

Forum on Evidence and Impact Measurement

# What Works in Youth and Women's Employment in MENA?



## Event Report

Cairo, The GrEEk Campus  
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Supported by:



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## Background

Youth unemployment rates in the Arab States<sup>1</sup> and North Africa region have been the highest in the world for the past 25 years and continue to rise. In fact the Arab States region reached a youth unemployment peak in 2016 of 30.4 per cent - a 4 percentage point rise over the proceeding decade. The struggle of young people in the Arab States to find decent work is exacerbated by ongoing armed conflicts, migration waves and low levels of economic growth. Women and rural populations face many similar challenges including decent work deficits, low labour force participation and a difficult transition from school to work. Labour force participation rates among women in the region are low; only 15 per cent among young women, as compared to 37 per cent worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

In dealing with these challenges, countries across the region have launched a series of policy and programmatic initiatives. Governments, social partners, civil society and development partners have joined forces to promote women's and youth employment and entrepreneurship as key policy issues. For example, Egypt launched the Egyptian Youth Employment (EYE) Programme, in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People. Jordan initiated the National Programme for Empowerment and Employment while Tunisia is formulating a new national employment policy. The first regional conference for social partners on Youth Employment in North Africa (YENA) was hosted by the ILO in September 2017, resulting in a regional plan (the "YENA" roadmap).<sup>3</sup>

An important element of success of national and regional employment initiatives is that programmes are designed based on the evidence for "what works". The MENA region has benefitted from the extensive growth of the evidence base over the past decade due to improved labour market data, diagnostics and impact evaluations. A key component has been the "Taqeem Initiative", a regional impact research and capacity development project. Taqeem is a partnership between the ILO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and its goal is to strengthen gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa. The event was an opportunity to share key results from the three year grant project (2015-2018) and ensure sustainability going forward.

## Objectives and overview

The ILO Forum on Evidence and Impact Measurement provided an opportunity to share the current status and progress on what works in youth and women's employment in the MENA region while promoting multi-sectoral collaboration to define and address priorities for policy formulation.

A key goal was the further growth and sustainability of a regional Community of Practice (CoP) to facilitate knowledge sharing, partnership creation and up-scaling of successful youth employment programmes. The current 17 members of the Taqeem CoP are a group of organisations implementing innovative results measurement strategies and conducting impact evaluations on youth and women's employment, with a focus on the rural economy. The event allowed some of the CoP members to share their experiences on results measurement and impact assessment in youth employment. Complementary to this was the piloting of the new ILO "Guide on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth" that provides comprehensive guidance to evaluating, monitoring and learning in labour market programmes targeting young people.

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<sup>1</sup> The ILO uses the regional designation "Arab States". In this concept note "Arab States" and "Middle East" are used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> ILO 2017. Global Employment Trends for Youth: Paths to a Better Working Future. International Labour Organization.

<sup>3</sup> Youth Employment in North Africa (YENA) Roadmap: 2017-2022, International Labour Organization.

## Day 1: The evidence base for what works in youth and women's employment in MENA

The morning of day 1 (7 May) was dedicated to sharing recent evidence and good practices on youth and women's employment in the MENA region, with a concentration on the rural economy.

### Welcoming remarks

**Peter Van Rooij**, Director of the ILO Cairo Office opened the Forum and welcomed the over 80 participants to the two-day event. Mr Van Rooij particularly thanked the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and Global Affairs Canada for their support of the Taqueem Initiative and the Decent Jobs for Egypt's Youth project. According to Mr Van Rooij the two topics central to the Forum, youth- and women's employment, are of paramount importance to the ILO. Mr Van Rooij pointed to difficult labour market conditions especially for rural populations, where, due to low rates of land ownership, lack of access to credit and extension services, and low levels of education, women are especially marginalised. Furthermore, unemployment is only the tip of the iceberg. In rural economies, the quality of the job and rights of workers are of equally great concern. In rural areas, many young men and women are forced to accept low productivity jobs and sometimes risk harmful working conditions. Mr Van Rooij underlined the need to further strengthen active and dynamic knowledge exchange across the region and create partnerships to scale-up programmes that proved successful.

**Youssef Wardany**, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Youth and Sports, stated that investing in youth development and youth employment is a key priority of the government. Egypt in particular and the MENA region at large is in urgent need of up-scaling its effort, policies and programmes to provide young people with the opportunities they deserve. Importantly, policy-makers should make sure to reach all relevant target groups, from recent university graduates, long-term unemployment to discouraged youth that have withdrawn from the labour market altogether. Mr Wardany underlined the importance of consulting young people when designing new programmes and to make use of new available technologies in this regard. Finally, he emphasized that the large amount of data available on youth development needs to be put more effectively to use to inform evidence-driven programming. This also encompasses more frequent knowledge exchange and coordination between all youth employment stakeholders, including different government institutions.

**Valter Nebuloni**, Head, ILO Youth Employment Programme, recalled the efforts made in the field of youth employment through the Call for Action in 2012, where ILO members states endorsed a worldwide plan to tackle the issue. While the ILO has since observed a growth in youth employment programmes, there still exists large gaps in the evidence base partly stemming from a lack of impact evaluation. This observation gave rise to a partnership between IFAD and ILO, the Taqueem Initiative, which looks at how to mainstream youth and women's employment in rural investments in the MENA region. This is being achieved through equipping local partners with the necessary tools to implement state of the art monitoring and evaluation systems and through rigorous assessment of active labour market programmes on rural women. Some major achievements of the partnership so far include, a Community of Practice of 17 organisations focussing on creating employment opportunities for women and youth, that together serve over 10,000 women and youth. Moreover, the partnership resulted in establishing the IFAD-ILO Impact Report series with 12 published impact evaluation and evidence review studies, and three unique Policy Labs and Evidence Symposiums in focus countries. The partnership also served to engage IFAD staff and partners on how to measure decent jobs for rural youth, for example through the Executive Course on Evaluating Labour Market Programmes and the Rural Employment Academy.

**Abdelkarim Sma**, Lead Regional Economist of IFAD's Near East and North Africa Division (NEN), emphasised IFAD's commitment to promoting decent and productive employment opportunities for youth and women in the region. Mr Sma referred to IFAD investment projects that target unemployed young people in rural areas of Morocco, Yemen and Egypt. Mr Sma stated that if poverty and hunger are to be

ended by 2030, while preserving the earth's resources and building healthy and vibrant communities, the efforts to provide economic opportunities for young people and women in the region must be intensified. It was in this context that the unique partnership between IFAD and ILO under the Taqueem Initiative was established. Mr Sma underlined that through the Taqueem Initiative, the needs and aspirations of young people have been listened to, enabling us to learn what works, and to better tailor solutions for demanded by young people. Finally, Mr Sma emphasized that IFAD adheres to the goal of conducting evidence-based research and rigorous measurement of gender empowerment in rural employment-related interventions.

**Solveig Schuster**, Head of Cooperation, Global Affairs Canada, expressed her strong belief in the importance of sharing knowledge and in building communities of practice, especially across the region. Canada's role in the MENA region is one of supporting youth and women's employment in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. Ms. Schuster highlighted that for Canada gender equality and women's empowerment are cornerstones of both its domestic and foreign policy. She pointed out that Canada prides itself on setting international standards on championing women's rights through the development of partnerships with the private sector, the education system, and job skills for youth. Recently, the Canadian Government launched its first "Feminist International Assistance Policy", seeking to reduce extreme poverty and to build a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world. Ms Schuster concluded that the goal of this conference was to share the lessons that have worked to help the youth and the women in the region to find decent work, with a focus on rural jobs.

### Women's employment: What works in MENA?

The opening talks were followed by two thematic panel sessions, focussing on women's and youth employment, respectively. Both sessions provided an overview of the challenges and presented case studies to demonstrate proof of impact.

**Samantha Constant** (independent consultant) started the first thematic panel session by giving a regional overview of the economic and social dimensions of women's rural employment in MENA. She highlighted that in many MENA countries women in rural areas are the 'rural engines of growth'. Although women's activities are often undervalued and invisible, increasing the labour participation of women in rural areas could create societal spill-over effects, leading to shared economic prosperity, intergenerational benefits, more resilient and prosperous communities and generally better human development outcomes. This makes investing in rural women a key area for development efforts.

Yet the path to economic empowerment is complex. It requires individual and collective and formal and informal change processes. Practically this requires development on all fronts, especially transforming attitudes and behaviours, women's access to opportunities and resources and reforms to institutions, laws regulations, cultural norms and exclusionary practices. Despite progress on the ground, gaps in monitoring and evaluation persist. Without comprehensive sex and rural-urban disaggregated data it becomes difficult to make change and have an impact. Ms. Constant continued by comparing facts and figures on labour market and employment trends, showing large disparities for rural women in the MENA region, for example labour force participation rates for women in rural areas range from 37 per cent in Morocco or 30 per cent in Tunisia to a mere 8 per cent in Yemen. The gender gap in unemployment in the MENA region is 12 per cent, 22.1 per cent for women versus 10.1 per cent for men.

**Aline Meysonnat**, researcher at UNU-MERIT, presented a study on women's empowerment in rural Tunisia. The overall objective of the study was to provide new measurement tools and data to policymakers and organisations to better design, target, monitor and evaluate initiatives aiming to empower women and young people across Tunisia. In particular the study's objectives were to adapt the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to the more advanced and diverse economy of Tunisia and to identify key determinants of women's and youth empowerment. The methodology was implemented on data from a nationally representative survey including over 2,500 individuals.

Overall, the study showed that 95 per cent of women (compared to 76 per cent of men) have deficits in empowerment, especially in the economic domains of production, resources and control over income. In agricultural households, women are often more empowered, because they are more often involved in decisions about production. In addition, women in agricultural households have more control over the use of household income, presumably because they work as producers in agriculture themselves. Furthermore, the study found that that women in rural areas are empowered in terms of leadership and time use, yet, they are disempowered in economic domains. This is driven by a lack of input into productive decisions, limited control over resources and low control over the use of income. In comparison to many poorer countries, rural Tunisia offers less employment opportunities to women. Finally, women often remain economically inactive because the working conditions are not compatible with traditional domestic roles or the jobs are in workplaces where women's sexual and reputational safety may not be preserved.

**Ghada Barsoum**, Associate Professor at the American University in Cairo, School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, presented new evidence on gender attitudes towards women in business by looking at constraints and good practices in women's entrepreneurship in MENA. Her presentation showed that the majority of self-employed women are considered as contributing family workers. Furthermore, of those women that are self-employed outside of the home, most are driven by poverty and the need for income rather than by entrepreneurial aspirations. Specific barriers that women face, can be congregated into three categories: (i) limited access to skills, knowledge, networks and markets, (ii) discriminatory gender norms, attitudes and regulations, and (iii) lack of financial and business services for women. Ms Barsoum also drew lessons from the global evidence base on what works in women's entrepreneurship. She stated that training programmes alone are not enough to tackle the multiple barriers. Better results have been observed when training is combined with other interventions such as financial support (credit/grants) and advisory services. Also cooperatives have proven to be an important source of peer-to-peer support and networks, especially for rural women.

Dr. Barsoum closed her presentation with the case study of El-Mashroua (The Project), a reality television show formed around a competition between 14 contestants to educate viewers about entrepreneurship. An impact evaluation of the TV series showed that the show had significant impact on some of viewers' gender-related attitudes towards self-employment. This points to edutainment being an effective tool in offering young people access to relevant information about self-employment.

To close the first session, **Magued Osman**, Board Member of the National Council of Women, reflected on the presentations, while involving the audience and opening the floor to questions and comments. The debate centred around good practices for successful entrepreneurship interventions. Some audience members agreed that there is a need for entrepreneurs to shift from understanding their business idea to really focusing on their target audience or clients. Others highlighted that that for women, a safe working environment is essential, which includes safe transportation and harassment free environments, especially in rural areas. Also the need for local female role models was emphasised, in particular role models that women could look up to but do seem obtainable and within reach.

## Youth employment: What works in MENA?

The second session of the day shifted its focus to youth, more specifically rural youth. **Nader Kabbani**, Senior Fellow from the Brookings Institute, the Global Economy and Development Program, started with a regional overview of young people's labour market situation. Youth in the region are faced with a myriad of intersecting obstacles, ranging from political instability, stagnant economies, weak business climates and challenging social developments, with women, youth and migrants being most affected. As a consequence, many youth struggle with finding decent jobs and those with work often are employed in the informal sector characterised by economic instability and precarious working conditions.

Dr Kabbani reminded participants that a 2004 World Bank report "Unlocking Employment Potential in MENA: Towards a New Social Contracts", estimated that the economies of MENA would have to create 97 million jobs from 2000-2020 to address the employment needs of their rapidly growing populations, a target which has been beyond reach for most countries in the region. Mr. Kabbani proposed that the challenge could be tackled through four areas: education with a focus on relevant technical and core skills, the public sector through reducing its size and scope, the private sector by focusing on improving the regulatory environment for entrepreneurship and governance systems by improving coordination among key actors.

Dr Kabbani closed his plea with an action oriented framework for researchers and practitioners to jointly overcome some of the common obstacles to implementing youth employment policy and programs, including to improve coordination among key actors, to develop a more integrated approach to policy formulation, to encourage human-centred policy design, and to introduce programmatic monitoring, evaluation and feedback loops.

**Jonas Bausch and Simon Hills**, ILO, presented evidence on "what works in youth employment" from youth focused active labour market programmes in Jordan and Egypt. Among the labour market challenges young people are facing they identified skills mismatches and social norms, lack of mobility and transportation as key concerns. While the common narrative in many MENA countries has been that economic growth through mega projects and large investments equals job growth for youth, there has been limited evidence that this idea of "trickle-down-economics" creates jobs and reaches marginalised groups.

Instead, the global evidence base suggests to proceed with an integrated employment strategy to support private sector-led job growth, consisting of: pro-employment macro-, trade-, sectoral-, investment policies, and active labour market policies (ALMPs) to increase the employability of disadvantaged jobseekers. ALMPs should focus on multi-pronged interventions, that combine training and skill development, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services and subsidised employment. Recommendations for programme design included to combine class-room based learning with on-the-job training, to ensure that training designs are gender sensitive to address young women, and making trainings demand-driven and created in collaboration with the private sector.

As the final presenter **Rania Roushdy**, Associate Professor at the American University of Cairo discussed the impact of a young women's entrepreneurship and employability program, Neqdar Nesharak ("We can participate") implemented until 2014 in rural Upper Egypt. The programme's objective was to increase social empowerment for young women and supporting them in starting a business. The impact evaluation showed that while women participating in the programme were more likely to be active on the labour market and in particular take up self-employment this did not automatically translate into changing social norms. Although their economic empowerment increased, such as labour market outcomes, economic aspirations and business knowledge, no significant impact on social empowerment was found. According to Dr Roushdy a key conclusion was that training programmes can foster economic empowerment by improving women's human capital. However, preconditions for this to happen in rural areas are: safe,

flexible, female-friendly employment and workplaces for women, plus innovative programmes that focus on social empowerment and gender dynamics.

As discussant of the session, **Youssef Wardany**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Youth and Sports, shared his reflections and questions on youth employment interventions and policies. There were many issues the Ministry is addressing when it comes to youth development: there is a problem common to the Arab region, that state institutions generally do not have a very deep understanding of expectations of young people. This makes it challenging to create interventions and policies that match the youth's needs and aspirations. Another central issue is the ongoing technological progress calling for a more innovative economic model. Mr Wardany underlined that the Ministry will place more focus on the border areas and Upper Egypt, where there is more violence, growing extremism and terrorism. It will also look into growing a stronger sense of citizenship and spreading employment values amongst youth.

## World café: Multi-sectoral dialogue on effective policy solutions

The afternoon was dedicated to a multi-sectoral dialogue on effective policy solutions, starting with the results of a needs assessment survey, conducted amongst a broad audience of partner organisations working in the field of youth employment. The survey functioned as input for the dialogue session, since it informed the key topics that were deemed relevant by the partner organisations. The survey was used to determine '*which youth and women's employment topics require more attention*' and the seven most popular topics were discussed in the shape of a World Café<sup>4</sup>.

### 1. Micro-loans- and social finance programs for employment

#### Key points and conclusions

- In order to make micro loans work for employment, their interest rates need to be fair and ethical for the sector.
- When a beneficiary is given credit, other support services need to be provided as well. This includes skills training, market research and financial literacy training.
- There needs to be insurance loan guarantees - for ownership and authorship. Also the conditions and consequences of defaulting on a loan need to be stated clearly to beneficiaries.
- Peer-to-peer networks work best to share information amongst beneficiaries, to share financial risk and help each other. This is especially true for women lenders.
- Products and services need to be designed in a gender-sensitive manner.
- Financial programmes (whether grant based or micro-loans) need to help connecting businesses to markets and market actors (market visibility).

### 2. Women's empowerment in the rural economy

#### Key points and conclusions

The group started by underlining that both women and men need to be involved in the process. Men need to be involved in all steps of women empowerment projects to have active and actual results. Mind-sets need to be changed at home, at school and through media about how women are portrayed. Specific recommendations included:

- Provide tailored training for women in areas that used to be male dominated, such as technical sectors, IT, mobile repair services, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> The World Café methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible facilitation format for encouraging participation and dialogue in large groups. It can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. The specifics of context, number of attendees, the purpose of the event and location, are all factored into the event's invitation, design, and choice of table topics.

- Ensure that trainers and facilitators are gender-balanced and are oriented to speak to women in local and gender sensitive languages.
- Focus on building the capacities and leadership competencies of women leaders who can influence other woman and girls in rural communities. Work with female role models that speak the same “language” and share similar backgrounds and experiences.
- Integrate childcare and elderly care and access to healthcare services, including proper and safe transportation, when designing programmes for women in rural areas.
- Develop policies that protect women against violence at home and work places, and raise women’s awareness on reporting such incidents, and integrate men and women at all ages in such awareness.
- Address awareness raising on the added value of gender balance at the workplace for the private sector and rural communities.
- Build the leadership competencies of women – women supporting women in cooperative formats.
- Ensure the enforcement of inheritance law, and awareness of the legal options for women.

### **3. Sectoral strategies and value chains for rural development**

#### **Key points and conclusions**

Consensus in the group was that the existing key sectors need to be restructured, and that sector priorities need to be aligned with country priorities while focusing on creating decent jobs. A shared conclusion was to base the identification of sector strategies in rural areas on local strengths, focus areas or geographical traits, such as water supply, labour demand, soil specific resources, such as in some Delta areas. Key priorities included:

- Bottom-up processes are key: When tackling value chains, all actors from producers to partners need to be integrated and all beneficiaries need to be involved, from local communities, youth associations to the private sector (inclusive map assessment).
- The rural - urban transformation gives opportunity to decentralise food processing value chains.
- MENA countries need to invest in labour intensive value chains, not only capital intensive sectors. This may include shortening the value-chain, linking producers to consumers directly, to support local markets. For that there is a need for more stakeholder mapping.
- Big enterprises need to be incentivised to extend production to small towns, and rural areas, so that local rural SME’s and rural suppliers in the service and manufacturing sectors can scale-up.
- Support training on business development skills, and soft skills for rural people, especially of women & youth.

### **4. Gap between education and employment for youth and women (including technical and vocational training strategies)**

#### **Key points and conclusions**

Support programmes and educational curricula are not sufficiently demand driven. The group discussed that demand driven education and training interventions need to be both adapted to the demands from the labour market, as well as speak the language of youth and take into account their aspirations. The following points were mentioned as steps to realise that.

- Raise awareness in local schools and universities on job search and work orientation.
- Enhance the image of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), especially for women by gender sensitive targeting.

- Foster partnerships and coordination under public and private sectors and local NGO's to design curricula based on needs, ie. Competency Based Curricula (CBC).
- Enhance integration between education sectors, employment training (TVET) and career guidance.
- Capacity building for governmental entities to understand youth's gaps, needs and aspirations.
- Promote work-place learning (job placements, job shadowing, paid internships).
- Integrate job simulations of work environment into educational curricula.

## **5. Healthy growth and economic inclusiveness**

### **Key points and conclusions**

The group spoke about economic growth and healthy or inclusive growth. In order for economic growth to be inclusive, regulation and forms of redistribution are key. The government, private sector and civil society fields need to work together. The following ideas and recommendations were defined:

- There is a need to go beyond common economic theory and consider sustainability, we cannot rely only on profitability to ensure sustainable economic outcomes.
- Adopt a systems thinking approach to tackle systemic challenges together with government, private sector and NGO's (for instance in better integration of trade- and financial policies).
- More research is needed to identify and map the barriers of inclusive economic growth (policies, perceptions, etc.).
- More bottom-up policy making is needed. To understand the needs of all sub-groups of a population (youth, refugees, women, disabled) and make bottom-up policy decisions based on analysis of what country's need to move forward and develop.
- Tackle the macro (country) and the micro (individual) challenges in a more coordinated approach.
- Consider minority populations and include them into all activities.
- Co-create and define the principles of inclusive economic policy making, such as speaking the local language, bridging the urban-rural divide (including through decentralisation), ensuring gender-balance and representation and promoting universal access to healthcare.

## **6. Effective entrepreneurship programmes**

### **Key points and conclusions**

The conversation focused on the need to have a unified definition of entrepreneurship, and ensure that everyone understands that entrepreneurs and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have different needs, also that those needs depend on whether they are operating in the formal or informal sector. When it comes to entrepreneurial support programmes, to a certain extent, we need to accept that informality is a reality. There also needs to be a difference in supporting entrepreneurs for the sake of job creation, and entrepreneurs that start a business because of an innovative idea that need more time to pay off and create jobs. The following recommendations and suggestions were made to design more effective entrepreneurship programmes:

- Enhance the coordination between entrepreneurship programmes and services as organisations do not collaborate enough.
- Create regional networks, through social media, where entrepreneurs can meet and exchange information.
- Create curricula that inform young people about the country's needs, so that they can tailor their business plans accordingly.
- Develop needs assessments approaches that are specific for young people in rural areas.

- Provide more information/training on legal and financial literacy - on laws and regulations, now that it has become easier to start a formal business.
- Good business training approaches need to be scaled up, and offer online open source entrepreneurship curricula.
- Formal accreditation of programmes is needed, to improve and standardise the quality and boost the image of entrepreneurship programmes.
- Entrepreneurship trainings need to be demand driven and designed in a gender-sensitive way. Given the quickly changing business environment and regulations, they also need to teach how to effectively access information and where to find data. Moreover, post training support is crucial to improve sustainability.

## **7. Private sector incentives towards decent jobs**

### **Key points and conclusions**

The private sector needs to provide jobs that guarantee a decent salary, working hours and working conditions (freedom of association and work-life balance that are secured), etc. The following arguments, and recommendations were formulated.

- The private sector needs to be convinced in “their language”, of benefits, financial incentives, productivity and profit that engaging with youth and women can bring. In order to do that, data is needed, we need *local* evidence-based papers and arguments for decent jobs.
- Incentives, inclusiveness and merits could ensure employees’ loyalty and hence the development of the company by reducing turn-over and encourage long-term human capital development.
- Create more awareness in the private on the cost of unstable working conditions. The value of unstable and unhappy staff can lower the profit, increases the turnover and affect the company’s image.
- Encouraging the “working from a distance” culture, which lowers the cost for employers and employees. This is conditional on the kind of work and the sector, but could be implemented more often.
- Make CSR even more appealing, creative and interesting for companies, show how it can also engage and motivate their own employees.
- Government pressure, carrots and sticks, in forms of sanctions but also rewards.

## Day 2: Measuring decent jobs for youth

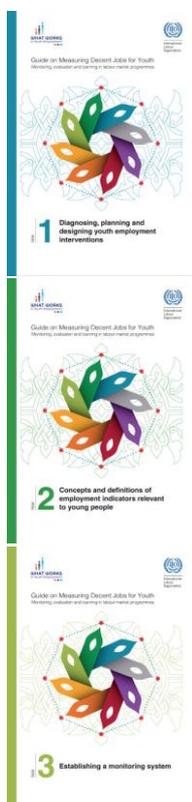
Day two (May 8) of the Forum concentrated on results measurement of youth employment initiatives. Through effective results measurement, youth employment stakeholders can learn how to improve their operations for sustainability and scale while contributing to building the global evidence base.

### Guide on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth: An introduction

The session introduced participants to the “Guide on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth: Monitoring, evaluation and learning in labour market programmes”. The Guide aims to equip ILO constituents and stakeholders with a full set of concepts and tools needed to make informed decisions about how to best measure and evaluate the results of youth employment programmes. The Guide offers direction on a wide range of evaluation methods and encourages users to select the most appropriate design feasible in the context of their youth employment intervention.

In an interactive presentation, **Drew Gardiner** and **Jonas Bausch** introduced the seven notes of the Guide. The Guide follows the various stages of a results measurement cycle of an employment intervention: (i) the planning phase, including diagnosing the labour market challenge, selection indicators and setting-up a monitoring system, (ii) the implementation phase, including planning accompanying evaluations and collecting data and (iii) the evaluation phase, including reporting evaluation findings, developing recommendations and ensuring evidence uptake among policy-makers.

The Guide is available [online](#) and is available in English and Arabic. All seven notes are accompanied by a practical case study designed to enhance learning and for class-room use.



#### **Note 1: Diagnosing, planning and designing youth employment interventions**

This section guides readers through the key steps in designing youth employment interventions. An employment diagnostic analysis can inform programme planners about the specific barriers to employment both across economic sectors and subgroups of youth. The note then provides guidance on how to select an intervention to tackle these constraints using a menu of Active Labour Market Programmes as a starting point to determine objectives and outcomes.

#### **Note 2: Concepts and definitions of employment indicators relevant for young people**

The objective of this note is to assist readers to choose appropriate outcome measures of their youth employment interventions. Readers can choose from a menu of decent work indicators, depending on the context and objectives of the particular project. The menu of youth employment indicators is broken down into four key dimensions: employment opportunities, employment quality, employment access and employment skills.

#### **Note 3: Establishing a monitoring system**

This note summarizes the key steps for building a results based monitoring system for youth employment programmes. This includes guidance on visualizing a theory of change, defining a results chain and collecting, analysing and reconciling findings. The chapter includes innovations for technology powered M&E and lean data collection tools.



#### **Note 4: Enhancing youth programme learning through evaluation**

This note discusses potential motivations for conducting evaluations, including an overview of key knowledge gaps in youth employment, before introducing the reader to evaluation criteria and how to derive relevant evaluation questions. It gives an overview of performance and impact evaluation as well as cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses.

#### **Note 5: Impact evaluation methods for youth employment interventions**

This note first explores the fundamental impact evaluation question: “How can we show that the changes in outcomes we see result from our youth employment intervention?” and explains the theory behind methods that aim at establishing a clear cause and effect link, also known as attribution. The note to provide youth employment practitioners with an overview of the different tools available for an impact evaluation and discusses the features of certain evaluation designs which are particularly relevant for youth employment projects.

#### **Note 6: A step-by-step guide to impact evaluation**

This note is a step-by-step guide to implementing an impact evaluation for a youth employment interventions. The note will help to plan an impact evaluation from the programme perspective, from preparation, timeline and budget, data collection, programme implementation and finally the dissemination of evaluation results. It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the evaluation.

#### **Note 7: Evidence uptake in policy formulation**

This note guides readers on how to ensure the results of their youth employment evaluation can inform the formulation of pro-employment policy frameworks. This can be achieved by ensuring research questions are relevant through engagement with constituents; communicating research effectively; and synthesising and repackaging research for different audiences.

### Taqeem Community of Practice Ignite! talks

In this session, Taqeem Community of Practice members showcased how modern M&E systems and impact evaluations can generate learnings and evidence for what works in youth employment and women’s empowerment. This was achieved through a series of Ignite! Talks.



**Joanna Abi Abdallah**, Manager at Berytech, presented Berytech’s business support services for young entrepreneurs in Lebanon. Berytech provides office spaces, workshops and conducts business competitions to provide entrepreneurs with mentoring opportunities, access to international markets and funding advice.

Working with ILO Taqeem Initiative, Berytech developed an online M&E system. Digital data management allows to collect new data efficiently and in real time, for example in Berytech Agrytech programme where the system was first piloted. The feedback received from online forms enabled Berytech to better customize its ongoing programmes and services to the needs of the targeted population.



**Rana Ansari**, M&E Specialist, Ministry of Labour Jordan, described an intervention to promote women's employment by establishing day care centres in the private sector in Jordan.

ILO Taqem supported the Ministry to develop a results chain and indicators for this intervention. The goal was to foster M&E skills within the Ministry that would allow to replicate some of the result measurement approaches for other interventions of the Jordan National Employment Strategy. Together with the National Council for Family Affairs, cost-effective data collection instruments were developed and piloted to measure the progress of setting up day care centres and training over 200 women as care workers.



**Sally Mansour**, M&E and Impact Manager, introduced the audience to RISE Egypt's Fellowship Programme, an initiative that provides technical assistance to social enterprises to inform a data-driven approaches to scaling up efforts that create jobs in Egypt.

Together with ILO Taqem, RISE built a cohesive data collection system to monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of the Fellowship Programme. Leveraging Salesforce, RISE integrated its evaluation tools into a single system and mainstreamed M&E activities through their all their operations.



**Ghaleb M. Hijazi**, Vice President, presented BDC's Jordan Maharat Training for Employment Programme that aims at improving the employability of recent graduates through skills and entrepreneurship trainings, jobs fairs and matching events.

BDC and ILO Taqem conceptualised an M&E system for Maharat by developing a results chain with gender-sensitive indicators that were to be monitored through efficient data collection instrument. Training BDC staff ensured that these tools could be employment effectively with minimum time and effort. Through an online platform, ([www.goprove.org](http://www.goprove.org)) BDC is keeping track of monitoring efforts.



**Ibrahim Melouk**, Senior Marketing Manager, Alexandria Business Association, described how ABA is utilizing its wide network of microbusiness clients to assess the impact of a new loan product, Tomouh, on the growth of the businesses and the livelihood of entrepreneurs.

Based on a thorough needs assessment, ABA and ILO Taqem piloted a new results measurement system for Tomouh, including shifting data collection to a tablet based real-time solution system.

The upgraded M&E system also allowed ABA to more easily develop a rigorous impact evaluation for Tomouh.



**Madhubashini Fernando**, Associate Programme Officer, introduced the audience to the Youth and Trade Initiative of the International Trade Centre. The initiative promotes export strategies for youth-led businesses and was piloted in Morocco.

The ITC worked with ILO Taqem to design a fully-fledged M&E system for the project. The approach relied heavily on web-based data collection instruments that helped to improve the efficiency of collecting and analysing data.



**Tamer Taha**, PhD Fellow, UNU-MERIT, presented an impact evaluation to assess the effects of co-working spaces in Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon on the innovativeness of co-workers and on job creation. Supported through an ILO Taqem research grant, the study uses the social network analysis methodology to analyse links between co-workers. The study finds that while co-working spaces have the potential to spur job creation, trust between co-workers is an essential condition to transform creativity into innovation.

### Taqem Community of Practice: What's next?

The final session of the Forum took the form of a mind-mapping session in order to collect participants thoughts and actions on the next steps in the growth of the Taqem Community of Practice. The key questions were:

- *What should the key elements of the Community of Practice moving forward?*
- *What will you and your organizations contribute to growing the Community of Practice?*

The mind map session was an interactive discussion in two groups, where priorities were harvested and debated. From the session several key priority areas for further strengthening the Community of Practice emerged:

#### 1. Technical assistance

The most popular function of the CoP was its provision of technical assistance in such areas as M&E support to relevant project managers and M&E experts, capacity building, open calls for participation and collaboration with the Taqem experts, and providing more in-depth information about trainings related to youth employment. Central to the discussion was that the CoP should function more as a respected expert body that can venture out and help practitioners in the field. Their role would also be to translate scientific findings of what works into knowledge that can be used at the project and intervention level.

Participants offered the following contributions:

- Prepare standard templates for (lean) data collection

#### 2. An online & offline community

Participants requested the continuation of the online platform ([www.ilotageem.org](http://www.ilotageem.org)) as well as to increase the amount of offline meetings. Webinars, meet-ups and workshops could be organised that gather more stakeholders, including government partners. The community would have as purpose to create cross sectoral links and expand the network, linking it to national institutions. Annual, bi-annual and even quarterly meet-ups at the regional or national level were proposed. These meetings could focus on specific sub-topics. Rather than choosing one lead organisation, these meetings could be organised collaboratively in a de-centralised manner. As technical tools, Slack was mentioned to complement webinars and group Skype-sessions.

Participants offered the following contributions:

- Provide space and logistical support for organising meetings/get-togethers/events
- Connect COP within their organizations with Taqueem COP
- Link IFAD projects in the region to CoP

### **3. Access to data, research & information dissemination**

Another core function of the CoP should remain research gathering and dissemination. The group expressed an ongoing need to make comparative analyses accessible, share case studies, have access to baseline data, share research or policy templates (or even questionnaires, policy briefs and issue notes). Some expressed the desire to receive concise updates on impact evaluations of interventions in youth employment promotion, or monthly one-page updates of news, challenges, methods, log frames of successful projects, etc.

Participants offered the following contributions:

- Support development of data sharing platform
- Technical support for knowledge management
- Sharing resources, data, documents
- M&E reports and best practice examples from the region

### **4. Policy take-up working groups**

Finally it was discussed that the Community of Practice needs to have a cross regional policy group that monitors and tracks if- and how evidence based recommendations are adapted into policy in the field of youth employment. This group would have to gather baseline and endline data and make it open source.

## Annex I: IFAD-ILO Taqueem Initiative

Taqueem is a partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), as part of an IFAD-financed project titled “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa”. Through rigorous impact research, this capacity development and learning grant project aims to understand “what works” in the promotion of gender mainstreaming, with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes across the region.

### Impact Report Series

- Issue 12. Economic and social dimensions of women’s rural employment in MENA: Status, trends and policy implications
- Issue 11. Women’s and youth empowerment in rural Tunisia - An assessment using the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)
- Issue 10. Constraints and good practice in women’s entrepreneurship in MENA
- Issue 9. Promoting youth employment and empowerment of young women in Jordan: An assessment of active labour market policies
- Issue 8. Empowering Young Women through Business and Vocational Training: Evidence from a Field Intervention in Rural Egypt
- Issue 7. Co-working, innovation and employment
- Issue 6. The impact of skills training on the financial behaviour, employability and educational choices of rural young people: Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Morocco
- Issue 5. Evaluating the results of an agricultural cooperative support programme: Business practices, access to finance, youth employment
- Issue 4. Towards Evidence-Based Active Labour Market Programmes in Egypt: Challenges and Way Forward

### Impact Brief Series

- Issue 16. Realizing Innovation through Social Entrepreneurship – Egypt
- Issue 15. Establishing Day Care Centres in the Private Sector – Jordan
- Issue 14. Maharat Training for Employment – Jordan
- Issue 13. Fostering employment through business support to young entrepreneurs in Lebanon
- Issue 12. Trade Accelerator for Young Entrepreneurs in Morocco
- Issue 11. Tomouh: A New Loan Product for Micro and Small-Sized Enterprises – Egypt
- Issue 10. Empowering Young Women through Business and Vocational Training: Evidence from Rural Upper Egypt
- Issue 9. Promoting women’s empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa: A rapid evidence assessment of labour market interventions
- Infographic: Promoting youth employment and empowerment in Jordan

### Country Briefs

- Morocco: Young Women’s Employment and Empowerment in the Rural Economy
- Jordan: Young Women’s Employment and Empowerment in the Rural Economy

## Annex II: Agenda

<b>Day 1 – 7 May</b>	
9:00 – 10:00	<b>Welcoming remarks and opening statements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youssef Wardany, Ministry of Youth and Sports</li> <li>• Peter Van Rooij, ILO DWT/CO Cairo</li> <li>• Valter Nebuloni, ILO Youth Employment Programme</li> <li>• Abdelkarim Sma, IFAD Near East and North Africa Division</li> <li>• Solveig Schuster, Global Affairs Canada</li> </ul>
10:00 – 11:00	<b>Women’s Employment: What Works in MENA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional overview: Economic and social dimensions of women’s rural employment in MENA, Samantha Constant, Independent consultant</li> <li>• Women’s empowerment in rural Tunisia, Dr Aline Meysonnat, United Nations University-MERIT</li> <li>• Impacts of women’s entrepreneurship and edutainment in Egypt, Dr Ghada Barsoum, American University of Cairo, School of Global Affairs and Public Policy</li> <li>• Discussant: Magued Osman, Board Member, National Council of</li> </ul>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee
11:30 – 12:30	<b>Youth Employment: What Works in MENA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional overview of young people’s labour market situation, Dr Nader Kabbani, Brookings Institute, Global Economy and Development Program</li> <li>• Evidence from youth focused active labour market programmes in Jordan and Egypt, Simon Hills &amp; Jonas Bausch, ILO</li> <li>• Impacts of young women’s entrepreneurship and employability in rural Upper Egypt, Dr Rania Roushdy, American University of Cairo</li> <li>• Discussant: Youssef Wardany, Ministry of Youth and Sports</li> </ul>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 13:45	<b>Results of needs assessment survey and World Café intro</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daria Ofman, Consultant</li> </ul>
13:45 – 14:30	<b>World Café: Round 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of topics &amp; key priorities</li> </ul>
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee
15:00 – 15:45	<b>World Café: Round 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy responses (addressing youth and women’s needs in MENA)</li> </ul>
15:45 – 16:30	<b>Reporting and Closure</b>
<b>Day 2 – 8 May</b>	
9:00 – 9:15	<b>Piloting the “Guide on Measuring Decent Jobs for Youth”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amal Mowafy, ILO Cairo and Valter Nebuloni, ILO Geneva</li> </ul>
9:15 – 10:45	<b>Introducing the 7 Notes of the Guide</b> Monitoring, evaluation and learning in labour market programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drew Gardiner, ILO Geneva and Jonas Bausch, ILO Geneva</li> </ul>
10:45 – 11:15	Coffee
11:15 – 12:00	<b>Taqeem Community of Practice Ignite! Talks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joanna Abi Abdallah, Berytech</li> <li>• Rana Ansari, Ministry of Labour, Jordan</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sally Mansour, RISE Egypt</li> <li>• Ghaleb M. Hijazi, BDC Jordan</li> <li>• Ibrahim Melouk, Alexandria Business Association</li> <li>• Madhubashini Fernando, International Trade Centre</li> <li>• Tamer Taha, UNU-MERIT</li> </ul>
<b>12:00 – 12:45</b>	<b>Mind mapping: What is missing and what's next?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to further strengthen the evidence base</li> <li>• The Community of Practice going forward</li> </ul>
<b>12:45 – 13:00</b>	<b>Closure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO DWT/CO-Cairo</li> <li>• Government representative</li> </ul>

## Annex III: List of participants

#	First name	Last name	Organization
1	Emad	Abdelmalek	AMIDEAST
2	Joanna	Abi Abdallah	Berytech
3	Heba	Abou Shnief	Arab Foundations Forum
4	Hiba	Al Taweel	Business Development Center
5	Rana	Al-Ansari	Jordan Ministry of Labour
6	Elham	Allan	Oxfam
7	Sami	Archella	ILO
8	Ragui	Assaad	University of Minnesota
9	Rania	Ayman	Entreprenelle
10	Mohamed	Barakat	Sawiris Foundation
11	Ghada	Barsoum	American University of Cairo
12	Jonas	Bausch	ILO
13	Awny	Bayoumy	Independent research & Evaluation consultant
14	Mona	Beckzada	Plan International, Egypt
15	Mohamed	Ben Achma	Education For Employment Tunisie
16	Ann-Katrina	Bregovic	Arqaam
17	Houda	Cherkaoui	Oxfam
18	Samantha	Constant	Independent consultan
19	Yasmine	D'Alessandro	Drosos Foundation
20	Maleke	Dridi	Oxfam Novib
21	Menna-t Allah	Ebaid	Medium, Small & Micro Enterprises Development Agency
22	Wessam	El Beih	Drosos Foundation
23	Nada	El Egeimy	Amideast
24	Sarah	El Nashar	RISE Egypt
25	Marwa	El Nokrashy	MCIT
26	Rania Ahmed	El Sobky	Ministry of Trade and Industry
27	Ibtissam	El-Gaafarawi	National Centre for Social and Criminological Research
28	Eman	El-Hadary	American University of Cairo
29	Ehab	Elia	Ouishare
30	Ismail	Elmaghraby	Moe
31	Madhu	Fernando	International Trade Centre
32	Engi	Gamal Eldin	RISE Egypt
33	Drew	Gardiner	ILO
34	Joseph	Gowid	One Society
35	Hadil	Hammad	GIZ
36	Nuha	Hammoud	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
37	Ghaleb	Hijazi	Business Development Centre
38	Simon	Hills	ILO
39	Kari	Ibrahim	Centre for Development Services
40	Tawfik	Jaber	ILO
41	Nader	Kabbani	Brookings Institute
42	Emad	Karim	UN Women
43	Zeinab	Khadr	Cairo Demographic Center
44	Mia	Madsen	IFAD

45	Sally	Mansour	RISE Egypt
46	Ibrahim	Melouk	ABA
47	Aline	Meysonnat	UNU-MERIT
48	Eman	Mohammed	National Employment Pact
49	Jean-Marie	Moreau	European Union Delegation
50	Sherine	Mourad	Arab Foundation for Monitoring & Evaluation and Quality
51	Randa	Moussa	Bibliotheca Alexandrina
52	Amal	Mowafy	ILO
53	Valter	Nebuloni	ILO
54	Hector	Niehues-Jeuffroy	GIZ
55	Daria	Ofman	Consultant
56	Magued	Osman	National Council of Women
57	Mattia	Prayer Galletti	IFAD
58	Rania	Rabie	Om Habibeh - AKDN Network
59	Heba	Rashed	ILO
61	Ali	Rashed	Population Council
62	Waleed	Rashwan	Plan International Egypt
63	Rania	Roushdy	American University of Cairo
64	SAMI	SAIDANA	Oxfam
65	Mohamed	Salah	MSMEDA
66	Ghada	Salem	Oxfam
67	Alexandra	Sarpakis	North South Consultants Exchange
68	Solveig	Schuster	Global Affairs Canada
69	Yasmine	Seffain	Egyptian Association for Educational Resources
70	Abdelkarim	Sma	IFAD
71	Samar	Sobeih	MCSBE
72	Ahmed	Soliman	Ministry of Agriculture
73	Jude	Stetieh	Business Development Center
74	Tamer	Taha	UNU-MERIT
75	Omnia	Tawfeek	General Arab Women Federation
76	Peter	Van Rooij	ILO
77	Youssef	Wardany	Ministry of Youth and Sports
78	Asmaa	Youssef	GIZ
79	Shireen	Zayed	Oxfam