contexts, such as Palestine.</td>
<td>• Intersecting vulnerabilities and violations of rights that limit the opportunities for the most vulnerable adolescents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY OF GAPS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

a. INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE:

• Although there are programmes that have instituted mechanisms to collect data on adolescent and youth civic engagement, there are no nationally standardized tools or data systems that systematically monitor and measure adolescent and youth civic engagement.

• Need for age and sex disaggregated data, to identify and increase the visibility of the specific needs and barriers to engagement faced by different young people, particularly those who are vulnerable and marginalized.

• Most evidence is generated by desk-reviews, which can be quite blind to the day-to-day realities of those on the ground.

• Very few participatory studies with a specific adolescents and youth focus surfaced in the sample reviewed for the purpose of this paper, and where these exist, the sample size of

88 Mercy Corps (2012). Civic Engagement of Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: An Analysis of Key Drivers and Outcomes
89 Mercy Corps (2012). Civic Engagement of Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: An Analysis of Key Drivers and Outcomes
94 Civic Engagement of Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: An Analysis of Key Drivers and Outcomes March 2012
participants was usually relatively small. An exception is the recent Participatory Action Research studies conducted by UNICEF, Save the Children and partners, in which more than 900 young people participated.

- There is little evaluation conducted on programs targeting youth engagement and current evidence is focused on measuring outputs instead of outcomes – there is a lack of longitudinal data collection on the (legacy) effects of adolescent empowerment in the Middle East. Basically, very few studies demonstrating how young people are changing their own societies for the better and how these efforts can be strengthened and replicated. Measurement of outcomes, however, can have important challenges – for instance, empowerment many not lead to specific outcomes in the short-term, as changes in the social norms are required.
- The scarce evidence that is available is focused on youth empowerment programming and its effects and does not review programmes working with parents and other key adults to address perceptions on age hierarchies and gender inequality – both requisites for participation.
- There is a lack of written and/or published documentation on the successes and failures of programmes which makes it difficult to identify good practices.95

b. LIMITED SCALE-UP:
- Limited knowledge on effective interventions integrated within sectors as well as a lack of funding is cited as one of the challenges impeding scale up of adolescent and youth interventions96.
- The ability to reach out to adolescents and youth in conflict situations is very challenging, and affects the capacity to sustain and scale up programmes97.
- Many initiatives stay as pilots or small-scale efforts, which are not adapted to fit the needs of other settings and only benefit a select few participants.

c. SUSTAINABILITY OF INTERVENTIONS
- Limited funding and insufficient long-term thinking means that interventions on adolescents and youth engagement are not sustained over time. Many adolescents are only engaged in punctual activities for the duration of a specific project or programme, and are not linked to existing systems and structures (education, health, social welfare, youth and sports). This prevents continuous development of their skills and limits opportunities for them to contribute their knowledge and skills to improve their communities and the lives of their peers.
- Limited focus on wider community involvement and brokering relationships with “power-holders” to ensure that young people’s skills and knowledge can be applied to change society in a sustainable manner.

d. WEAKNESSES IN POLICIES

96 HRP 2018 Planning Guidance Note, Reaching Adolescents and Youth Adolescent and Youth Guidance, (UNICEF and OCHA).
97 Ibid
Adolescent and youth led engagement initiatives emphasize empowerment of adolescent girls and boys with the assumption that when they are supported and encouraged, and have supportive policies and services attentive to their needs and capabilities, as well as the support of adults and communities, they then have the potential to break long-standing cycles of inequality, poverty, discrimination and violence. However, if the policies and enabling environment (like social norms for girls) allowing access to services (employment, civic and political engagement) are not in place, we face the risk of increasing frustration among empowered adolescents.

e. SECURITY AGENDA

- The security agenda could obscure the asset development approach and/or impact negatively the scale up of positive adolescent development programmes.
- At the same time when there are no positive options offered to adolescents and youth, especially those in crisis affected settings, they are at risk of choosing riskier pathways (substance use; illegal and often exploitative and dangerous physical work; extremism; radicalization).

KEY MESSAGES

- Adolescent and youth engagement works when done right. The experience of active engagement during adolescence and young adulthood has formative and lasting effects on the extent and kind of political and social participation undertaken throughout the life cycle. Adolescent and youth engagement also has significant impact on communities, it improves social cohesion and builds positive perceptions of young people.
- Adolescent and youth engagement in MENA is overall limited, in part due to strict age hierarchies that shape space for young people’s engagement in the household, at school, in the community, and in policy-making fora. The engagement of girls and young women and other marginalised groups is especially poor.
- For scaled up adolescent and youth engagement in MENA to become a reality sustained efforts are needed by national, local and international organizations and it is critical that both adolescents and powerholding adults are engaged to build a safe space where young people can voice their opinion and participate in community change in a safe and meaningful manner.
- There is a need for better data, proper documentation and more inclusive knowledge sharing. Better evaluation, proper documentation and knowledge sharing must be encouraged. In addition to collecting age and gender disaggregated data in MENA countries, it is important to make resources publically available. This is particularly important if young people in resource-poor areas are to have access to good practice learning.
- Meaningful engagement can pose a risk for young people. Given strict age hierarchies, across the region, young people who are actively working to influence their communities have faced discrimination, jail, and torture-- among other human rights violations. It is important to be cognizant of that fact and ensure adolescent and youth engagement is underpinned by the Do No Harm principles.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS, POLICYMAKERS, PROGRAMMERS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- **Do no harm.** Ensure that efforts to improve and promote young people’s participation do not put them at risk.

- **Approach young people from an assets-based perspective,** convinced of their (young people’s) promise and focusing on their strengths – negotiate this perspective with adult power brokers in the household, community and the wider society.
  - Emphasize youth presence and voice as essential facets of implementation, for example, co-designing and promoting the sections or phases of a project to be implemented by youth NGOs, young people’s organisations or young project participants/beneficiaries.

- **Scale up age appropriate adolescent and youth participation programmes** and ensure that they are embedded in a wide range of sectors and offered in a variety of venues to ensure that all young people have access to opportunities and topics that interest them.
  - Invest intelligently in financial and technical resources by working to increase the effectiveness of existent programmes, for example by improving the capacity of programme implementers, and translating evidence into scaled up action.
  - Establish linkages with sectors and integration within sectoral systems to ensure a sustainable model. Stronger adolescent and youth participation can be achieved by national policies that address the needs of young people using an integrated, multidimensional approach that cuts across sectors and anchors adolescent and youth engagement through sectoral systems (e.g., education, social welfare/protection, labour and employment, information and technology, health)
  - Increase sustainable opportunities to build adolescents’ and youth’s skills through volunteering, community service and paid employment.
  - Increase access to digital media and broadband technologies for girls and young women and other marginalised groups, as these offer new pathways for engagement. Care needs to be taken to account for the gatekeepers who control access—and to ensure the safety of users.
  - Create strategic and sustainable opportunities for adolescent and youth engagement leadership at the lowest and highest level of decision making, co-learning and team work, to enable youth to take ownership of successful changes to their households, communities or circumstances.

- Develop tailored engagement and participation initiatives to attract disadvantaged, vulnerable and/or marginalised adolescents and youth, including (married) girls, refugees and young people living with disabilities. Ensure that the initiatives simultaneously take into account their particular constraints and also work to reduce them over time.

- Make space for intergenerational dialogue between older and younger generations to ensure that young people’s decision making power in the household, community, state level is appreciated.

- Develop the capacities of governments, partners, adults and young people to ensure adolescent and youth engagement is done right. Capacities should be developed both from a perspective of improving capacity to engage adolescents and youth in a systematic manner and to support partners and young people to systematically monitor the programmes and collect documentation of their processes and intervention.
- **Improve the evidence base—and the visibility of the evidence base:**
  - Ensure **age and gender disaggregated data** about adolescent and youth participation in national and **humanitarian settings** across key sectors of Education, Protection, Health and Livelihoods.
  - **Document and study the positive contribution of many young girls and boys** in building more inclusive and equitable societies – this is often neglected in empirical literature in favour of a predominant narrative of risk mitigation and countering violent extremism (CVE).
  - **Institutionalise measurement of participation/engagement** through models that investigate and evaluate outcomes and outputs. This is vital for the sake of generating evidence with which to influence policy and governance as well as to accelerate advocacy efforts that promote an understanding of the value of young people’s opinions in the decisions that affect their lives, be it to parents, custodians of community decision-making, education authorities or the local or central government.
  - **Build capacity around monitoring and evaluation** of youth participatory aspects in programs, committing to strengthening routine monitoring, and integrating outcome evaluations in the planning of youth programmes.
  - In research projects targeting youth, firmly support involvement of **young people as co-researchers** and, at a very minimum, consult young people as part of the research process.
  - Institutionalize systems to monitor and coordinate adolescent and youth engagement.