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# Concept Note

# Youth Leadership Programme

#  Engagement In Full Circle

# 11 – 14 November, 2019

# Amman, Jordan

***Background***

In the Arab States youth are vital; it is the youngest population in the world with over 100 million youth between the ages of 15 and 29 [1] and they represent a great potential to become change-makers as they tend to be “better educated and more connected to global knowledge relative to older ages”[2]. These young women and men face several challenges such as the highest unemployment rates among youth in the world [3] - and this affects women disproportionately. In the larger context, across the region there are forms of exclusion that young people face that impact their lives on varying levels. Political and economic instability and fragility in addition to conflict and protracted crisis, has created socioeconomic development challenges for the region as a whole and for youth more specifically. Understanding how exclusion plays a role in youth’s lives in the Arab region is important in the larger discussion of how youth can be agents of change in their respective country-context. Equipping youth with tools for innovation and with skills to be positive forces of development can only be as successful as addressing the larger barriers they face.

From the lens of citizenship and its relationship to the 2030 Agenda, poverty and inequality are central obstacles to social inclusion [5]. Exploring the role of citizenship for youth in the region is important to identifying the challenges that prevent them from contributing positively to their communities by supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unleashing their potential as agents of positive change requires their engagement as partners in development and peace and in influencing responsive policies. Doing so can support resilience nationally and locally.

The UN Youth Strategy of 2018-2021 prioritizes promoting the civic engagement and advocacy of youth and it highlights that “it is only by engaging and working with them, supporting them in standing up for their rights and creating the conditions allowing them to progress and play an active role, that the international community will be able to achieve peace, security, justice, climate resilience and sustainable development for all.”[4] Change-makers can be supported by having their needs met and closer collaboration with policy makers fostered. It is urgent to do this by enabling the opening of spaces for youth engagement and leadership [6].

While framing the larger context of citizenship and inclusion, there is also the question of the individual. When addressing development and youth’s role, much focus tends to be on the current barriers given youth’s context. While very important, there is interest in looking at young people’s growth through a lens that is aimed inward. More specifically, diving into the individual’s approach to engaging, using self-awareness and emotional intelligence in their path towards becoming agents of change.

***YLP 5 Regional Forum***

Following the regional workshop that took place in March in Beirut, YLP regional team and UNDP Country Offices worked with partner youth-serving organizations to implement the National Action Plans developed during the workshop. From April to October, the national partners conducted national activities, including preparatory activities on political/civic participation and policy dialogue, raising awareness of SDGs and teaching Design Thinking to young social innovators. Some of the ideas are entrepreneurial and others addressing a social development challenge.

Following these national activities, the YLP 5 Regional Forum will bring together over 45 youth, 33 youth serving organizations from across the Arab region in addition to public and private sector partners. The theme is Engagement which will be weaved throughout the forum by: 1. addressing the importance of Engagement as a Citizen and with policymakers, 2. Exploring engagement with stakeholders and 3. Improving engagement through an exploration of one’s self-awareness, emotional intelligence and empathy. The later aims at supporting youth in their journey by better equipping them with skills for effective leadership.

**The main objectives of the YLP5 Regional Forum are to:**

i) Explore, through the lens of a citizenship and the SDGs, youth becoming change makers, the barriers they face and the prospects for accelerating SDGs with their participation by addressing the barriers.

ii) Provide a space for youth-serving organizations and youth to engaging with policy leaders and enhance cooperation on issues related to civic engagement through the exchange of good practices and networking.

iii) Reflect in-ward and explore self-awareness, emotional intelligence and empathy as part of development for engaging stakeholders more effectively and becoming future leaders of tomorrow.

iv) Advance UNDP strategic direction on SDGs through collaborative support and YLP’s growing network while facilitating sharing of good practices and lessons learned.

v) Enhance knowledge around partnerships, financing, communications and pitching for youth.

During the regional forum, the YLP team aims to capture and document the experiences and hard work of YLP participants, our partners and youth-serving organizations and how they contribute to creating a wider social impact in the region.

**Expectations**

In sessions for all participants, the youth-serving organization partners, youth, policymakers and other invitees will expand their knowledge on political and civic participation through the lens of citizenship and SDGs. The aim is to expand the knowledge, awareness and skills of participants in supporting youth’s active role in societies on civic and political arenas, and to explore the opportunities and challenges the youth face in their communities, countries and in the region. This will frame the overall context and barriers faced as youth move to implement their social innovations. Bringing awareness to this context is important for further exploring how best to support youth in their path to being change makers.

Youth and youth-serving organizations will also be introduced to soft-skills which are important for shaping one’s self into a leader of the future. There will be an opportunity to looking inward, learn about self-awareness, and emotional intelligence and how these concepts can give way to better engagement and implementation of innovative solutions developed.

YLP 5 also aims at covering more details around partnerships, financing, communications and pitching. The forum will end with an opportunity for both youth and youth serving organizations to share their best practices, approaches, and lessons learned. Doing so will support a network for future support and exchange.

The Regional Forum will also engage former YLP alumni as inspirational speakers, facilitators, and mentors during the event.

By the end of the regional forum, participants are expected to have developed a greater understanding of the greater context which poses challenges giving way to creative solutions, knowledge of self-awareness and emotional intelligence and how it impacts their engagement and advancement of their ideas, and finally opportunity to practice pitching their ideas to experts who will provide constructive feedback. Also hope to create a stronger networks to continue to invest, promote and support young people across the region through YLP.

***Participants and Selection Criteria***

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| **Category** | **Estimated****(in total)** | **Selection criteria** |
| Partner youth-serving Organizations | 30*(3 per country)* | · Representative have relevant and constructive skills and committed to empowering young people. · Representative has actively contributed to YLP national activities. |
| Youth Representatives | 30(*3 per country)* | · Youth are most active and engaged in partners’ YLP5 programs.· Youth can provide substantive mentorship to fellow YLPers.· Youth have developed a prototype or a feasible idea of their community solution.· Youth can take lessons learned, knowledge and tools from the regional forum back to their communities and can work with the national team to replicate the regional forum upon return. |
| Previous years’ YLPers | 6 | · YLP Alumni that contributes actively to YLP5 activities, either through volunteered time or shared resources which in turn has provided support to current YLPers.· Alumni is capable of mentoring current YLPers and provide support. |
| Experts: investors, specialized technical specialists, investors, policy advocates, journalists, youth leaders, guest speakers. | 6  | · Invitee has proven and evident interest and history of engagement in youth empowerment· Invitee has relevant experience in engaging with youth-led innovation.· Invitee holds relevant knowledge and critical views about the ongoing policies, related to youth-led social innovation and SDGs. |
| Policy Makers | 10(*1 per country)* | · Policymaker is able to attend the full four-day forum.· Policymaker holds a technical position within the government, for example, advisor to the ministry.· Policymaker is motivated to open dialogue with youth and policy advocates. |
| UNDP CO Focal Points | 10(*1 per country)* | · Focal point has proven and active engagement with YLP activities. |

[1] “Expanding Youth Opportunities in the Arab Region.” United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/poverty/ExpandingYouth%20Opportunities%20AHDR%20research%20paper.pdf

[2] “Expanding Youth Opportunities.” UNDP.

[3] https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS\_514537/lang--en/index.htm

[4] UN Youth Strategy. 2018.

[5] Arab Human Development Report Research Paper, Leaving No One Behind Towards Inclusive Citizenship in Arab Countries. Adel Abdellatif, Paola Pagliani, Ellen Hsu. 2019

[6] Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development & Peace 2016-2020