



Session name: 2.1 Young People are connected with Multiple Pathways of Learning, with focus on those left behind

Session date: Day 1, 23rd May 2022, 15:30-17:00pm

Session Objective

Children and young people in the Middle East and North Africa region face unprecedented challenges – in terms of learning, skilling, social inclusion and transition into decent employment – aggravated by political instability and conflicts. Young people who are from poor families, from rural areas, female, forcibly displaced, or with disabilities are those most likely left behind. **Multiple pathways of learning:** Education and training systems across the region aggravate inequalities, with almost 1/5 of young people dropping out of school before finalizing lower-secondary education, and even more than 1/3 of young people leaving formal schooling before graduating upper-secondary education. Ensuring continuity of learning and preparation for life and work, calls for open and flexible education systems promoting multiple pathways of learning. The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak has further amplified the challenges and disparities. The pandemic has showcased the importance of multiple pathways of learning – to ensure continues learning through formal and non-formal education opportunities. The medium- to long-term socio-economic impact of the pandemic is expected to lead to increased poverty and increased school dropout, especially among the most vulnerable young people. Multiple pathways of learning have always been found flexible and effective ways to promote inclusion in learning and skilling young people, to enable labour market access.

This session aimed at:

Further unpack the issue and discuss challenges in providing multiple pathways of learning, with focus on the most vulnerable young people. Brainstorm and share innovative, relevant and effective approaches towards multiple pathways of learning and skilling. Enable exchange of good practices on young people’s learning, skilling and transition into decent employment.

Session Speakers

Panel 1: Setting the Scene

Reem Aslan [Moderator]	Technical Specialist, ILO RO
Rawan Walid Akak [Co-Moderator]	Young Person, Egypt (Syria)
Oroub Al Abed	Lead Researcher, Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS)
Saddam Sayyaleh	Founder ‘I learn Jordan’, GenU Global Board Member
Salwa Al Mannai	Head of Planning and Research, Education Above All (EAA)
Abdel Rahman Ahmed	Youth Panelist, Egypt

Panel 2: From Commitment to Action

Marwan Tarazi [Moderator]	Director Center for Continuing Education, Birzeit University
Ahmad Buasallay [Co-Moderator]	Young Person, Bahrain
Majd Al Abdalla	Young Person, Jordan (Syria)
Ms. Wejden Ben Ayed	Ministers Cabinet, Ministry of Education, Tunisia
Hssain Oujour	Director Non-Formal Education, Morocco
Oussama Ghneim	National TVET Directorate, Lebanon
Mr. Saadi Ali Hamee	Director General TVET, Iraq
Dr. Sayed El Torky	Federation of Egyptian Industries, Egypt

Session Outcomes

The session was opened by a roleplay of two young people – **Kolilk A Sadiq** from Iraq and **Mouhamad Hazem Janineh** from Egypt (Syria) – reflecting on reasons for dropping out of school early, and ways of ensuring young people stay in school and re-engage in learning.

Screen projections summarized **recommendations from young people** reflecting on multiple pathways discussed during the Virtual Round Table ‘Young People’s Learning and Skilling’, November 2021:

- Raise awareness about school dropout, the **reasons for school dropout** and how to mitigate those issues
- Provide multiple pathways of learning, **customized to the needs of the learner**
- Ensure **certification and recognition** of multiple pathways of learning / alternative learning opportunities
- Raise **awareness on the importance of education** and how parents can support young people’s learning
- Build **teacher’s capacity and support**, and guide them to improve teaching and learning efficiency
- Encourage and **incentivize private sector investment** in education services

Panel 1: Setting the Scene

During the first panel discussion – moderated by **Reem Aslan**, Technical Specialist from ILO Regional Office together with **Rawan Walid Akak** from Egypt (Syria) – panelists further unpacked reasons for dropping out of school and challenges in providing multiple pathways of learning and experiences across the region.

Oroub Al Abed, Lead Researcher at the Center for Lebanese Studies (CLS), reflected on her research findings on young people’s education, training and livelihood, and **bottlenecks young people face when accessing multiple pathways of learning**. **Saddam Sayyaleh**, founder of ‘I Learn Jordan’ and a refugee, orphan and school drop-out himself further outlined community-based approaches to education to empower children and young people in disadvantaged communities, and **non-traditional learning opportunities customized to the individual needs of young people**. **Salwa Al Mannai**, Head of Planning and Research at Education Above All (EAA) shared some insights on EAA’s approach to foster access to **multiple pathways of learning for the most vulnerable children** in the region. **Abdel Rahman Ahmed**, a top graduate of a skills training in Egypt – a rapper, actor and member of the Egypt National Weightlifting team – reflected on the challenges he and other young people with disabilities faced and **how education and training systems can be more inclusive to the specific needs of persons with disabilities**.

Screen projections summarized key **evidence from data and research** to inform and frame the discussion:

- Already prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, **nearly 15 million children were out of school** in the MENA region, and **additional 10 million at risk of dropping out**.
- The percentage of young people out of school is estimated at **16% for lower-secondary education**, and even **35% for upper-secondary education**.
- The widest gaps and disparities are based on **wealth** (poor/rich), **location** (rural/urban) and **gender** (female/male).
- Research indicates that the main reasons for not being in school are **economic barriers** and the **low quality of education**.

Panel 2: From Commitment to Action

During the second panel discussion – moderated by **Marwan Tarazi**, Director of the Center for Continuing Education from Birzeit University – panelists exchanged good practices of multiple pathways of learning and young people’s learning, skilling and transition into decent employment from across the MENA region.

Ms. Mejden Ban Ayed, from the Minister of Education's Cabinet in Tunisia, reflected on the measures taken in Tunisia to ensure continuity of learning and multiple/**alternative pathways provided to young people who dropped out** of school. **Hssain Ojour**, Director for Non-Formal Education in Morocco, further zoomed in on **Second-Chance Education** as alternative pathway of learning, and how to **customize learning pathways to the diverse needs of young people** who dropped out of school – those from poor and rural areas, those displaced, those with disabilities, those supporting family income. **Oussama Ghneim**, from the National TVET Directorate in Lebanon, discussed on the **inclusion and empowerment of young women in the TVET system** to foster female labour force participation.

Dr. Sayed El Torky, from the Federation of Egyptian Industries, reflected on the **role of the private sector to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities** and presented some examples of what the Federation of Egyptian Industries is doing.

The session was closed by **Irina Isomova** from the UNHCR and **Brenda Haiplik** from UNICEF.