



ARAB REGION IDEATHON 2020

UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC SECTOR DURING COVID - 19 AND BEYOND

ASSESSMENT OF THE REGIONAL IDEATHON AND SUMMARY OF TOP 23 IDEAS



FOREWORD

The COVID-19 pandemic's impacts have been felt throughout the world, reverberating through public health, economy, public institutions, and everyday life. The consequences of this pandemic are in every sector in every country, perhaps continuing to be felt for years to come. One of the main challenges emerged from the pandemic is that it is possible for the public sector to be agile, remain productive and efficient in performing their duties and deliver services. This pandemic has also highlighted the need for regional cooperation.

As countries in the Arab region gradually recover from the COVID-19 crisis and adapting a hybrid model of office and home-based work, more innovative tools and new ways of thinking are needed to maintain labour productivity under the new normal and beyond. In the context of the public sector, this includes the continuity of work and administrative functions, maintain service delivery, optimize engagement and collaboration, share knowledge and learning, and break down organizational silos.

Since April 2020, UNDP and General Secretariat for the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) jointly launched #Q8vsCovid19 Hackathon Series to introduce innovative solutions to Covid-19 related challenges, such as a SME hackathon to overcome broken supply-chains and health services. In September 2020, UNDP, GSSCPD and World Bank partnered to organize this Regional Ideathon, which attracted over 700 participants from the region. Participants worked on coming up with ideas to improve public sector efficiency and effectiveness. Through this process, participating teams further consolidated newly acquire skills in design thinking and behavioural insights. These were the moments of solidarity working till late nights across borders, being connected digitally.

This report is a knowledge product, summarizing this Regional Ideathon, documenting the Ideathon experiences, along with a catalogue of ideas that were developed by participants. This is not meant to be prescriptive, nor implying one size fits all. Rather, this is our hope that ideas presented to this report can further stimulate management practitioners and colleagues at the public sector to refine ideas further to adapt to the situations they face.



HIDEKO HADZIALIC
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE
UNDP KUWAIT



DR. KHALED MAHDI
SECRETARY GENERAL
SUPREME COUNCIL
FOR PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT



GHASSAN ALKHOJA
REPRESENTATIVE
WORLD BANK KUWAIT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Regional Ideathon was a result of great thought leadership as well as their dedication for being coaches to participants and inputs from the following colleagues.

We thank Dr. Faleh AlRashidi, Mr. Faris AlObaid, and Mr. Khalid AlHashash from the General Secretariat for Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD); Ms. Fatmah Shah from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research; Dr. Ahmad AlQatan, Dr. Mohammed AlOlayan from the Kuwait University; Dr. Hashim AlHonayan from the Ministry of Finance; Mr. Ismail Radwan from the World Bank; Ms. Fatma AlHajri from Oman Vision 2040; Ms. Ines Cheniour, who was a lead coach, from UNDP Tunisia; Ms. Vrouyr Joubanian from UNDP Lebanon; Mr. Muhamad Shabarek from UNDP Syria; Mr. Osama Mansour from UNDP Libya; Mr. Mamoun Attili from UNDP Palestine; Mr. Abdelhamid Ezzat from UNDP Egypt; Ms. Carla Groom from UK Department for Work and Pensions; Mr. Mohamed Al Sharif, UNDP Bahrain, Dr. Fatemah Mosawai from Kuwait Achievers for Future Opportunities; Ms. Wafa Saad; Mr. Saad Al Rubaiaan; Ms. Darine Elhage; Dr. Odeh Al-Jayyousi; Mr. Elia Korban; Dr. Atef Rawahneh; Mr. Khaled Abu Shady; and Mr. Wael Osman. These colleagues and friends provided technical guidance to Ideathon participants to walk them through design thinking processes to make this Ideathon successful.

The following eminent high-level speakers from the Arab region set the tone with enriched discussions over pragmatic issues the public sector faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hasan Al Sabba, Bahrain Institute for Public Administration; H.E. Dr. Mohamed Odeh, Palestine Disaster Management Authority; H.E. Mr. Naser Mohamed al-Krawji, Tripoli Municipality Council, Libya; H.E. Dr. Mishal Alrubaie, Kuwait Ministry of State for Youth Affairs; H.E. Dr. Hazem Rahahleh, Social Security Corporation, Jordan; H.E. Dr. Ghada Labib, Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology, Egypt; and H.E. Mr. Naceur Zaidi, Ministère de la Santé Tunisia; H.E. Dr. Nissaf Ben Alaya; Ministère de la Santé, Tunisia; H.E. Mr. Ahmed Laamoumri, Ministry of Budget, Finance and Administration, Morocco; H.E. Mr. Fadi Yarak, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon; H.E. Ms. Salma AlEssaand H.E. Ms. Fatima Darwi, State Audit Bureau, Kuwait; and Ms. Estephan Salamen. We appreciate their generosity for sharing valuable insights and experiences the public sector faced at the midst of the pandemic.

We also extend our gratitude to the organizing team for their ideas and substantive contributions to designing of this Ideathon, Ms. Nadiah H A A Mubarak, and Ms. Aalaa A A J S Alshaheen, the World Bank; Mr. Meshari Binhasan and Ms. Hawra A. Bahman, GSSCPD; Ms. Maram Almutairi, Mr. Mohamed Samy, Mr. Yousef Al Salem, Mr. Ghazi Alqatan, Ms. Sarah Zubaid, Ms. Shereen Alsaad, Mr. Rashed Alabhoul, Mr. Ali Alsayegh; Ms. Aishah Alqabandi, Mr. Abdulrahman Alramadhan and Mr. Omar Mishael, UNDP Kuwait; Ms. Zeina Afif, and Ms. Tasmia Rahman, the World Bank; Ms. Roxani Roushasand Ms. Jennifer Colville, Mr. Giordano Segneri and Mr. Noeman Alsayyad, UNDP Regional Hub; Mr. Ali Salman, UNDP Bahrain, Ms. Saud Alrakhayes, World Bank Kuwait; , UNDP and Ms. Fatima Keaik, UNDP Kuwait and Ms. Shahd Sulaiman A Alhamdan, World Bank and Mr. Asim Salah, UNDP Saudi Arabia; and Ms. Laura De Castro Zoratto, World Bank Saudi Arabia.

We sincerely thank Ms. Narjas M. Mohammad, Director, International Cooperation, Mr. Faris Alobaid, and Ms. Hawra A. Bahman from the GSSCPD; Mr. Khaled Shahwan, Deputy Resident Representative from UNDP Kuwait; Mr. Saud Alrakhayes, Mr. Issam Abousleiman, Ms. Tasmia Rahman, Ms. Laura De Castro Zoratto, and Ms. Zeina Afif from the World Bank; Mr. Ali Salman, Ms. Jennifer Colville, Ms. Roxani

Roushas, Mr. Noeman Alsayyad, Mr. Noeman Alsayyad, Mr. Giordano Segneri, Ms. Ines Cheniour, Ms. Kawter Zerouali, Mr. Asim Salah, Mr. Stefano Pettinato, Mr. Adam Bouloukos, Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafi, Mr. Firas Gharaibeh, Ms. Nada Bouari, Mr. Alessandro Mrakic, and Ms. Sarah Poole from UNDP; Dr. Raed Mohammed Ben Shams, and Mr. Mohamed Hasan Al Sabba, the Institute of Public Administration of Bahrain; Dr. Hazem Rahahleh from Social Security Cooperation of Jordan.; Dr. Ghada Labib from Ministry of Communication and information Technology of Egypt; MS. Salma AlEssa, and Ms. Fatima Darwish from State Audit Bureau of Kuwait; Mr. Ahmed Laamoumri from Maroc Ministère de la réforme de l'Administration; Mr. Fadi Yarak from Ministry of Higher Education of Lebanon; Mr. Estephan Salamen from Palestine; Dr. Mohamed Odeh; Mr. Naser Mohamed al-Krawi; Mr. Naceur Zaidi; Dr. Nissaf Ben Alaya, and Mr. Abdullah Alsharrah for your inputs, guidance and advice.

Our gratitude goes to Mr. Ali Elmuntaser for being the Project Coordinator for this initiative, and Dr. Mosaad Radwan, the researcher and author for collecting and analyzing the results of this event in this publication.

Partnerships, professional insights and foresights of H.E Dr. Khaled Mahdi, Secretary General, GSSCPD, and H.E. Mr. Ghassan Alkhoja, Resident Representative, World Bank made this Regional Ideathon as a truly successful initiative.

Hideko Hadzialic, UNDP Kuwait

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	5
0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
1 INTRODUCTION.....	11
2 THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON THE PUBLIC SECTOR.....	13
3 PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE ARAB REGION.....	15
4 ARAB REGION IDEATHON.....	17
5 EFFECTS OF IDEATHON COMPETITION ON PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION	27
6 ARAB PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19 CRISIS.....	28
7 IDEATHON INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGES	30
8 IDEATHON QUALITY IDEAS CODIFICATION	32
9 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36
IDEATHON TEAM WINNER PROPOSALS	39
IDEATHON TEAM SEMI-FINAL PROPOSALS	44
LIST OF REFERENCES	67

ANNEX

ANNEX 1 LIST OF FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWEES	71
ANNEX 2 LIST OF WEBINAR SPEAKERS	72
ANNEX 3 ORIENTATION SESSIONS AND SKILLS WORKSHOP AGENDA.....	73
ANNEX 4 LIST OF COACHES NAMES AND BACKGROUND	74
ANNEX 5 EVALUATION GRID	75
ANNEX 6 LIST OF SELECTION CRITERIA	76

BOXES

BOX 1 A QUOTE FROM IDEATHON TEAM SURVEY	18
BOX 2 A QUOTE FROM ORGANIZERS TEAM SURVEY.....	21
BOX 3 A QUOTE FROM COACHING TEAM SURVEY.....	23
BOX 4 A QUOTE FROM EVALUATION TEAM SURVEY.....	25

CONTENTS

FIGURES

FIGURE 1	THE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE INDEX AND THE GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX ANALYSIS	16
FIGURE 2	THE IDEATHON IMPLEMENTATION STAGES	17
FIGURE 3	DISTRIBUTION OF THE IDEATHON TEAMS BASED ON COUNTRIES.....	19
FIGURE 4	IDEATHON MIXED TEAMS NATIONALITIES.....	20
FIGURE 5	NUMBER OF TEAMS SUBMITTED INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS.....	20
FIGURE 6	IDEATHON TEAM BACKGROUND	21
FIGURE 7	IDEATHON TEAMS MOTIVE FOR PARTICIPATION.....	21
FIGURE 8	COACHING TEAM BACKGROUND	22
FIGURE 9	PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGE IDENTIFICATION SOURCES	24
FIGURE 10	CLASSIFICATION OF INNOVATIVE PROPOSAL BASED ON SECTOR.....	24
FIGURE 11	CLASSIFICATION OF INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS ACCORDING TO COUNTRY AND SECTOR	25
FIGURE 12	THE EVALUATION TEAM BACKGROUND.....	26
FIGURE 13	LEVEL OF EVALUATORS SATISFACTION WITH PROPOSALS QUALITY	26
FIGURE 14	DISTRIBUTION OF PROPOSALS AND COUNTRIES.....	26
FIGURE 15	IDEATHON CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION.....	27
FIGURE 16	DIFFERENT TEAMS POINT OF VIEW TO IMPROVE IDEATHON.....	27
FIGURE 17	MATCHING PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED INNOVATIVE IDEAS	30
FIGURE 18	IDEATHON INNOVATIVE IDEAS CODIFICATION METHODOLOGY	32

TABLES

TABLE 1	SURVEY SAMPLE SIZE AND RESPONSE RATE.....	12
TABLE 2	SAMPLE INTERNATIONAL INDICES ANALYSIS	15
TABLE 3	DISTRIBUTION OF IDEATHON TEAMS BASED ON COUNTRIES.....	19
TABLE 4	CLASSIFICATION OF THE 23 QUALITY INNOVATIVE IDEAS BASED ON SECTORS	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Kuwait, in partnerships with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) and The World Bank, jointly initiated the Regional Ideathon building on positive results of the first Hackathon's in May 2020. This series two of the #Q8vsCOVID19, namely Regional Ideathon is to challenge a broader general public from the Arab states including youth to come up with innovative solutions and ideas for the public sector to be efficient and effective in a post-pandemic new normal setting and beyond.

This report also assesses this public at-large outsourcing, namely this Ideathon initiative as an emerging way to complement participatory policy making process, by drawing lessons learned and recommendations for future replication. It employed several data collection tools, e.g., literature review, qualitative analysis of the experts' webinars recordings, and analysis of the competition's innovative proposals. Besides, some interviews and field surveys were carried out to collect different parties' perceptions and suggestions. Whilst this report cannot serve as an evaluation of outcomes for each idea generated, it serves government agencies, development institutions and civil society to design similar participatory problem solving methods.

The Ideathon has reserved most Arab countries' active participation; 209 teams consisting of 824 members from 18 Arab countries registered at the initiation stage. The screening process concluded that 144 teams comprising of 583 members from 17 countries are qualified to proceed on in the Ideathon. The qualified teams submitted 77 innovative proposals in various sectors, e.g., education, government services development & automation, environment, and food security. Based on predetermination evaluation criteria, 23 proposals reached the semi-final stage, and three of them won the Ideathon prizes.

In light of literature review and data collected, the report outlines nine challenges facing the public sector in the Arab Region while managing the COVID-19 pandemic emerging situation: continuity and timely service delivery; inactive strategic planning processes; the bureaucratic burden and troubled productivity; digital transformation stress; low human capital productivity; outdated legislation framework; lack of synergy between public sector agencies; insufficient crisis management capacity; and weak innovation and knowledge management.

The ideas submitted to the competition contributed significantly to highlight the public sector's challenges during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. It also embarked on tackling current public sector performance problems represented by bureaucratic complications and the insufficient of capabilities, whether in infrastructure or human resources. Nonetheless, most innovative proposals focused on transforming to online services delivery, exclusively in the health and education sectors. The innovative ideas echoed the participants' views of democracy, participation, and importance of gender inclusion concepts to improve public sector efficiency and effectiveness. In sum, the proposals generated several visionary ideas that could draw the public sector's attention to the new normal necessities.

The report draws some recommendations that could improve the implementation of the Ideathon in the future, including giving sufficient time to applicants for the preparation phase for forming the right team and researching the most critical challenges countering public sector productivity; the Ideathon might identify a specific sector or challenges for each round; the coaching process conceivably enhanced by assigning coaches based on their specialization and expertise; in the addition, the ideas submitted to the competition could be further enriched through organising more workshops for the teams - exclusively those with ideas that have reached the semi-final stage, to further elaborate on their ideas and have more discussion with coaches, and receive feedback to refine their ideas; and institutionalize Ideathon outputs by installing a mechanism for coordination, networking, and exchanging ideas between Arab countries.

INTRODUCTION



1.1. PARTNERSHIP FOR INNOVATION

Remarkably, Kuwait is achieving progress in many international indicators, e.g., Kuwait has advanced by eight places to reach the 46th rank out of 141 countries in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) 2019 based on the report issued by the World Economic Forum (WEF), as compared to its 54th rank in GCI 2018 out of 140 countries (Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, 2019). Kuwait is one of the world's top 10 improvers amongst 190 economies in the World Bank Group's Ease of Doing Business 2020 study due to a comprehensive reform program. These improvements align with New Kuwait Vision 2035 (The World Bank, 2019).

Steadily, Kuwait approaches its vision 2035 by launching The Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP) III, a unified direction intended to transform Kuwait into a financial, cultural, and institutional leader in the region. It presents a consolidated strategy towards a prosperous and sustainable future and sets its long-term development priorities. The KNDP comprises five themes and seven pillars. Each pillar has strategic programs and projects designed to significantly impact achieving the New Kuwait vision. Effective Public Administration is a key pillar in the KNDP; it aims to reform administrative and bureaucratic practices to reinforce transparency, accountability, and government efficiency (New Kuwait , 2020).

Since April 2020, UNDP-Kuwait has been working in partnership with the GSSCPD and other stakeholders to implement a series of activities to support efforts to control the pandemic and respond to its impact in some sectors. Among other activities, UNDP and GSSCPD jointly launched #Q8vsCOVID19 Hackathon Series to introduce innovative solutions to Covid-19 related challenges, which were implemented in line with UNDP Policy on the Management of Innovation Challenges and technical support from Regional Hub - UNDP in the Arab States. The first Hackathon aimed to challenge local SMEs to introduce new and innovative business approaches to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic locally. The purpose of the Hackathon has been to create robust, resilient, and sustainable ideas for Kuwait.

The Hackathon's positive results inspired a partnership between UNDP, GSSCPD, and The World Bank to implement a Regional Ideathon as a part of the Hackathon series. The Ideathon has targeted participants and challenged teams from the Arab Region to identify specific challenges facing public sector institutions and propose innovative ideas for solutions that could support public sector to adapt to the "New Normal" effectively and efficiently.

1.2. REPORT METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

Given UNDP's vision to enhance knowledge management and experiences exchange to support achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNDP-Kuwait planned to produce a forward-looking perspective to discuss the Ideathon methodology and its implications for enhancing innovation in the public sector. The purpose of the report is to examine the following questions:

- What have been the main challenges public institutions in the Arab Region have faced during the pandemic and in the “New Normal” that have affected the institutional and staff productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness?
- What efforts have been taken by public sector institutions to address these challenges?
- How could the ideas generated from the Ideathon Innovation Challenge tackle these challenges and foster productivity, effectiveness & efficiency of public sector institutions in crises and beyond?

The main objectives of the report are:

- Provide lessons learned from the pandemic period that could help share the knowledge generated from the pandemic experience on how public sector institutions faced the pandemic's challenges, maintaining their productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- Provide a clear idea on entry points and gaps that could be utilized by public administration development agencies to provide agile support during this crisis or in the future.
- Shed light on the quality ideas generated by the Ideathon Innovation Challenge, and present how the ideas could benefit the productivity of public sector institutions during the crises and beyond.

The report research methodology relies on three primary sources of data collection. Firstly, a review of the international literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the public sector's performance and the relevant lessons learned could be drawn to study the public sector's current status in the Arab region. The literature review outlines a scientific framework to identify the dimensions taken into account when conducting the analysis. Secondly, the qualitative analysis of the webinars recordings where representatives from the public sector in different Arab countries elaborated on the challenges their institutions are facing, Ideathon participants' data, and the Ideathon quality innovative proposals. Thirdly, conducting online surveys to collect data from the Ideathon teams "Competitors - Coaches, Evaluators, and Organizers". The survey forms were distributed online to all teams, and the response rate was significant (Table 1).

TABLE 1. SURVEY SAMPLE SIZE AND RESPONSE RATE

Source	Total number	Responses	%
Ideathon Teams (submitted proposals)	76	26	34%
Coaching Team	27	16	59%
Evaluation Team	17	12	71%
Organizers	22	7	32%

Subsequently, four online follow-up interviews with senior government officials from Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, and Morocco were conducted to elicit further data on the public sector's challenges (Annex 1). The webinar recordings and interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted; each theme was examined to understand participants' perceptions and insights of the Ideathon process.

In addition to the executive summary and the introduction, the report comprises eight sections: the Effect of COVID-19 on the public sector; public sector in the Arab Region; Arab Region Ideathon; effects of Ideathon competition on public sector innovation; Arab public sector challenges during COVID-19 crisis; Ideathon innovative solutions for public sector challenges; Ideathon quality ideas codification; and findings & recommendations.

THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In general terms, the public sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services. Undoubtedly, public service is the engine of effective governance delivery in the world economy; governments worldwide cannot function well without the enabling structures of public administration to deliver on their mandate to meet citizens' basic welfare needs (Jackson, 2020, pp. 1-2; The Institute of Internal Auditors, 2011, p. 3; and Asian Productivity Organization, 2017, p. 7).

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak was an event so unprecedented that governments, with few exceptions, had no benchmark or previous experience to count on (OECD, Public Administration: Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020, p. 3). It has governments at all levels operating in a context of radical uncertainty. It impacts highly heterogeneous, with significant implications for crisis management and policy responses (OECD, The territorial impact of COVID-19: Managing the crisis across levels of government, 2020, p. 1). In 2020, the pandemic affected almost all countries and had a massive impact on health systems and a devastating effect on the global economy and societies (International Labour Organization, 2020, p. 1). When COVID-19 hit, many public sector agencies had to drastically change their operations overnight (Insight, 2020, pp. 5, 9). Therefore, governments strived to maintain public services operating to the extent of their capacity to provide them remotely, but many have reduced some operations to keep employees safe (International Labour Organization, 2020, p. 1). Most notably, COVID-19 has acted as an accelerator for digital transformation in public service delivery (Agostino, Arnaboldi, & Lema, 2020, p. 3).

There are seven emerging legacies as a result of COVID-19 effects on the public sector.

- 1) The pandemic has permanently altered how governments and their agencies view resilience for their organizations and the nation-state.
- 2) Governments encounter higher debt after a shock to public finances.
- 3) The COVID-19 crisis has amplified inequalities.
- 4) The COVID-19 pandemic has created a high-pressure environment where the lines between government agencies and between the public and other sectors have blurred in the public interest.
- 5) The lockdown has accelerated collaborative technologies.
- 6) Civil society has been rebooted, and citizen behavior may change.
- 7) In many public bodies, the pandemic has surfaced ideas for longer-term change that would make them more resilient, effective, and able to add value (Roddis & OBE, 2020).

Subsequently, the public sector worldwide adopted new features to cope with the emerging situation to ensure public service continuity. Public servants, who used to operate in routine,

predictable, and regulated systems, had to deploy quick thinking, instant creativity, and innovation to counter the destruction caused by the pandemic in service delivery, particularly in critical areas such as healthcare (UN/DESA, 2020). Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis holds much potential to accelerate the digital transformation in many sectors, e.g., education and health. Digitalization is also a potentially powerful tool to make the government more open and participative. So-called "e-Democracy" has become even more relevant in the context of COVID-19, with many countries moving to allow parliaments, municipal and regional councils to debate and vote online (Mello & Ter-Minassian, 2020, pp. 10-12).

While leaders across the public sector remain focused on the immediate COVID-19 threat, they are increasingly mindful of its longer-term implications, and for some, the crisis could be an inflection point for their agency. International literature reveals that the public sector must pay attention to developing the capacities of the public service and public servants; institutionalize early warning, emergency planning, preparedness, and quick response in the public service; network, collaborate, share and learn from successful practices and mistakes to build better and more effective public services for future pandemics and crisis; sustain the development of responsible, responsive, accountable and people-focused leadership in public sector institutions. Conclusively, the COVID-19 situation is unique and requires tough policy choices for managing the public sector. Nonetheless, COVID-19 recovery could be seen as an opportunity to lay institutional foundations for sustainable development through information-sharing and a whole-of-society approach (United Nations, 2020, p. 27; UN/DESA, 2020; and World Bank, 2020, p. 3)

PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE ARAB REGION

The scope and definition of public administration vary from one country to another, depending on the national legislation's definition. In most states within the Arab region, this definition applies to the employees in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the national government and the employees within the regional and local administration (Nasser, 2018, p. 167). However, the public sector presents a large share of the economy in most Arab countries, either directly or through state-owned enterprises, particularly in the oil and gas industry (World Economic Forum, The Arab World Competitiveness Report, 2018, p. 11).

The Arab region, similar to the rest of the countries, is struggling with a deteriorating economic outlook and responding with emergency projects to relieve health and social protection systems, including partial financial support to the private sector. Despite a number of pre-existing fragile contexts in the region, some Arab governments have dealt proactively and have been rigorous and responsive. Several priorities emerge for the Arab Region to respond to the pandemic, e.g., seize the opportunity to reform institutions; prioritize human rights, the rule of law and more effective, responsive, accountable public institutions that increase citizen trust, in line with the 2030 Agenda (United Nations, Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arab Region, An Opportunity to Build Back Better, 2020, p. 5). Distinctly, increased social and economic distress and an impending health crisis should lead Arab governments' policy action to ensure a swift response to mitigate the pandemic's impact using a comprehensive and inclusive approach that leaves no one behind (ESCWA, 2020, p. 5).

The analysis of a sample of international indices outlines the public sector's current status in the Arab region. Most Arab countries have low international ranking in the E- government Index, the Global Competitiveness Index, and the Doing business index (Table 2).

TABLE 2. SAMPLE INTERNATIONAL INDICES ANALYSIS

Country	2020 UN E-government survey (No of countries: 193)	The Global Competitiveness Report 2019 (No of countries: 141)	Doing Business 2020 (No of countries: 190)
United Arab Emirates	21	25	16
Bahrain	38	45	43
Saudi Arabia	43	36	62
Oman	50	53	68
Qatar	66	29	77
Tunisia	91	87	78
Morocco	106	75	53
Egypt	111	93	114
Jordan	117	70	75
Lebanon	127	88	143
Kuwait	46	46	83

Moreover, the Global Knowledge Index and the Global Innovation Index analysis refers to the modesty of knowledge management in most Arab countries (Figure 1). Hence, there is an excessive need to support initiatives that would support the innovation and knowledge management system.

SDGs are the world's shared goals for sustainable development, and COVID-19 makes them more relevant than ever (Sachs, Schmidt-Traub, Kroll, Lafortune, Fuller, & Woelm, 2020, p. 2). Effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions are essential to achieving the SDGs. Without public administration modernization and transformation to adapt to today's needs, realizing a better future for all will be impossible (Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Nasser, 2018, p. 156). The SDGs index 2020 shows that most Arab countries' progress is not up to expectations and have a low rank in the SDGs global index. Similarly, reviewing the SDG 16, which includes features related to the public sector, indicates the stagnation of progress except for three countries, Jordan, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, making moderate progress.

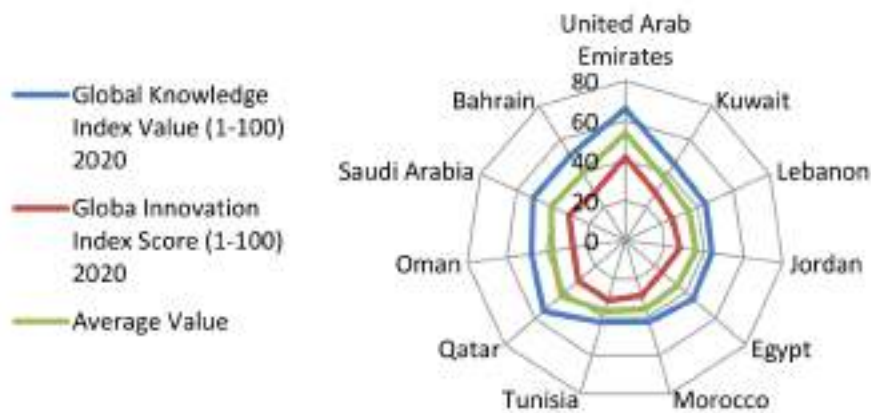


FIGURE 1. THE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE INDEX AND THE GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX VALUE ANALYSIS

ARAB REGION IDEATHON

The Ideathon came the 2nd in the Hackathon Series to challenge teams from the Arab Region to identify specific challenges facing public sector entities and propose innovative ideas for solutions that can adapt to the "New Normal" efficiently and effectively. Teams were encouraged to think of solutions that improve collaboration, optimize interactive engagement, breakdown organizational silos, and promote knowledge sharing within and across organizations, which can eventually be institutionalized into regular work settings. Regional Hub - UNDP in the Arab States, supported the implementation of the Regional Ideathon significantly since its inception, through the design of the Ideathon schedules, developing business model templates, design thinking, etc.

The Ideathon has been implemented in seven stages, starting from September 12th to October 5th, 2020 (Figure 2). Due to the mourning period that the State of Kuwait went through after the passing away of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, the Emir of the country, the award ceremony was held in December 2020.

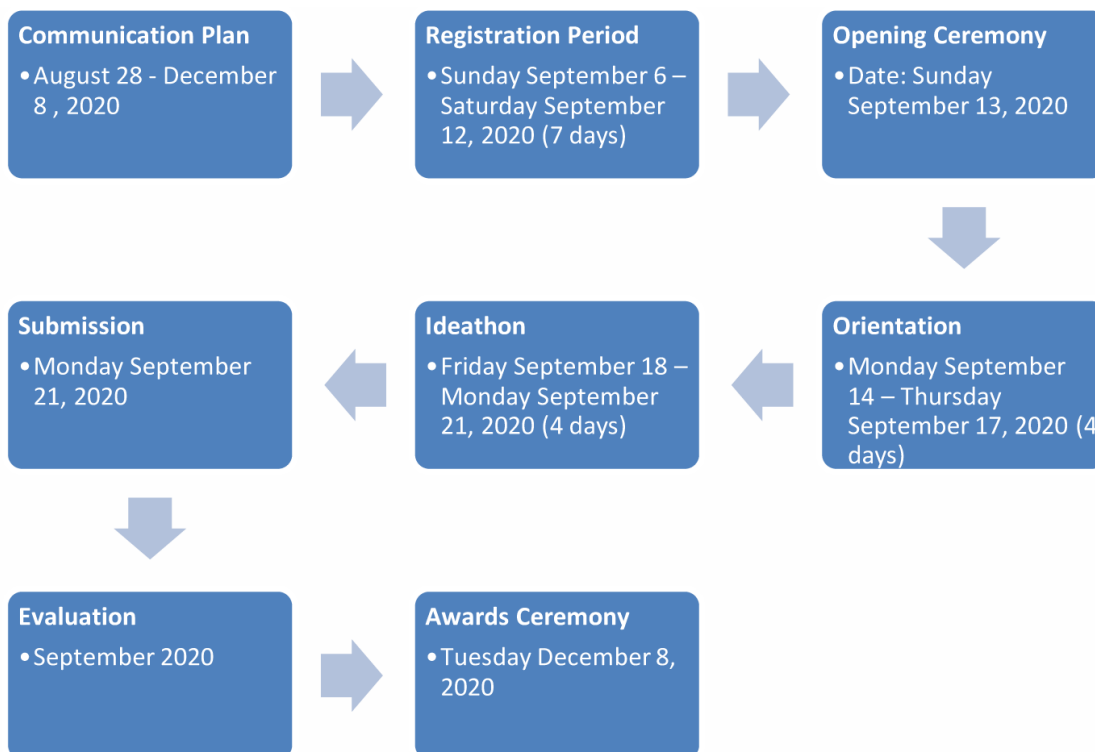


FIGURE 2. THE IDEATHON IMPLEMENTATION STAGES

1.1. IDEATHON COMMUNICATION PLAN

The Ideathon organizers initiated a communication plan to outreach Arab region residents "Innovators, Entrepreneurs, Public institution employees". The plan aims to maximize awareness of the Ideathon across the Arab region, provide necessary updates reflecting the different stages of the Ideathon, and desirably present the Ideathon.

The communication plan included several types of media content (social media posts, articles, videos, etc.) that must be created for which days from the start of the Ideathon and disseminated via communication channels. Nonetheless, it was flexible in responding to the developments of implementation process. The communication plan was mainly carried out by UNDP across the Arab region, World Bank, and GSSCPD. The communication plan used a variety of methods to convey messages effectively as follows:

- Social media posts.
- Reaching out to national media outlets
- Contacting public institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to spread information regarding the Ideathon.
- Contacting innovation sectors within UNDP and partnering organizations to spread Ideathon information to their innovator's networks.
- Reaching out to sister organizations in the relevant countries to use their media resources to spread the news of the Ideathon.
- Agree on the specific hashtags used when posting about the Ideathon and encouraging partner and supporting organizations to use them whenever posting any material regarding the Ideathon.
- Write press releases/articles, and post them on the Ideathon websites, post a link on social media platforms, and send them to national media outlets.
- Informal dissemination of the Ideathon (e.g., encouraging staff to send broadcasts of the Ideathon registration via WhatsApp groups; retweeting and liking posts related to the competition via their own Twitter/Facebook accounts).

1.2. IDEATHON TEAMS

The Ideathon targeted participants residing in Arab countries, who meet the competition criteria, e.g., teams should comprise 3-7 members; living in one of the Arab States; at least one team member is a public sector employee, and at least one member holds one of the Arab countries' nationality. The Ideathon encouraged teams to partner with other Arab nationals to join their team.

Brightly, Ideathon has enjoyed most Arab countries' active participation; 209 teams consisting of 824 members from 18 Arab countries registered at the initiation stage.

“
*“Our participation in Ideathon was very wonderful.
 It added a lot to us, and we hope to see more
 participation from different Arab countries
 in the future”*
 Team 56 Yemen
 Ideathon 2nd Place winner

BOX 1. A QUOTE FROM IDEATHON
 TEAM SURVEY

The screening process concluded that 144 teams comprised of 583 members from 17 countries are qualified to proceed on the Ideathon (Figure 3 and Table 3).



FIGURE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF THE IDEATHON TEAMS BASED ON COUNTRIES

TABLE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF IDEATHON TEAMS BASED ON COUNTRIES

Country	Registered teams	Registered team members	Qualified teams	Qualified team members
Algeria	1	3	1	3
Bahrain	2	11	2	11
Egypt	23	80	17	60
Iraq	3	9	3	9
Jordan	7	23	1	4
Kuwait	11	39	8	28
Lebanon	8	30	5	20
Libya	2	8	2	8
Morocco	2	8	1	4
Oman	4	16	4	16
Palestine	13	62	8	38
Saudi Arabia	2	8	2	8
Somalia	3	12	2	9
Sudan	2	8	1	5
Syria	89	340	64	239
Tunisia	4	15	3	12
UAE	2	8	0	0
Yemen	4	16	3	12
Multinational	27	128	17	79
Total	209	824	144	565

The table shows that teams from 18 out of 22 Arab countries (82%) participated in the Ideathon, signposting the Arab youth and professionals' enthusiasm to participate in such events. The participation level reflects emerging commitments amongst youth and professionals to effectively engage in the public sector development process, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth noting that teams from Arab countries encountering internal conflicts and civil unrest, such as Syria, Yemen, and Libya have engaged in the process.

It is also noticeable that joint teams consist of cadres from more than one Arab country (13 countries) have been formed, whether to present proposals related to a specific country or applicable in more than one country (Figure 4).

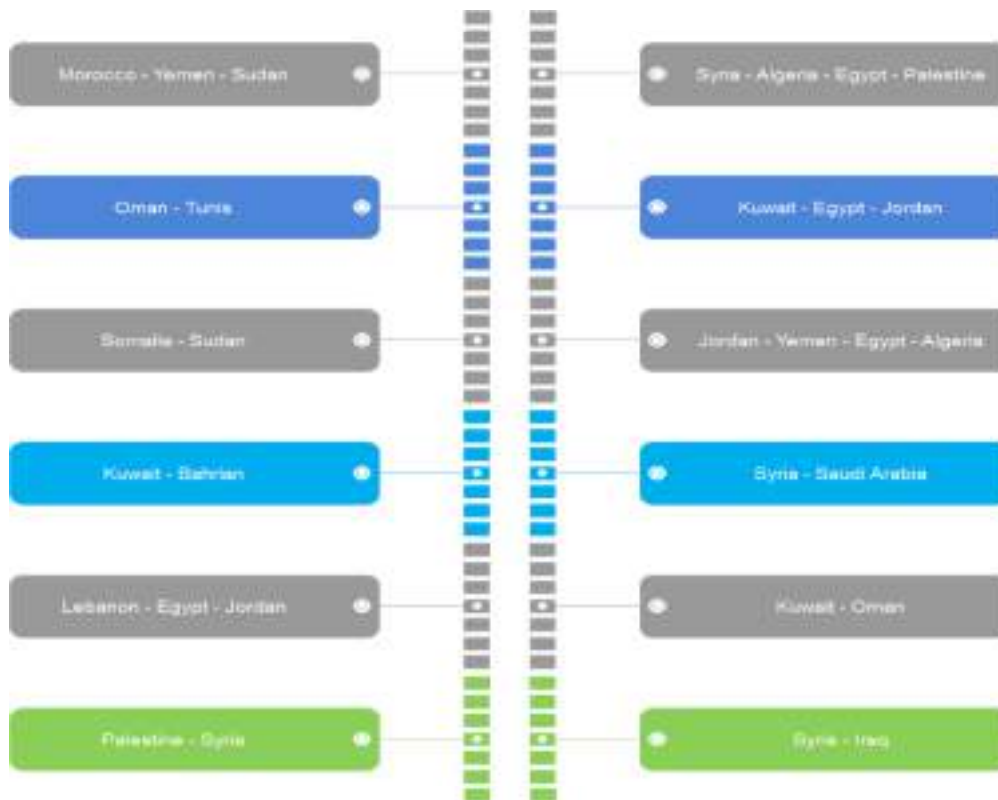


FIGURE 4. IDEATHON MIXED TEAMS NATIONALITIES

The Ideathon initiative has reached several Arab countries; however, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and Kuwait are at the forefront of the countries with teams registered in the competition. After webinars and skills workshops, 77 teams from 16 Arab countries submitted innovative proposals that tackled public sector challenges (Figure 5).

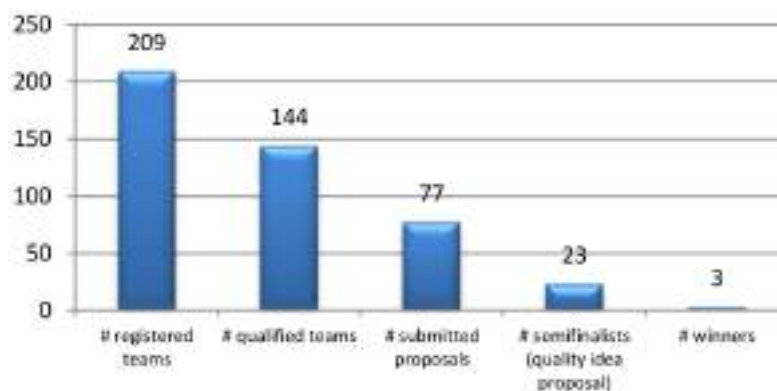


FIGURE 5. NUMBER OF TEAMS SUBMITTED INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS

1.3. IDEATHON TEAMS BACKGROUND

The Ideathon teams' background and experiences varied, the mixed experience of the public and private sectors, representing the majority, then the public and private sector (Figure 6).

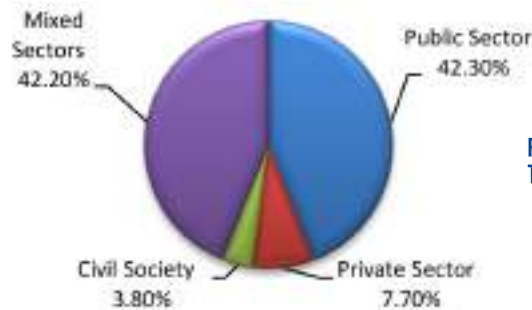


FIGURE 6. IDEATHON TEAM BACKGROUND

The teams got introduced to the Ideathon competition through multiple means, most notably social media in various forms, the UNDP website, and other people. The Ideathon team's survey shows that passion for developing the government sector came at the top of the motives for participation in the competition; then, learn a new experience; and the enthusiasm to work in a team (Figure 7). Moreover, some participants pointed out that Ideathon is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the work culture in international organizations, which, in turn, prepares them to work in such organizations in the future. In reality, UNDP, The World Bank, and Kuwait -GSSCPD sponsorship of the Ideathon encouraged teams to participate effectively.

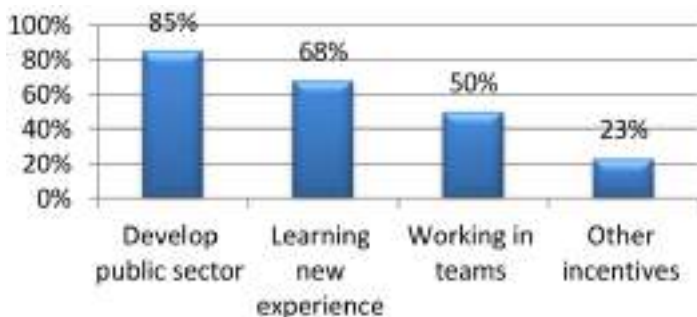


FIGURE 7. IDEATHON TEAMS MOTIVE FOR PARTICIPATION

4.4. IDEATHON ORGANIZATION AND PLATFORM

A team was formed to organize the competition, consisting of 22 staff members from UNDP -Kuwait, UNDP Regional Hub, and Kuwait Public Policy Center. The organizing team managed the competition's administrative processes exceptionally, contributed impressively to the communication processes with teams, and facilitated constructive interaction between the participants and the coaching team. However, according to the organizers survey, the organization process could be improved by seeking opportunities to do more public sector outreach, and more preparation and scheduling would benefit all those involved "organizers, participants, judges, & Coaches".

BOX 2. A QUOTE FROM ORGANIZERS TEAM SURVEY

“Overall, the Ideathon experience was phenomenal. The feedback I received from participating teams, coaches, & judges is entirely positive. The primary comment I have heard from participants (teams that didn't win or make it to the semi-finals) is that they were glad to be part of such an event and that the amount of information and skills gained is very valuable if it weren't for the Ideathon, they wouldn't have been exposed to such content. Hearing this comment makes the organization of the event worth it. This is how the seed for positive change is planted ”

Maram Almutairi
 Ideathon Organizer Team
 Technical Associate - UNDP Kuwait

The Ideathon organization team used the website platform of the 1st Hackathon (<https://www.q8vsCovid19.org>), which has all details related to the Ideathon. UNDP- Kuwait created a virtual meeting spot on Slack to keep in line with social distancing rules and have open channels with coaches/organizers and access to real-time coaching/support. The Zoom application was used for the opening ceremony and meetings between organizers, coaches, and participants for the duration of the Ideathon. As well, Slack software was the primary method of communication.

1.5.IDEATHON OPENING CEREMONY AND ORIENTATION

The Opening ceremony was organized virtually via Zoom. Link of the meeting room was shared with the partners, representatives, selected media outlets, and all registered participants. The orientation period kicked off the Ideathon and introduced the agenda. It included a series of webinars through which selected civil servants from middle management level in public institutions from Palestine; Kuwait; Lebanon; Libya; Jordan; Egypt; and Morocco presented the challenges their institution and its staff are facing during the COVID-19 lockdown and affected the productivity and effectiveness of their agencies to function and be productive (Annex 2). During the orientation period, the participants were introduced to the selection criteria and submission rules.

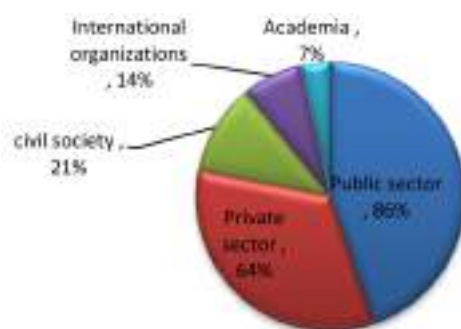


FIGURE 8 . COACHING TEAM BACKGROUND

In parallel with the webinars, four skills workshops have been facilitated to introduce teams to the Mural, Slack, and Coaches, detailed program and expected outcome; behavioral insight principles and experimentation; problem definition and ideation techniques; and human-centered design mindset & observation methodologies. Four optional zoom coaching / capacity building and mentoring sessions were offered to participants for clarifications and assistance.

The skills workshops explained Design Thinking as a problem-solving technique and a human-centered innovation, as it puts people we design for at the center of the process and invites them to co-create solutions. The Design Thinking five-step process: Observation, Ideation, Prototyping, Testing, and Implementation were thoroughly discussed in the sessions. Moreover, The Organizational Behavior Approach was introduced to the Ideathon teams, as it brings psychological, social, and contextual explanations of human behavior to policy design and provides innovative, complementary, and usually inexpensive solutions for policy improvement. The approach aims to identify potential bottlenecks in existing systems and service delivery mechanisms by emphasizing design details.

The orientation sessions, skills workshops, and technical support sessions were useful for the Ideathon process, as the terminologies were standardized among all parties. Further, teams learned new methodologies and mechanisms associated with practical applications that enabled them to explore challenges and formulate innovative proposals accordingly (Annex 3).

1.6.COACHING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Technical support and guidance to teams were an asset for the Ideathon. The Coaching team consolidated 27 experts, and each expert mentored an average of 3 teams. The Coaching team was multidisciplinary, consisting of advisors from various backgrounds, ranging from innovation advisors, business administration, science, and public administration (Figure 8).

The Coaches have vast experience in many areas "Public sector, Private sector, Civil Society, and International organizations", They are quite aware of the public sector in the Arab region. This background deepens the Ideathon process, as Coaches guided the teams and provided them with insights to build their ideas professionally.

The coach's role was not to provide teams with solutions but to facilitate design thinking, provide potential examples, invigorate conversations & discussions amongst participating team members to arrive at a set of solutions. The Coaches were available to participants via Slack (and Zoom per the participants' meeting request) to help answer questions and guide thinking. Additionally, Coaches were available on Zoom through help sessions where all participants were invited to ask questions and clarify (Annex 4).



BOX 3. A QUOTE FROM COACHING TEAM SURVEY

Remarkably, the coaching process contributed to the Ideathon competing team's capacity building. The Coaching team expressed their satisfaction with the team's performance and response to the mentoring process; nevertheless, the coaching process value would be maximized in the future through:

- Conducting more orientation sessions for Coaches to know each other more and develop organizational intelligence.
- More time for preparations, clarity by organizers on objectives and deliverables.
- Foster engagement of media; publicity at the national level; key figures being senior policymaker involved in the national response to COVID-19 to play a leadership role and local mentor, would facilitate bringing the outcome of projects to support emerging initiatives and benefit the country team (s) with lasting partnerships.
- Extend the time for coaching with suitable materials. Perhaps, provide Online training to the participants. Following the online training, the participants will be better equipped to join new competitions across the region.
- Coaching would have been far more effective if teams had not been worried about putting together an "idea" and thereby rushing the problem structuring more than learning from the whole exercise.
- Categorizing Coaches and linking them to teams based on interest and niche of expertise is more efficient and leaves the space to contact all Coaches irrespective of their background, as practiced in the current Ideathon.

1.7. INNOVATIVE PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Ideathon teams used several sources to get in touch with the public sector challenges, e.g., field experience, personal observations, and consultation with officials. The Ideathon team survey reveals that some teams carried out a field study and reviewed the literature to deepen their understanding of the selected public sector challenge, determine its causes, and then suggest the appropriate innovative approach (Figure 9).

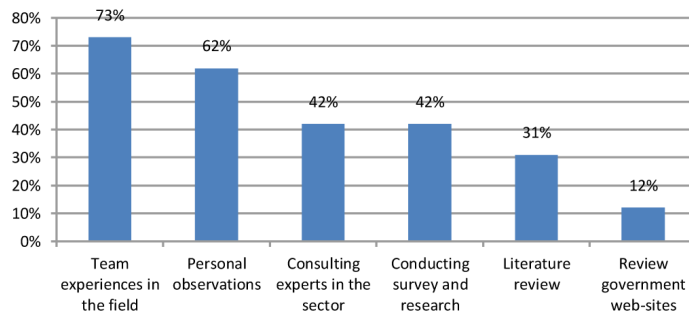


FIGURE 9. PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGE IDENTIFICATION SOURCES

Specific teams received assistance from the public sector departments during the preparation of their proposals. Yet, the degree of received support varied from one country to another. Hence, it is crucial to outreach public sector officials to increase their awareness and recognition of innovation importance to develop public sector capacity. On the other hand, teams encountered some challenges while developing their proposals, inter-alia lack of information, modest personal expertise, weak cooperation from public sector officials, and time limitation.

1.8. INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS SUBMISSION

The innovative proposal submission was a presentation in PPT or PDF format on a predefined template. One proposal was allowed per team. Participants were encouraged to consider the selection criteria when developing the presentation. The template steered participants to explain better their ideas and solutions to the panel of judges. Using charts and diagrams were encouraged to increase the quality of the submission. The qualified teams submitted 77 innovative proposals in various sectors. The proposals focused on education, development, automation of government services, environment and food security (Figure 10).

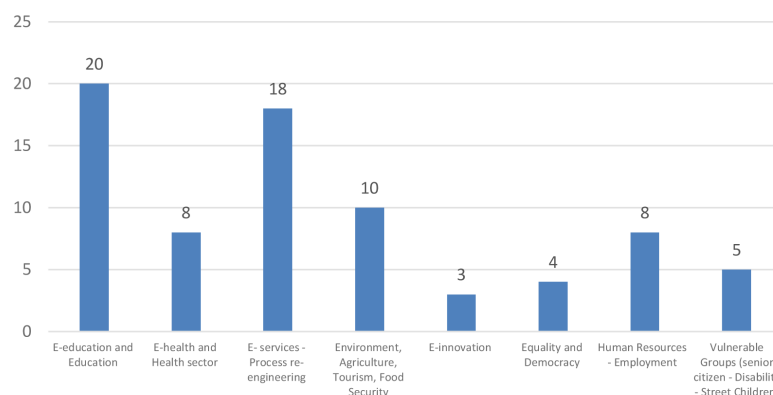


FIGURE 10. CLASSIFICATION OF INNOVATIVE PROPOSAL BASED ON SECTOR

Over-all, types of proposals and sector focus varied between teams. Nonetheless, the number of Syrian teams who submitted proposals is at the forefront, and then country mixed teams and Egypt (Figure 11).

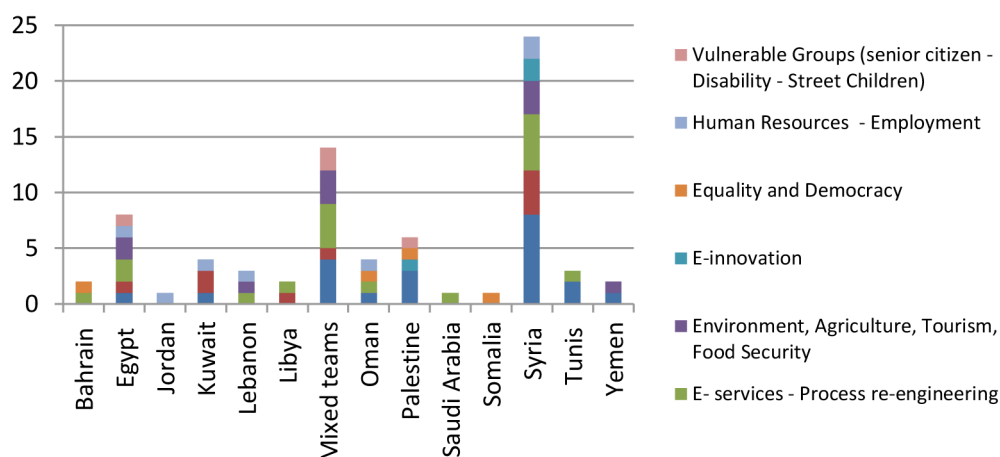


FIGURE 11. CLASSIFICATION OF INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS ACCORDING TO COUNTRY AND SECTOR

1.9.EVALUATION AND PANEL OF JUDGES

The team of panelists was multidisciplinary and included bilingual. It comprised advisors from diverse institutions and civil servants from Arab countries. The majority of the panelists were from UNDP staff (51%-49%), as per the Innovation Challenge Policy. The evaluators' team has extensive experience in the public and private sectors, civil society organizations, and the academic field (Figure 12). They also have in-depth knowledge of many Arab countries, which has effectively contributed to the proposals' rational assessment. Upon submission of presentations, the judges have met to review and discuss them and begin scoring based on the evaluation criteria (Annex 5 and Annex 6).

“
“It has been a pleasure of mine to be part of the evaluation. It has been informative and reinforces my conviction that it is tie to change and for public sector to open up to what in many cases ar dynamic sectors of society (youth, private sector, NGOs, academia etc...)”
 Osama Matri
 Evaluation Team Member
 Project Management Specialist at UNDP Libya
 ”

BOX 4. A QUOTE FROM EVALUATION TEAM SURVEY

The evaluation team addressed their satisfaction with the quality of Ideathon team proposals (Figure 13). Nevertheless, evaluators observed that many proposals centered on applying IT technologies, especially in education and remote work. While this is understandable within the COVID-19 emerging situation, it seems to miss many other ways where innovation is not strictly tied to digitalization. There are great humanitarian, environmental, social, and other services that can be improved. The innovation approach could also provide nontraditional solutions to improve business processes and other management challenges, e.g., human resource capacity, organizational culture, behavior change etc.

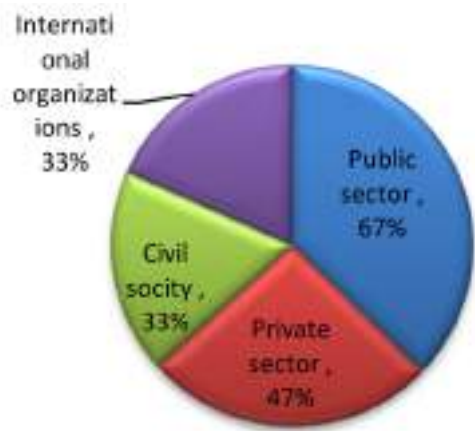


FIGURE 12. THE EVALUATION TEAM BACKGROUND

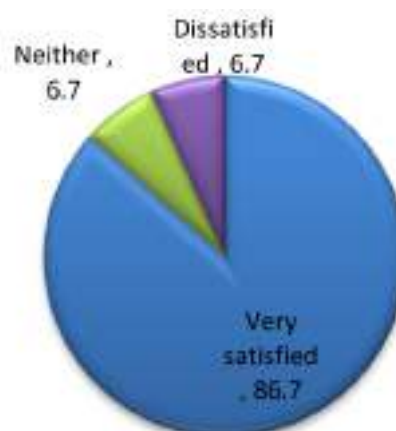


FIGURE 13. LEVEL OF EVALUATORS SATISFACTION WITH PROPOSALS QUALITY

However, there were many good and well-structured proposals and quite a bit of potential. Yet, there is a need to encourage young people to be engaged and share their ideas and potential solutions to the problems they face in their home countries and the region. The screening process revealed that 53% of the qualified teams submitted proposals; meanwhile, 38% of the submitted proposals reached the semi-final stage (Figure 14). According to the Ideathon policy, the panelist announces the top-three ranked proposals as prize winners as follows:

- 1st place, Team 15, The Government Talent Cloud, Bahrain.
- 2nd place, Team 56, The On-Line Education Without Access Internet, Yemen.
- 3rd place, Team 85, Digital Platform for Cross-hiring Between the Public and Private Sectors, Lebanon.

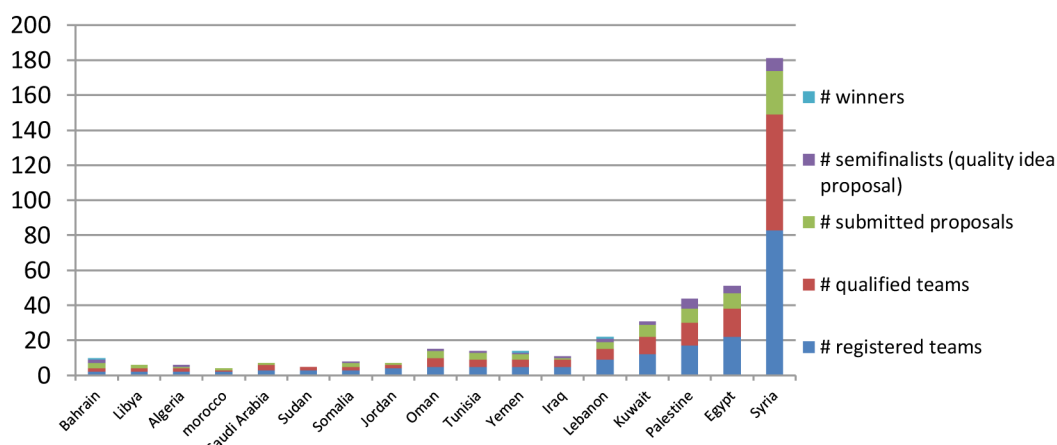


FIGURE 14. DISTRIBUTION OF PROPOSALS AND COUNTRIES

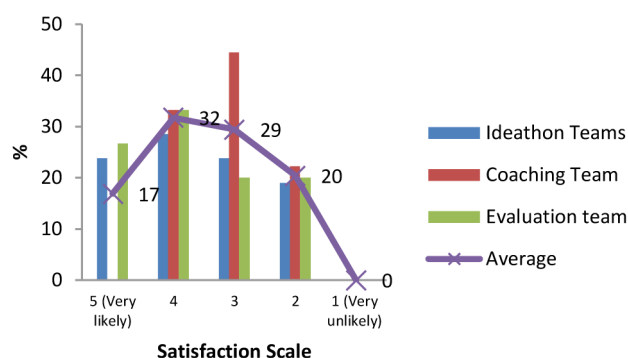
1.10. AWARDS CEREMONY

The Ideathon organization held an award distribution ceremony on Tuesday, December 8th, 2020, from 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm. At the awards ceremony, eminent speakers include the Secretary-General of GSSCPD, Director of UNDP Regional Hub for the Arab States, and The World Bank Regional Director for GCC Countries. UNDP Regional Hub members were also invited. A video to summarize the Ideathon journey was played. The three winning teams had the opportunity to do a brief presentation about their ideas. The 1st winning team received a cash prize of USD 15,000, the 2nd winning team USD 10,000, and the 3rd winning team USD 7,000.

EFFECTS OF IDEATHON COMPETITION ON PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION

The Ideathon initiative is perceived positively by Ideathon teams, Coaches, and Evaluators as a means to improve innovation in the public sector and its capacity to cope with the COVID-19 crisis (Figure 15). Furthermore, public sector officials' engagement in the event through introductory sessions and webinars draw their attention to the importance of innovation to the public sector. More importantly, the public sector now - in light of COVID-19 is seeking advice that can help manage the crisis. The Ideathon is beneficial for creativity, which one aspect, but adoption by the public sector is essential.

FIGURE 15. IDEATHON CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION



The competition brings innovative solutions, but the challenge is to ensure the solutions are adopted to create impacts. The innovation tools and methods provided in the Ideathon are precisely what all 21st - century governments need; nonetheless, the outcomes should be mandated for further exploration and execution. The Ideathon brought a range of innovative ideas, which is the start, but many will see the light if funding is matched, and political will is there.

One of the positive effects of the Ideathon is creating motivation among the teams to continue adopting innovative ideas. The Ideathon team survey showed that most of the teams would continue developing the proposed concept, ensuring that it is communicated to officials, and searching for funding sources.

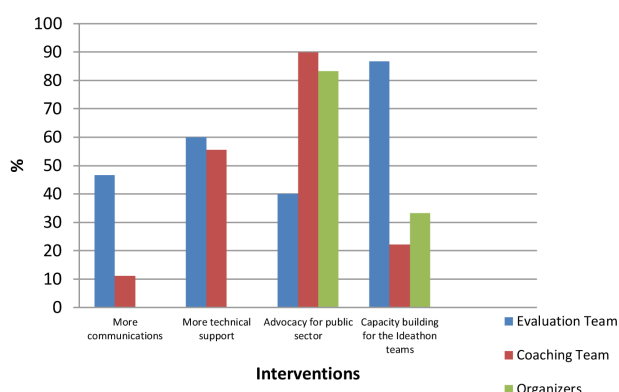


FIGURE 16. DIFFERENT TEAMS POINT OF VIEW TO IMPROVE IDEATHON

However, the teams suggested some recommendations for the Ideathon replication, e.g., additional outreach for the public sector to get their support for teams before and after the Ideathon; more technical support might be provided to teams to sharpen their understanding of the process and to get focused (Figure 16).

ARAB PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

The public sector in Arab countries experiences several challenges due to the COVID-19 eventualities, consistent with the rest of the world. The report draws on the literature review; the qualitative analysis of webinar recordings, analysis of surveys distributed to various teams; and in-depth online interviews with experts and officials in the public sector in Arab countries to extract the most critical challenges the public sector faces during COVID-19 crisis. The analysis concluded that the common challenges are as follows:

- **Continuity and timely service delivery.** Particularly health, education, transportation, and economic adjustments. COVID-19 had exacerbated the governance deficit with the pandemic overwhelming health systems' impact and seriously undermined the ability to organize and mobilize a nationwide response.
- **Inactive Strategic planning processes.** The public sector experiences an unexpected change in the planning process, as the inputs to the planning processes did not consider the developments imposed by the COVID-19 uncertainty. Hence, it became imperative for the various government agencies to reformulate their priorities in a short time. Even in countries with a contingency plan, it did not fully recover, as the effects of the COVID-19 are not predictable yet. Equally, the time stress did not enable the various government agencies to evaluate the options made during the crisis to determine the feasibility of continuing or withdrawing them. Therefore, the public sector in the Arab countries must develop non-traditional sensing and planning mechanisms to cope with emergency conditions that may cause crises similar to the future's COVID-19 turmoil.
- **The bureaucratic burden and lack of productivity.** Most public sectors in Arab countries have inherited complex bureaucratic systems, resulting in lengthy and complicated procedures and low productivity. Dealing with the COVID-19 crisis requires an extraordinary capacity to manage the service's provision in such an exceptional situation. Therefore, the public sector should pursue a new approach to facilitate service delivery and reinvent the procedures. Many Arab countries, underway to re-engineer administrative processes to enhance service delivery efficiency and effectiveness. These initiatives are still in the preliminary stage and must be accelerated to support the public sector to overcome the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Digital transformation stress.** Due to the measures taken by most countries, including the Arab countries, whether by partial or complete lockdown, public sector faced a fundamental challenge, to continue providing vital services to citizens. Consequently, many countries decided to provide most of the services online. In this context, government institutions in the Arab countries faced several immediate challenges resulted from rapidly shifting to online service provision and remote work in terms of infrastructure readiness; weak IT skills, absence of synergy between institutions; and importantly, a large segment of citizens lack skills, awareness, and facilities to access online public services.
- **Low human capital productivity.** Public sector human resources are not prepared to deal with emerging work conditions during the crisis in many Arab countries. During the pandemic, workers' size has been reduced by 30% in some countries as a precautionary and preventive measure. Hence, public sector tackled difficulties in coordination between workers at different

administrative levels. In addition to that, monitoring employees working from home, evaluating their performance, and applying a proper incentive scheme are emerging considerations for public sector management. Also, the difficulties in communicating with different administrative levels, given the need to involve workers in decisions making process to ensure their understanding of the exceptional situation the country is going through, and then provide effective mechanisms to address the crisis and its repercussions.

- **Outdated legislation framework.** Many Arab countries have taken adequate measures to develop public sector institutions, including digital transformation. Yet, the legislative system has not been equally developed. Therefore, a dilemma arose concerning the legal cover for operations intended to proceed electronically, e.g., electronic signature, electronic payment, and legislation related to the possibility of conducting checks and audits electronically.
- **Lack of synergy between public sector agencies.** Most public sector institutions work in silos and not willing to share information or knowledge with other institutions. COVID-19 crisis requires a high degree of harmony between these institutions, principally since most immediate actions need inputs from different stakeholders to better cope with the emergency.
- **Insufficient crisis management capacity.** Crisis management is one of the primary responsibilities in the government agencies' mandate. Nonetheless, crisis management capability varies among Arab countries and has not taken appropriate attention to ensure different sectors' ability to deal with emerging situations. Although many Arab countries have agencies and committees at the national level to manage crises and disasters, these entities' readiness needs to be revisited. Some Arab countries, as in the case of Syria, Libya, and Yemen, face specific circumstances in dealing with the internal conflicts that constitute a multiplier effect on public administration bodies.
- **Weak innovation and knowledge management.** Exceptional situations need outstanding management. As indicated in a previous part of this report, the level of innovation and knowledge management in most Arab countries is low, which is unavoidably impeded in the public sector. In many Arab countries, the public sector has a fragile infrastructure and lack of institutional culture necessary to flourish innovation.

IDEATHON INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGES

Identifying challenges is the easy part and can be found in many public sector documents and reports. The main issue is identifying appropriate innovative solutions and then translating those into real policies with impact. The Ideathon initiative challenges the traditional way of operating services and helps accelerate creative thinking about "whole of society" approaches to existing and emerging challenges by fostering bottom-up solutions instead of the traditional top-down approach in addressing new challenges or issues. Many Arab countries are yet to catch up to this transformation in development thinking. The ideas submitted to the this Ideathon competition tackled the public sector's challenges during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. It also dealt with overcoming the current public sector performance issues represented by bureaucratic complications and the lack of capabilities, whether in infrastructure or human resources.

Most innovative proposals focused on transforming services provision to online platforms, exclusively in the health and education sectors. The proposals have addressed the challenges facing the public sector digital transformation by presenting modalities for easy applications that can be used in practice and avoid many citizens' weak technological skills. To this end, the analysis of the proposed ideas points to the effectiveness of the technical assistance and coaching offered during the introductory and orientation sessions on human-centered design, problem definition & ideation techniques, and behavioral insight principles & experimentation.

It is worth noting that the proposed innovative ideas reflected the participants' view of the importance of supporting concepts of democracy, participation, and gender inclusion. Three proposals were developed to enhancing participation in voting processes in the elections, supporting the right to access the Internet for all, and empowering women in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The innovative proposals generated many visionary ideas that draw the public sector's consideration to remote work necessities, e.g., online training, online recruitment process, performance appraisals, and new incentive schemes.

The Ideathon teams' ideas came consistent with the analysis of public sector challenges presented during the webinars by the public sector representatives. The Ideathon teams have identified digital transformation stress, continuity & timely service delivery; low human capital productivity; bureaucratic burden and low productivity as the most critical challenges facing the public sector. This reflects the Ideathon teams' awareness of the public sector priorities during the COVID-19 Innovative Ideas pandemic (Figure 17).

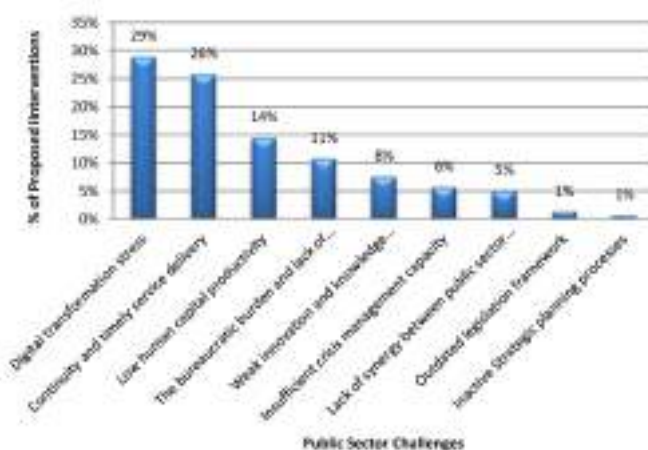


FIGURE 17. MATCHING PUBLIC SECTOR CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Interviews with public sector representatives from the Arab Region revealed that despite the difficulties and adverse effects of the COVID-19 on different societies, the crisis could be invested as an entry point for public sector development. Many positive aspects pursued during the pandemic time. e.g., acceptance for change and bypassing sophisticated routine procedures; flexibility in adjusting the state's priorities and rationalizing resources; seeking and encouraging partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations to maximize the state's ability to face common risks; increasing cooperation and coordination between different governmental entities; and The government employee's willingness to learn new skills.

IDEATHON QUALITY IDEAS CODIFICATION

Codification strategies involve transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge to facilitate knowledge sharing among the Arab public sector. The report adopts a qualitative research approach for a more thorough analysis of the Ideathon 23 quality ideas. Studies on knowledge management have addressed knowledge codification as a strategy to increase knowledge management efficiency at the organizational level and support knowledge transfer across individuals and entities (Bettiol, Maria, & Grandinetti, 2012, p. 550). To this end, knowledge classification and codification are means for further organizational learning and innovation (Sørensen & Snis, 2001, p. 83).

The report employed a holistic methodology to carry out an analysis of Ideathon innovative ideas. The methodology used three approaches: innovative idea standardization, content analysis, and associate the outputs of Ideation innovative ideas to the ultimate goal of Ideathon, which is improving public sector efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability to achieve community trust (Figure 18).

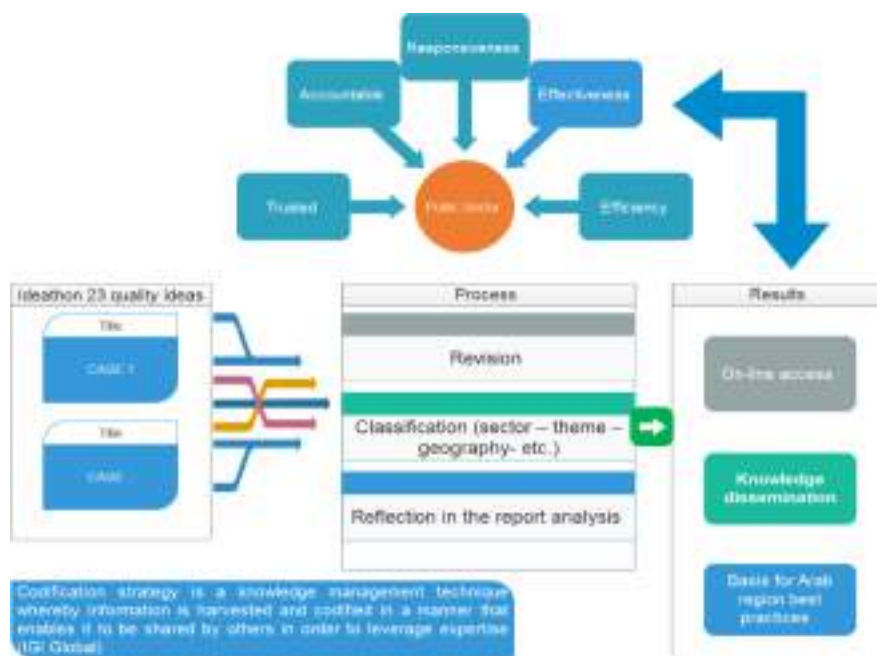


FIGURE 18. IDEATHON INNOVATIVE IDEAS CODIFICATION METHODOLOGY

The participants' innovative ideas were reviewed and represented in a unified format to facilitate the searching process. The proposed format includes five sections: public sector challenges, proposed innovative idea; anticipated impact; case keywords; development team contact information. The innovative ideas are presented in two sections (Annex 7 A and Annex 7 B). The first section presents the three Ideathon prize winners; meanwhile, the second section presents the rest of the innovative ideas that reached the semi-final stage sorted according to the Ideathon team ID number. Furthermore, the report took a closer look at the 23 Ideathon quality ideas employing the content analysis approach to classify them based on specific variables, namely Ideathon team competition ID number, Team nationality, innovative idea title, sector, and public sector challenges. The analysis aims to provide the reader with insights into the proposed innovative ideas so that the lessons learned, or best practices can be extracted and used for further study or elaboration for a specific case or context (Table 4 and Table 5).

TABLE 4 CLASSIFICATION OF THE 23 QUALITY INNOVATIVE IDEAS BASED ON SECTORS

Ideathon team competition ID number	Team Nationality	Innovative idea title	Sector								
			E-education & Education	E-health & Health	E-services - Process re-engineering	Environment, Agriculture, Tourism, Food Security	Equality and Democracy	Human Resources Employment	Vulnerable Groups (senior citizen - Disability - Street Children)		
2	Palestine	Online Education Platform	✓								
4	Algeria Egypt Arab Rep. Palestine Syrian Arab Rep.	On- line Education	✓								
15	Kingdom of Bahrain	The Government Talent Cloud							✓		
26	Syrian Arab Republic	CitiHealth		✓							
28	Egypt Arab Rep.	Human Capital Management With BlockChain "HCM"							✓		
30	Egypt Arab Rep.	Taha Hussein Initiative to Support the Employment of People with Visual Impairment									✓
32	Palestine	Our Voice							✓		
36	Oman	ADAA: Participatory Government			✓						

Ideathon team competition ID number	Team Nationality	Innovative idea title	Sector						Vulnerable Groups (senior citizen - Disability - Street Children)	
			E-education & Education	E-health & Health	E-services - Process re-engineering	Environment, Agriculture, Tourism, Food Security	Equality and Democracy	Human Resources Employment		
38	Syrian Arab Rep.	Organizing Work in Public Sector Institutions by Making use of Queuing Theory			✓					
40	Lebanon	Citizen Reporter				✓				
41	Palestine	Empowerment								✓
44	Syrian Arab Rep.	Hope							✓	
46	Somalia	The Deeping Gender Gap due to the COVID -19 pandemic							✓	
48	Palestine	Smart Teacher Assistant	✓							
56	Yemen Rep.	The on-Line education Without Access Internet "educore"	✓							
59	Tunis	Learning by Doing	✓							

Ideathon team competition ID number	Team Nationality	Innovative idea title	Sector						Vulnerable Groups (senior citizen - Disability - Street Children)	
			E-education & Education	E-health & Health	E-services - Process re-engineering	Environment, Agriculture, Tourism, Food Security	Equality and Democracy	Human Resources Employment		
62	Kingdom of Bahrain Kuwait	Home-based Employee Performance Management Framework								✓
81	Iraq Syrian Arab Rep.	Waste Management				✓				
84	Kuwait	Productive Human Resource in Kuwait Public Sector							✓	
85	Lebanon	Digital Platform for Cross-hiring Between the Public and Private Sectors							✓	
88	Syrian Arab Rep.	Medical Digital Platform MDP		✓						
101	Palestine Syrian Arab Rep.	Social Insurance System			✓					
144	Egypt Arab Rep.	Artificial Intelligence Guide for Elderly (AiGE)								✓

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report articulates many aspects to document the Ideathon experience and identify lessons learned to deepen innovation paths in the public sector in the Arab region. It also provides an outlook on the Ideathon replication in the future and sharing these lessons with development partners.

Based on data analysis, the report extracted the most critical challenges facing the public sector in the Arab countries in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth noting that the report did not approach holistically the entire problems facing the public sector - as this is not among the objectives of the report - rather those problems that directly affected the public sector performance during the pandemic eventualities. The report identified nine main challenges: continuity and timely service delivery; inactive strategic planning processes; the bureaucratic burden and lack of productivity; digital transformation stress; low human capital productivity; outdated legislation framework; lack of synergy between public sector agencies; insufficient crisis management capacity; and weak innovation and knowledge management.

The public sector in Arab countries have adopted some strategies to manage the emerging challenges resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g., provide government services online; reducing the number of government employees as a precaution against virus spread and move to work remotely; reformulation of priorities in their plans; and forming crisis management teams to coordinate and find practical solutions. It is worth noting that some challenges have not received sufficient attention from the public sector, such as changing legislation to cope with COVID-19 developments, building workers' capacities to survive new work environment and instability, and not devoting enough resources to innovation.

The Ideathon has contributed significantly to the discussion and presentation of the most critical challenges facing the Arab region's public sector during COVID-19. The Ideathon participants used the new tools presented in the Ideathon skills workshop e.g., human-centered design mindset & observation methodologies, problem definition and ideation techniques, and behavioral insight principles & experimentation to put forward innovative ideas to solve public sector problems both within the same country and across different countries, as has been demonstrated in the formation of multinational teams.

The Ideathon competition encouraged innovative proposal development, which reflected the possibility of bridging the gap in performance of public Institutions' to improve service delivery and cope with the new normal resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The innovative proposals comprised ideas in the areas of continuity of providing services online, managing human resources and working remotely, it also introduced approaches to support the vulnerable groups by simplifying procedures and providing services through easy and affordable applications that do not impose additional burdens. The proposals also supported community participation in the democratic process and public policy-making process.

Remarkably, most of the proposed solutions focused on the digital transformation of services - in line with the general context and the emerging need for continuity of service provision. However, other aspects than the digital transformation can support public sector during COVID-19 pandemic time. Moreover, the proposed ideas need further study to be formulated

into practical and feasible proposals accepted by public sector. In sum, the Ideathon competition contributed to many positive results, including:

- Increasing the awareness amongst the youth and public sector officials of innovation's role in improving public services performance, mainly during COVID-19 pandemic crises.
- Enhancing networking between teams from different Arab countries helped the exchange of ideas across borders and benefit from other countries' experiences in offering innovative solutions to some of the public sector challenges.
- Contributing to building youth innovation, problem-solving, and design –thinking skills.
- Engaging the "Coaching" mechanism supported teams in developing ideas and studying their feasibility and applicability.
- Drawing the public sector's attention to some innovative ideas, as the competition encouraged some teams to approach public sector officials to conduct interviews or seek data.

The report shed light on some recommendations addressed during interviews and surveys to capitalize on the Ideathon value, including:

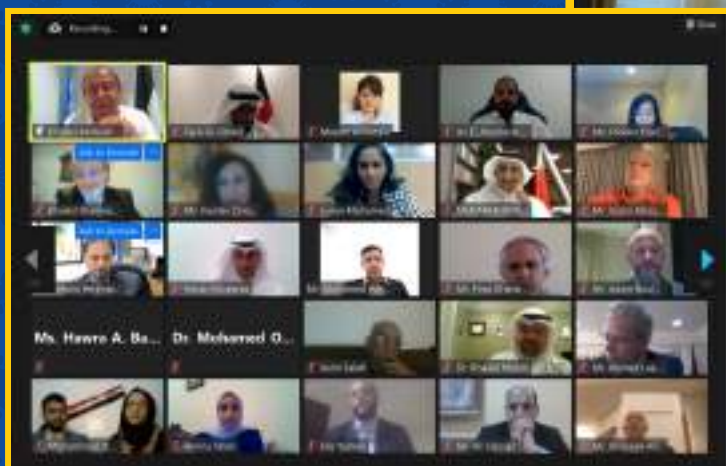
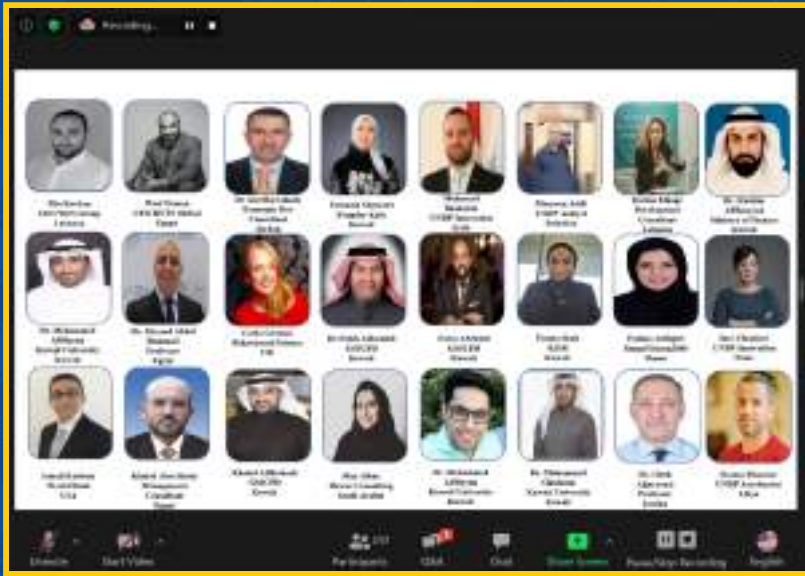
- Giving applicants sufficient time for the preparation phase to form the right team and research the most critical challenges facing the public sector. The preparation might be through conducting a series of online skills workshops and webinars before the Ideathon.
- The Organisers to identify a specific sector or some specific challenges for each round. It is envisaged that focus articulates more ideas in one field, so more chances of getting feasible proposals to be attractive for the public sector.
- Assigning Coaches, based on their specialization and expertise, whether in terms of themes or countries, to make support and advice fit more to the team needs.
- In the short term, the ideas submitted to the competition can be enriched through organizing more workshops for the teams - especially those with ideas that have reached the semi-final stage, to present their ideas in details and have a discussion with Coaches, and receive feedback on how to improve their ideas. The follow-up process with teams encourages them to continue the innovation process and search for other opportunities to support their proposals, whether in other competitions or through communication with public sector officials or the concerned authorities in their countries. It is also possible to create an "Ideas Bank" platform and make those ideas available.
- In the long term, Ideathon is a mechanism to stimulate innovation and creativity in the public sector. It works in the form of events or initiatives; hence, it might be applicable to institutionalise Ideathon outputs by installing a mechanism for coordination, networking, and exchanging ideas between Arab countries. Establishing a public sector innovation network in the Arab world facilitates interactions between innovation groups, public sector officials, and sponsoring organizations. The network could also organize annual innovation awards at the level of the Arab countries.

IDEATHON TEAM

WINNER PROPOSALS



THE COACHES & THE EVALUATORS



#Q8 VSCOV19
HACKATHON
KUWAIT HACKS THE CRISIS
REGIONAL IDEATHON

A. IDEATHON TEAM WINNER PROPOSALS

A .1. TEAM 15, THE GOVERNMENT TALENT CLOUD	39
A .2. TEAM 56, THE ON- LINE EDUCATION WITHOUT ACCESS INTERNET "EDUCORE"	40
A .3. TEAM 85, DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR CROSS-HIRING BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS	41

A .1. TEAM 15, THE GOVERNMENT TALENT CLOUD.

1ST



TEAM 15

WINNER IDEATHON 2020

1ST PLACE

THE GOVERNMENT TALENT CLOUD

Public Sector Challenges

As a result, of the rapid digital transformation of services, the number of employees involved in providing such services has been reduced, and subsequently, many of them became a surplus. Such a surplus with vast experiences, accumulated knowledge, and diversified talents could be wasted if the government would not capitalize on such opportunities optimally. The recent record of volunteers fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in the Kingdom of Bahrain has reached up to 7000 members, the majority of which are full-time government employees.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Accordingly, the time has come for the government to reutilize their employees' energies and talents by developing The Government Talent Cloud. It is a mechanism that allows the government employees to register their talents, knowledge, and skills in the cloud, to capture and mobilize talents within the Civil Service Bureau, as employees could be rotated within their organizations or between the different government entities ,or to work in specific government projects according to their talents and to which they will be able to continue adding value.

Anticipated Impact

If implemented, The Government Talent Cloud project reap multiple outcomes. It helps in instilling the culture of innovation within the government, thus achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals No. (8), (5), (9), and (17), as well as achieving the second ambition of Bahrain's Vision 2030 at the government level. On an individual level, this project helps the process of self-development of the employee gain new skills from diversification and create a spirit of challenge and positive competition among public sector employees, leading to raising the government's efficiency level. Ultimately, this project provides easy access to a pool of implicit talents that could achieve new realities and countless possibilities once tapped-on.

Case key words:

Bahrain - Public Sector
Digital transformation - Talent management
Human Resources

Development Team Contact Information

Name:

Lamya Hussain Muhanna
Lulwa Mohammed
Hasan Mubarak
Hasan Khalid Al Manaseer Amina Isa Tahir

e-mail:

l.muhanha@bipa.gov.bh
hmubarak@sce.gov.bh
h.k.almanaseer@gmail.com
smart_doctor_85@hotmail.com
lulwa.mohamed@bahrainedb.com

Country: Kingdom of Bahrain

A .2. TEAM 56, THE ON-LINE EDUCATION WITHOUT ACCESS INTERNET "EDUCORE".

TEAM 56

WINNER IDEATHON 2020
2ND PLACE

2ND



THE ON-LINE EDUCATION WITHOUT ACCESS INTERNET "EDUCORE"

Public Sector Challenges

People in Yemen suffer from the problem of massively slow internet connection, and it is frequently getting out of service due to some problems with the submarine cable and its high cost. Moreover, in this period, due to (COVID-19), education has stopped entirely. Therefore, students could not pursue their education online. The delay in the start or interruption of the school year leads to complete disruption in the lives of many children, their families, and school teachers. Accordingly, Yemen approaches an increase in school dropout rates and a decrease in student enthusiasm for education.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Solve remote area education problems using local servers that carry a system and database that collects educational materials of all educational facilities, distributes them to telecommunications exchanges and internet service providers, and ensuring accessibility to the system from all residential areas using the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN), without the need to access the Internet. Universities and schools pay an annual subscription in the system and provide user accounts for their students.

Anticipated Impact

Applying this solution, achieving safe and accessible education, overcoming the causes of interruption, and ensuring education continuity. Besides, the quality of education and easy access to it for all students will be secured. Furthermore, education will not be affected by the COVID- 19 second wave or any other epidemic. Additionally, the revenues from university and school subscriptions will be used to improve the country's infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, reduce inequalities in education, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Case key words:

Yemen - Education - Internet access
Metropolitan Area Network - Inequalities

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Mohammed AbdIslam Al- Thawr
e-mail: malthawr@gmail.com
Country: Yemen, Rep.

A .3. TEAM 85, DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR CROSS-HIRING BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

TEAM 85

WINNER IDEATHON 2020

3RD PLACE

3RD



DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR CROSS-HIRING BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Public Sector Challenges

The MENA region's public sector has been overcrowded for some time now, with the situation worsening come COVID-19. While some departments in the system are overworked (health and manual labor), other departments are overcrowded with little to work on (everyday affairs in the public system are suspended due to the pandemic). The availability of an affordable foreign workforce willing to occupy blue-collar jobs, combined with attractive public sector jobs, leads GCC nationals to limit their employment within the private sector or consider more suitable opportunities.

Proposed Innovative Idea

The solution aims to target the MENA region's biggest hindrance by improving soft and technical skills such as Digital ability, Careers Guidance, Confidence and Communication, and Entrepreneurship. The solution adapts four approaches. The online digital platform provides a matching system that develops technical skills and builds skills through experience and training. Job Browsing, as public and private sector employees, would have the ability to sign up and view jobs that would suit their skill set. This way, the employees can start creating an interaction with the other sector, and it gives them an extra push to improve their skill set. Localization of Private Sector by encouraging the public sector employees to work with private companies, and eventually transition there. The flow of knowledge, not only to enable the transition but also to facilitate the flow of knowledge among the sectors and to develop new criteria for the high-skilled workforce.

Anticipated Impact

Addressing the hardship that the region has been experiencing, exacerbated by COVID-19. The idea of cross-hiring is rarely explored, and the move towards digitalization is rather stale. The proposed solution aims to combine both into a platform that can benefit the whole region, creating a connection that enhances the economy and sets an example for further innovation. It leads to decent work & economic growth, industry innovation, and quality education.

Case key words:

Lebanon - Public sector - Private sector
Human resource - GCC

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Elie Yazbek
e-mail: elieyazbek78@gmail.com
Country: Lebanon

IDEATHON TEAM
SEMI-FINAL PROPOSALS



B. IDEATHON TEAM SEMI-FINAL PROPOSALS

B .1. TEAM 02, ONLINE EDUCATION PLATFORM.	43
B .2. TEAM 04, ONLINE EDUCATION.	44
B .3. TEAM 26, CITIHEALTH	45
B .4. TEAM 28, HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT WITH BLOCK CHAIN "HCM"	46
B .5. TEAM 30, TAHA HUSSEIN INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	47
B .6. TEAM 32, OUR VOICE	48
B .7. TEAM 36, ADAA: PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT	49
B .8. TEAM 38, ORGANIZING WORK IN PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS BY MAKING USE OF QUEUING THEORY	50
B .9. TEAM 40, CITIZEN REPORTER	51
B .10. TEAM 41, EMPOWERMENT	52
B .11. TEAM 44, HOPE	53
B .12. TEAM 46, THE DEEPING GENDER GAP DUE TO THE COVID -19 PANDEMIC	54
B .13. TEAM 48, SMART TEACHER ASSISTANT	55
B .14. TEAM 59, LEARNING BY DOING	56
B .15. TEAM 62, HOME-BASED EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	57
B .16. TEAM 81, WASTE MANAGEMENT	58
B .17. TEAM 84, PRODUCTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE IN KUWAIT PUBLIC SECTOR	59
B .18. TEAM 88, MEDICAL DIGITAL PLATFORM	60
B .19. TEAM 101, SOCIAL INSURANCE SYSTEM	61
B .20. TEAM 144, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GUIDE FOR ELDERLY (AIGE)	62

B.1. TEAM 02, ONLINE EDUCATION PLATFORM.

TEAM 2

ONLINE EDUCATION PLATFORM

Public Sector Challenges

The learning process has adverse effects after the spread of COVID-19, and many countries have gone to implement the distance education system. However, in Palestinian, it was noticed that a small percentage of students are keen to participate regularly in virtual classes. The team's field survey indicates that there are some reasons for this reluctance, including high cost, lack of motivational activities during learning processes, lack of motivation among students to participate, and limiting the educational process to the theoretical at the expense of the practical part.

Proposed Innovative Idea

The proposed solution aims to create a profitable educational platform that serves education and relies on smooth ideas that attract users and keep track of technological developments. The platform will serve the interactive learning and develop a method of distance learning for use in times of crisis and beyond. The platform will be connected to an official channel on YouTube, which will generate revenue through advertisements and sponsors. The platform will provide employees with new approaches to raise student motivation and passion for completing their lessons by providing educational entertainment. It also provides exceptional support for students with poor economic conditions to get electronic devices and an internet line.

Anticipated Impact

Reducing the financial burden on the Ministry of Education in establishing, maintaining, and operating schools. It is the best solution to address any crisis that countries are going through, including epidemics or wars, such as the Gaza Strip (Palestine). Ultimately, it enables expatriates in foreign countries to enroll their children in the platform to study the prescribed curriculum in Arabic (the mother tongue).

Case key words:

Palestine - Education platform
Interactive learning
Ministry of Education - YouTube

Development Team Contact Information

Name: E-Model School
e-mail: officialrobaeid9@gmail.com
Country: Palestine

B.2. TEAM 04, ONLINE EDUCATION.

TEAM 4

ONLINE EDUCATION

Public Sector Challenges

Children in countries that witness internal conflict suffer a lack of basic needs, particularly education.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Creating an educational platform in cooperation with communication authorities and making access to this platform free for all Students registered on the list. Hence, the Internet will be easily accessible to those unable to pay for internet subscriptions. The platform will include training activities for teachers to effectively teach by using technology in the context of online education. The platform will assist in sharing education materials among users. It is also proposed to establish education centers, which receive a limited number of students –not more than 5- to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic time.

Anticipated Impact

Increasing the education system's efficiency, as the adoption of technology will facilitate the learning process and control the number of COVID-19 pandemic infection cases. Using technology will create more jobs in the anticipated education centers. The proposed solution will increase the teacher's skills and enhance student innovation skills.

Case key words:

Palestine - Education platform
Interactive learning
Ministry of Education - YouTube

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Abdo Waheed
e-mail: waa239983@gmail.com
Country:
Algeria
Egypt, Arab Rep
Palestine
Syrian Arab Republic

B.3. TEAM 26, CITIHEALTH.

TEAM 26

CITIHEALTH

Public Sector Challenges

During the COVID-19 pandemic, health care centers are doing the most critical job to save lives. The pandemic is not over yet, and the statistics show that the numbers are growing exponentially, which is lowering the productivity of the public health sector due to misusing medical resources appropriately with the infected person. Sometimes patients might die or get worse due to the delay in their treatment without knowing if the virus is critical on their current health status, which is a profound human tragedy. When infected people get admitted to any health care center, they get assigned to a very long queue due to the vast number of patients. By the time they get their turn for the medical examination, their condition would have worsened, causing more time and resources to be treated if the medical examination did not require additional medical tests or previous knowledge about the patient's health status, which will delay the treatment process for a longer time.

Proposed Innovative Idea

A high-tech cloud-based governmental medical system that records and updates citizens' health status from the day they are born until the day they die, which is linked directly to their civil records. This system will give information that would help both the infected patients and the medical team, such as doctors and nurses at any public or private health care center, to diagnose the infected patients, and suggest a treatment process for similar cases with a similar medical history. As for the logistics department, this system will continuously update the patient's health status, help clarify the actual number of patients, and produce enough medicine. The solution to a high-tech cloud-based patient record system will remove the opportunity barriers presented by lack of tests, blood types, blood pressures, previous illnesses, etc.

Anticipated Impact

The results will be that infected people get their treatment at the right time, which could save their life if they have critical health issues that might be missed by the medical team. It will change how the public health sector handles the treatment for infected cases in pandemics by prioritizing their treatment according to the medical status, which will save many resources and increase the governmental health sector's productivity. This impact is considered under the 3rd goal of the SDGs: Good Health and Well-Being.

Case key words:

Syria - Health - Patient Record
cloud-based governmental medical system
Public health sector - Pandemic

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Hani Mounla
e-mail: haniwmounla@gmail.com
Country: Syrian Arab Republic

B .4. TEAM 28, HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT WITH BLOCKCHAIN "HCM".

TEAM 28

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT WITH BLOCKCHAIN "HCM"

Public Sector Challenges

The COVID-19 crisis has reshaped regimes worldwide' concerns to abolish the new situation "New Normal", which requires support for innovation in the government sector. One of the challenges that the public sector faces is the lack of productivity of human capital. The causes of the problem are mainly due to the lack of a secure human capital management system due to the lack of data for the decision-maker; negative impact on seasonal workers; high unemployment rate, and people with disabilities, this constituted an urgent need for policies that contribute to resilience during and after crises

Proposed Innovative Idea

The proposed solution is based on designing a system to improve the management of human capital inputs technically and safely, ensure a long-term strategy for effective use of data, and apply innovation in the public sector. The human capital management platform will be launched based on blockchain technology to collect data from public sector employees and people with disabilities. This process will be secured to ensure data safety and confidentiality of all platforms' clients. The platform statistics will be made available to decision-makers. It is envisaged that the platform will be launched in a partnership with the international organization concerned with the human capital development issue.

Anticipated Impact

The expected results are a secure and technical system for managing human capital, affecting positively:

1. The public policy of the applied country,
2. The government situation in The human capital index,
3. the state resilience during and after crises,
4. And joining the innovation map to confront COVID-19.

Case key words:

Egypt - Human capital
International organization - Blockchain
Innovation - Public Sector - Resilience

Development Team Contact Information

Name:

Germeen Diaa
Heba Nasr
Elshimaa Elbahrawy
Mohamed Eladly

e-mail:

germeen.kmf@gmail.com
Hebanasr114@gmail.com
alshimaama@zu.edu.eg
civilmohamedeladly@gmail.com

Country: Egypt, Arab Rep

B.5. TEAM 30, TAHA HUSSEIN INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT.

TEAM 30

TAHA HUSSEIN INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Public Sector Challenges

People with visual impairment face challenges to enter the job market, even more than other disabilities. Also, they suffer from negative perceptions of employers regarding their ability to work efficiently and independently. As well, workmates perceive the person who has visual impairment as dependent and consistently needs help. The legislation in Egypt grants the right of disabled people to have the opportunity to work. The law defined 5% of the public and private sectors' jobs to persons with disabilities. It set penalties for those who do not adhere to that percentage.

Nonetheless, some organizations "public-private" comply with law requirements without having the attitude of being a supporter. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many private sector activities have been closed or shrieked, negatively impacting people with disabilities even more. This increased pressure on the Ministry of Manpower to find alternative jobs for this segment of people. In sum, the ineffective employment system for people with visual impairment results from some factors, including an imbalanced recruitment system, the inability of the society to integrate people with disabilities functionally; and people with disabilities lack interpersonal skills needed to enter the job market.

Proposed Innovative Idea

The proposed solution for significant employment of visually impaired persons in the labor market includes Recruitment system reform through re-engineering work mechanisms for employing people with visual impairment, complete the policy of digital inclusion and conduct research to determine the labor market needs. Improve the work environment to be more enabling for persons with visual impairment. The Taha Hussein initiative will support the employment of people visually impaired in the private sector. It will address and highlight promising examples of individuals with visual impairment, companies cooperating with the initiative, and electronic platforms. Ultimately, the initiative will build the target group's capacity to join the labor market and increase their family awareness on how to support their family member who has a disability.

Anticipated Impact

The initiative will change the societal perception of people with disabilities' capacities to work and being integrated into the community. Establish an enabling environment for people with visual impairment to get their potential and advance their careers. It reduces spending on subsidies for people with disabilities once they integrated and being productive members of society.

Case key words:

Egypt - People with disabilities
Visual impairment - Labor market
legislation

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Mostafa Gamal Taha
e-mail: mgrtelsheemy@gmail.com
Country: Egypt, Arab Rep

B.6. TEAM 32, OUR VOICE.

TEAM 32

OUR VOICE

Public Sector Challenges

From February 21, 2020, until August 25, 2020, the electoral process and political life were disrupted. During this period, many heads of state's mandate ended, and many parliaments' legislative session ended. National and sub-national elections, and all practices related to elections in at least 70 countries and territories, such as referendums, have been postponed due to the COVID-19 epidemic, which leads to distortions in democratic concepts. In Palestine, the Jerusalem area also witnesses many obstacles for people to practice their rights to vote in various electoral processes, and these challenges have increased with the spread of COVID-19.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Using alternative means to hold the electoral process by transferring it to be online, this solution will be consistent with the global trend in keeping social distance to eliminate the spread of COVID-19. It will also facilitate the process for the citizens who reside in Jerusalem and face challenges to vote. The project's idea is based on launching an electronic platform to implement the electoral process in all its stages using blockchain technology to ensure impartiality, integrity, and transparency.

Anticipated Impact

The proposed solution will contribute to achieving justice, equality, creating strong institutions, reducing the gender inequality gap, and supporting development sustainability.

Case key words:

Palestine - Democracy - Election
Blockchain - Gender

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Jaber Mohammed M. Abu Al-Amrain
e-mail: mgrtelsheemy@gmail.com
Country: Egypt, Arab Rep

B.7. TEAM 36, ADAA: PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT.

TEAM 36

ADAA: PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT

Public Sector Challenges

One of the COVID-19 pandemic reflections is a change in the traditional view of government interactions and the emergence of an inevitable need to adapt to a new work style to build a new life, or what is known as "New Normal". The New Normal requires different government business models characterized by flexibility and innovation. Research papers highlight that providing government services to the beneficiaries should be participatory and consider the beneficiaries' right to evaluate service quality and give feedback to improve the services. Ultimately, the absence of the transparent government service provision standard and mechanism to get citizen feedback negatively affects citizen satisfaction and accountability. The lack of participatory management in the public sector causes some negative impact on the service delivery process, e.g., the lack of citizen perspective.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Developing a scientific mechanism for evaluation, which, in turn, leads to developing some indicators to measure service performance and adherence to standards of quality and achievement. The indicators "Quality standard" will be transparent and accessible to all concerned parties. The service quality standard will be used to get beneficiary feedback to improve the service. The proposed solution will be implemented by creating a unified platform for government services that provide a stimulating environment for innovative and transparent services.

Anticipated Impact

The proposed solution achieves several positive results for the beneficiary. It will institutionalize a new behavior and awareness of the importance of evaluating government services and giving feedback.

The government agencies will strive to provide services at a quality standard to get beneficiaries' satisfaction and trust in government institutions. It will improve the government institution's capacity in managing citizen feedback and being more credible and accountable. The feedback provided will be used as a planning tool to establish new services in the future. More importantly, society will be more active and positive about participating in public issues.

Case key words:

Oman - feedback - participation
Government service - Quality
Participatory government

Development Team Contact Information

Name:	e-mail:
Dr. Suad Al Ishaqi	sa.alishaqi@gmail.com
Amira Al Lawati	amira.allawati526@gmail.com
Nafissa Jaafar	anfas.j@gmail.com
Mohammed Sulaiman	thalsariri@gmail.com
Dr. Thuraya Al Sariri	Najah.AIRashdi@trc.gov.om
Najah Al Rashdit	Country: Oman

B.8. TEAM 38, ORGANIZING WORK IN PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS BY MAKING USE OF QUEUING THEORY.

TEAM 38



ORGANIZING WORK IN PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS BY MAKING USE OF QUEUING THEORY

Public Sector Challenges

The consequences of the war, the COVID-19 crisis, and the administrative and organizational problems collectively contributed to poor public service delivery in Syria. It is observed that most public services have long waiting for queues. The problem of long waiting queue results from poor work organization, which causes crowding that may increase the rate of infection with COVID-19.

Proposed Innovative Idea

The proposed solution will be based on the Application of Little's law principle to queuing theory. Public bodies suffering from lack of organization are provided with a model and simulation algorithm that is easy to use and handle. The model could be converted to a mobile application to be user friendly. After providing the algorithm with the necessary inputs, a graph is made showing the size of the waiting queues and the expected casualty curve before and after the organization of work.

Anticipated Impact

Reducing the size of queues and thus reducing pandemic infections. The work organization enables intuitions to create new job opportunities; increase business efficiency and effectiveness, both during and after the COVID-19 crisis, and disseminate a new work culture based on scientific methodology and investment in human resources. This new work method enhances the community's culture towards respecting the idea of queuing.

Case key words:

Syria - Service Delivery - Little Law
long Queues - work organization

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Modeling and Simulation Club in SCS
(Syrian Computer Society)
e-mail: mmohamadkheir@yahoo.com
Country: Syrian Arab Republic

B .9. TEAM 40, CITIZEN REPORTER.

TEAM 40

CITIZEN REPORTER

Public Sector Challenges

Ministry of Environment (MOE) faces challenges in general, such as lack of accountability, understaffing and lack of resources, and security challenges. COVID-19 adds to these challenges as it reduced the availability of employees (rotation system) at MOE By 70%, reduced the number of registered applications By 70%, compromised field accessibility, and Cut out Co-inspecting.

Proposed Innovative Idea

The proposed solution is a participatory platform called "CITIZEN REPORTER." The platform involves the Citizens in attainable environmental tasks when requested by the Ministry and increases the Ministry's performance and efficiency by saving time and resources. Citizen Reporters around Lebanon would be invited to participate in an incentive-based volunteer network to report 40% of the inspections that do not require specialists' intervention.

Anticipated Impact

Increased productivity and improved national monitoring indirect tool for data collection; saving resources; regaining trust in the public sector through satisfied applicants; engagement will create more responsible citizen and legal and institutional exposure. The environment will be positively affected as faster response to accidents, faster response to emergencies, and increased compliance. The solution will also increase social collaboration and create a social network between public employees and citizens. While at the economic level, it will save resources (car maintenance, fuel consumption, etc.).

Case key words:

Lebanon - Environment
citizen participation - participation
Citizen reporter

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Shareef Tarhini
e-mail: tarhinishareef@gmail.com
Country: Lebanon

B.10. TEAM 41, EMPOWERMENT.

TEAM 41

EMPOWERMENT

Public Sector Challenges

Weak capacities and capabilities of the public sector in providing training services, education, and job opportunities for people with disabilities. The difficulty of getting a job for persons with disabilities in Palestine and the Arab world in general. People with disabilities lack the skills to market their innovative and creative products. The percentage of persons with disabilities working in the government sector is 0.5% in Palestine (2019), according to the Palestinian Statistics Bureau.

Proposed Innovative Idea

An electronic platform through which persons with disabilities are integrated into the community and increase their chances to enter the job market. The platform includes four sections: E-store to enable people with disabilities to display and market their products and sell them through the platform. A freelance platform enables people with disabilities to link with owners of various projects and work on their projects. Employment platform, to enable persons with disabilities to link and network with institutions and companies to be employed in them. Moreover, to provide a set of training courses in various fields that help people with disabilities learn new skills to increase their chances of getting a job, whether on freelance work or jobs in various sectors.

Anticipated Impact

Reducing the number of unemployed persons with disabilities, integrating them into their societies, and changing society stereotypes concerning people with disabilities. The idea contributes to SDGs, namely: Employment, where persons with disabilities will obtain their right to work; Justice, which will be achieved through equal opportunities; Education, learning new skills that will increase their chance of getting a job; and Empowerment by empowering them in the labor market and providing them with equal opportunities.

Case key words:

Palestine - Disability - job market
SDGs - Marketing

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Tamkeen
e-mail: nidal.alkafarna96@gmail.com
Country: Palestine

B.11. TEAM 44, HOPE.

TEAM 44

HOPE ALWAYS THERE IS A SOLUTION

Public Sector Challenges

The country lockdown resulting from COVID-19 affected production levels in the 24-hour laboratories and reduced their working period to 10 hours or less. Most of the private sector activities were negatively impacted by the country lockdown, which resulted in job loss for many workers. The shortage of some commodities leads to an increase in prices; accordingly, a decrease in the standard of living. Besides, the decrease in exporting activities "impacted by global market shrinking" negatively affects some sectors such as agriculture. In some cases, companies were seeking suitable candidates to apply for jobs; nevertheless, most of the job candidate lacks the needed skills or are not connected with the market needs.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Develop an electronic platform through networking with relevant government agencies and concerned organizations (Ministry of Industry - Ministry of Higher Education - Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor - and international organizations) and the private sector. The platform will provide four types of services: Empowering youth, online work skills training; Job orientation training, and Paid training by networking with private and Public sectors.

Anticipated Impact

Saving time, effort, and resources; Create training and job opportunities; Creating electronic vocational education. Achieving economic development and capacity to deal with the crisis "during and after COVID-19).

Case key words:

Networking - Employment
private sector - Training

Development Team Contact Information

Name:

Morhaf Absi
Bashar Fallah
Brahem Harbaa

e-mail:

marhafapsi@gmail.com
bashar.fallah1@gmail.com
brahemharbaa@gmail.com

Country: Syrian Arab Republic

B.12. TEAM 46, THE DEEPING GENDER GAP DUE TO THE COVID - 19 PANDEMIC.

TEAM 46

THE DEEPENING GENDER GAP DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Public Sector Challenges

The gender gap between men and women has been enduring for quite some time; however, the pandemic has ironically demonstrated that work from home is something feasible and encouraged, indeed. Therefore, the old argument that fostered the persisting pre corona gap between men and women, which states that women cannot balance work and home responsibilities, is critically challenged, as a great deal of global work is now done from home. In terms of safety, many women are frontline health workers rendering them one of the most vulnerable victims of the pandemic.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Among many others, education and skills inequality are more or less chief among what fosters the employment gap. Fixing the former would have a considerable effect on the latter's predicament.

The proposed solution Induced Cognitive Policies: transparency in the hiring process; gender participation; equal employment at different levels; and designs and develop gender-sensitive indicators across government offices and departments. Behavioral Non-Cognitive: e.g., paternal leaves for fathers in the education, labor, and public sectors; and social responsibility initiatives by establishing community funds that support small and medium enterprises of women.

Anticipated Impact

Positive impact on the economy and the community as a whole.

Case key words:

Somalia - Gender - equal employment participation - cognitive policies
gender - sensitive

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Mohamed Mohamed
e-mail: mohamedamienahmed@gmail.com
Country: Somalia

B.13. TEAM 48, SMART TEACHER ASSISTANT.

TEAM 48

SMART TEACHER ASSISTANT

Public Sector Challenges

The main problem is the weak computer skills and technological knowledge of many teachers and students of different ages using e-learning tools, in light of the trend towards distance education resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak. There is a lost opportunity to receive education effectively due to wasting time and efforts for teachers, students, and parents in solving many of the daily technical problems related to accessing the distance education program. As well, teachers are not able to effectively follow up with students due to the large size of the virtual classes.

Proposed Innovative Idea

It is a smartphone application that provides a smart assistant to teachers, students, and parents based on artificial intelligence. The application will track and diagnose all technological problems facing the education process. It also provides preliminary information for educational courses and materials to keep students informed of course progress. The application will be designed in the form of voice and text messages. It will operate in a manner that considers the geographical distribution and users' demographic and linguistic diversity. It is also scalable and can be used as an aid on various educational platforms and websites.

Anticipated Impact

Quality education, where the smart teacher assistant provides ease of dealing with e-learning tools for teachers, students, and parents, and provides information and solutions for students in an easy way, which contributes to raising the educational process's efficiency. It will improve computer skills and technological knowledge for present and future generations.

Case key words:

Palestine - Smart Teacher Assistant
distance learning - Parents

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Duha Husam Abdo
e-mail: duha_abdo@outlook.com
Country: Palestine

B.14. TEAM 59, LEARNING BY DOING.

TEAM 59

LEARNING BY DOING

Public Sector Challenges

Primary school children aged 6 to 12 living in Tunisia have been deprived of school for almost six months during the COVID crisis. The school program was interrupted, and families had to improvise to complete the year's program. Children lack learning in a fun way, and they cannot learn independently and continuously need their parents' presence. Parents are overwhelmed, and this situation negatively impacts their productivity at work. Several reasons for inefficient learning process, e.g., vertical education system; an education system that encourages assessment and not learning; dependence of children and parents on private lessons; no freedom at school, no room for creativity in teaching; lack of training for the educational staff on innovative pedagogies; school is the only recognized learning place; school program not updated to the current context; and children not initiated into online learning.

Proposed Innovative Idea

The proposed solution follows the "EAST" framework from UK'S behavioral initiative team. The framework comprises four dimensions: Easy, Attractive, social, timely; Giving one challenge per day for children in connection with the school program and social inclusion goals, and Children will learn by exploring and doing. The solution is designed to be implemented in four steps: Challenges will be submitted to children through media; children will do Nature observation and analysis; Children will have the possibility to send their work through a platform, and a TV program will be held at the end of the day to discuss the challenge. The solution aims to help parents working in the public sector to be more comfortable with their children's education and have more time to improve their work performance.

Anticipated Impact

The solution will improve the learning environment for children; build autonomous and creative children; enable children to develop their thinking and critical thinking, take initiatives and make decisions; provide fun learning and discovering new things; and build confident children and ability to concentrate, developing observation, active listening, and dialogue.

Case key words:

Tunisia- Learning - EAST Children
Creativity - Framework

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Chaima Ktaifi
e-mail: ktaifi.Chaima@hotmail.fr
Country: Tunisia

B .15. TEAM 62, HOME-BASED EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK.

TEAM 62

HOME-BASED EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Public Sector Challenges

Absence or non-existence of a unified framework to manage employee performance and productivity while working from home during COVID-19 pandemic and with the new normal in the public service sector. The root causes for such a challenge are ineffective management for employee performance while working at home. Absence or non-existence of a unified framework. Absences of a straightforward, fair, transparent, and structured process. The individual performance objectives are not well developed. Absences of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Targets. There is no precise categorization and classification for job families based on full or partial presence at the workplace.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Developing a unified and structured employee performance management framework enables the public and other sectors to manage their employees' performance remotely, especially those with special needs. The proposed solution will develop Individual Performance Plans Online; online-based evaluation forms; virtual meeting rooms; online Individual Performance Review meetings; and online Performance Conversations (Analyze achievement and possible challenges).

Anticipated Impact

Defines clear expectations for each job family while working at home; Improves employee satisfaction, engagement, and then retention. Reduction in overall associated costs (e.g., HR recruitment, Training & Development, etc.). Link the contribution of each employee to organizational performance. Reduce subjectivity (bias-free) in evaluation and decision making. Assures continuous learning, monitoring, and improvement of individual performance. Analyze performance based on pre-defined Objectives, KPIs, and Targets; and Extends the empowering performance culture to those working from home.

Case key words:

Kuwait - Bahrain
Performance management system
working from home

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Saleh Yousif Abdulla Alansari

e-mail: salehyaa@agu.edu.bh

Country:

Kingdom of Bahrain

Kuwait

B .16. TEAM 81, WASTE MANAGEMENT.

TEAM 81

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Public Sector Challenges

The main challenge is poor waste management. The authorities concerned with waste management lack adequate workforce and resources and coordination between different departments. Furthermore, there is a weak awareness among citizens on dealing with waste to help the concerned authorities in the collection and recycling process. Accordingly, there is a gap between waste management authority performance and citizen expectations.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Organize meetings between citizens in neighborhoods and specialized teams from the municipalities to enhance cooperation and participation in identifying challenges and developing solutions. This approach will grant citizens' willingness to cooperate and participate and accept municipalities' guidelines for waste management. The proposed solution will be activated by designing a smart application that citizens upload to their phone device through which they will monitor the state of waste in the area in which he resides and reports to the concerned authorities that direct the concerned teams to deal with citizens' complaints.

Anticipated Impact

Contribute to creating cooperation and participation between citizens and the public sector. Citizens' feeling of responsibility towards the environment. Generate a sense of job satisfaction among the cleaners. Citizen satisfaction. Reducing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that restricted work and reduced the number of workers.

Case key words:

Iraq - Syria - Municipalities
Solid waste management - citizens

Development Team Contact Information

Name:

Abd al-Rahman Ragheb Abd al- Razzaq (Adlia)
Muhammad Rusli
Diaa Assaf

e-mail:

ark80a@hotmail.com
mohammed.resly2521@gmail.com
dyaa.assaf500@gmail.com

Country:

Iraq
Syrian Arab Republic

B.17. TEAM 84, PRODUCTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE IN KUWAIT PUBLIC SECTOR.

TEAM 84

PRODUCTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE IN KUWAIT PUBLIC SECTOR

Public Sector Challenges

The Kuwaiti public sector is notoriously inefficient with its hiring process. Approximately 80% of its citizens are employed in the public sector. However, it is one of the least efficient entities in Kuwait. The employee can only give a list of 5 entities they would like to work in, and then the Civil Service Commission "CSC" is not obligated to assign them to these positions. When a government is bloated, its expenditures do not result in productivity. The general environment is lax, and there are no incentives to excel in performance and careers. Wrong nominations for jobs as the CSC only hire based on background, other essential qualities cannot be adequately appraised, which results in hiring the wrong people for the wrong positions and exacerbating the lack of productivity

Proposed Innovative Idea

The job applications should not end at the CSC level. After a prospective employee joins their entity, they should receive a welcome package, "Orientation training," containing all the information they need. The concerned department should collect all the required signatures and documents for the prospective employee. Finally, after acceptance, employees should be informed when to report and to whom.

Anticipated Impact

Eliminate the need for pointless bureaucracy and paperwork. The orientation package will explain in detail all of the paperwork required. It will reduce inefficiency and increase the likelihood and prospective, and employees will find a job they love. Guarantee a fresh and positive outlook for the employee when they report to work. The employee will have a clear understanding of their position and work. Ultimately, resulting in a happy mindset and a worker that is pleased to serve.

Case key words:

Kuwait - Civil Service Commission
Job application - Orientation package
bureaucracy

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Yousef Ali
e-mail: yousefaali@outlook.com
Country: Kuwait

B .18. TEAM 88, MEDICAL DIGITAL PLATFORM.

TEAM 88

MEDICAL DIGITAL PLATFORM MDP

Public Sector Challenges

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, the problem of providing an adequate diagnosis has multiplied, especially as the wrong diagnosis causes an increase in the spread of the disease. The problem of inadequate medical diagnosis is due to the following principal reasons: (1) the emigration of national medical competencies as a result of internal crises and the ongoing war in Syria and some Arab countries, such as Yemen and Libya. 2) Lack of competent medical doctors causes a fundamental difference in the quality and productivity of accurate diagnosis of diseases and affect negatively on the medical care provision quality. 3) Lack of medical and laboratory equipment and supplies due to internal crises resulting from the war, the loss of a large part of the necessary medical supplies and equipment, and the limitation of resources has affected the accuracy of medical diagnosis. 4) Lack of medicines and laboratory medical materials as the current internal crises in Syria have made it difficult to secure an adequate quantity of laboratory diagnostic materials and affect the ability to make a correct diagnosis.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Establishing a local Medical Digital Platform (MDP) in collaboration and networking with global resources to connect qualified doctors in all specialties from different countries of the world with patients to provide medical diagnostic services and digital health care, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and with the support of The World Health Organization.

Anticipated Impact

This platform is consistent with improving services (Healthcare) in the Syria Vision 2030. The platform helps improve Syria's global health indicators and achieve the targets of the SDGs' third goal. It is also a viable solution in light of the COVID-19 crisis and the period after the pandemic and reduces pressure on medical centers, thus raising the quality and efficiency of the health sector. The proposed solution will create new job opportunities to oversee and manage the platform and analyze the big data collected. This data will provide the Ministry of Health with an accurate and valuable analysis. On the other hand, the proposed solution will reduce environmental pollution resulting from increased traffic and saving energy resources. Moreover, changing the culture of current behavior and increasing confidence in government medical services.

Case key words:

Syria - Medical Digital Platform
diagnosis - Medical centers
Medical centers

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Razan Hallak
e-mail: razanhalla@gmail.com
Country: Syrian Arab Republic

B.19. TEAM 101, SOCIAL INSURANCE SYSTEM.

TEAM 101

SOCIAL INSURANCE SYSTEM

Public Sector Challenges

Upon retirement, sickness, or disability resulting from work, the beneficiary has to submit several documents to the social insurance office to get the pension or the compensation. Finishing the process takes a long time (3-6 Months). COVID-19 caused disruption of social insurance offices, which led to an extra delay in the processes. The root causes for the problem are inter-alia; there is no electronic database; lack of coordination between ministries, weak work organization; losing submitted documents, and a shortage of social insurance offices.

Proposed Innovative Idea

Providing a joint electronic database between ministries. Develop a website (web, mobile application) to make information available for the target people, and they can get the needed information and documents and save time. The web application helps the beneficiary register electronically and reserve time for the office visit to submit original documents. It is planned to find a mechanism to facilitate paying insurance fees through banks.

Anticipated Impact

The proposed solution expedites the process of getting a pension or compensation. It retains information for a long time and ensures its safety. Creating job opportunities. Enable beneficiaries to get information easily, accurately, and quickly. It saves time and effort for workers in the public sector. Besides, it compensates for the shortage of social insurance offices resulted from COVID-19. Finally, it enhances the public sector modernization.

Case key words:

Palestine - Syria - Social Insurance
Pension - Data-base

Development Team Contact Information

Name: E. Maessa Ahmed Wann
e-mail: maesawanni8@gmail.com
Country:
Iraq
Syrian Arab Republic

B.20. TEAM 144, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GUIDE FOR ELDERLY (AIGE).

TEAM 144

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GUIDE FOR ELDERLY (AIGE)

Public Sector Challenges

Elderly and disabled people face many challenges to get essential government services. They are dependent on routine governmental paperwork to process their governmental requests (walk-in, apply for service, and walk out of the entity). The vulnerable group has a limited capacity of movement and less acquaintance of digitization. More attention should be paid to them to facilitate their request and fulfill their needs. They also suffered the most during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. They need a fast and straightforward digitalize system to process their request and provide elegant service. In sum, The elderly and disabled people can not cope with the long process of getting any given government service. In addition to their limit to access digital applications, the COVID-19 pandemic worsened this vulnerable group's situation.

Proposed Innovative Idea

The proposed solution, "Artificial Intelligence Guide for Elderly (AiGE)" has a vision of achieving personalized procedures for the vulnerable section of the population (elder and handicapped section). Its mission is to engage artificial intelligence and build an automated scoring system that minimizes the bureaucracy. The AiGE will help minimize the burden for the vulnerable people (elderly and disabled) and calibrating the governmental procedures into the minimal legitimate requirements. The AiGE can be either a stationary or movable system (delivery) assisted with AI and voice recognition. It integrates an AI system that reduces the required procedures by adopting a "serving first" policy for the elderly and disabled to provide them the service first then submit the documents. The AI calculates each individual's score based on unique algorithms, predicting how likely they will submit further required documents after receiving the service. The higher the score, the faster the individual gets the service. The AI will determine the essential documents to be submitted and eliminate unnecessary ones based on the score. AiGE applies deep machine learning to predict how many vulnerable individuals need the same service at a given time. The system will send automated SMS to offer the service for such individuals.

Anticipated Impact

The AiGE will introduce the idea of old and disabled people digitization and successful integration of the older people alongside other age groups into one digitized automated system. It contributes to the valorization of vulnerable people's role in society and provides them with a glimpse of empathy and support they need during crises and pandemic times. Also, systems and resources are connected in one way and another and can replicate in different public sector departments. Ultimately, the system simplification and introduction of specific algorithms to the most vulnerable people would generate more opportunities for a new electronic smart booth development level.

Case key words:

Egypt - Vulnerable groups
Artificial Intelligence
governmental procedures

Development Team Contact Information

Name: Ghada Rashed
e-mail: ghada_rashed@yahoo.com
Country: Egypt, Arab Rep.

REFERENCES AND ANNEX



LIST OF REFERENCES

- Agostino, D., Arnaboldi, M., & Lema, M. D. (2020). New development: COVID-19 as an accelerator of digital transformation in public service delivery. *Public Money & Management "On line"*, 1-5.
- Almutairi, F. L., Thurasamy, R., & Yeap, J. A. (2020). Historical Development of E-Government in the Middle East. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 8(5), 748-751.
- Altman, E. J., & Nagle, F. (2020). Accelerating Innovation Through a Network of Ecosystems: What companies can learn from one of the world's largest networks of accelerator labs. *MIT Sloan Management Review*(Summer 2020).
- Asian Productivity Organization. (2017). *Knowledge Productivity in the Public Sector: Enhancing knowledge work to improve effectiveness*. Tokyo: Asian Productivity Organization.
- Asian Productivity Organization. (2017). *Knowledge Productivity in the Public Sector: Enhancing knowledge work to improve effectiveness*. Tokyo: Asian Productivity Organization.
- Bettiol, M., Maria, E. D., & Grandinetti, R. (2012). Codification and creativity: knowledge management strategies in KIBS. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 16(4), 550-562.
- Bhuiyan, S., & Farazmand, A. (2019). Society and Public Policy in the Middle East and North Africa. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 43(5), 373-377.
- Buisman, H. (2020, June 11). *Designing Government After Shock: global discussion on the future of government*. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from Observatory of Public Sector Innovation: <https://oecd-opsi.org/designing-government-after-shock-global-discussion-on-the-future-of-government/>
- Colville, J., & Roushas, R. (2020, March 31). *Innovating in the COVID-19 response – emerging examples across the Arab States region*. Retrieved November 14, 2020, from UNDP Arab State: <https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/ourperspective/ourperspectivearticles/2020/innovating-in-the-covid-19-response--emerging-examples-across-th.html>
- Cornell University, INSEAD, and WIPO. (2020). *The Global Innovation Index 2020: Who Will Finance Innovation?* Geneva: World Intellectual Property.
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Public Institutions for SDGs*. Retrieved November 20, 2020, from United Nations - Department of Economic

LIST OF REFERENCES

and Social Affairs: <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Themes/Public-Institutions-for-SDGs>

Dixon, J., Bhuiyan, S., & Üstüner, Y. (2018). Public Administration in the Middle East and North Africa. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 41(10), 759-764.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, U. (2017). *Guideline on fostering Innovation in the Public Sector of the Arab Region*. Beirut: E/ESCWA/TDD/2017/TECHNICAL PAPER.6.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, U. (2018). *Fostering open government in the Arab region*. Beirut: United Nations.

ESCWA. (2020, March 25). *Regional Emergency Response to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19*. Retrieved October 30, 2020, from ESCWA: https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/20-00116_rer_mitigatingimpact_covid-19_eng_mar27.pdf

IGI Global. (n.d.). *What is Codification Strategy*. Retrieved October 30, 2020, from IGI Global: <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/codification-strategy/34631>

Insight. (2020, September 11). *2020 Insight Public Sector Pulse: The Impact of COVID-19 on Public Sector Organizational Readiness*. Retrieved November 14, 2020, from Insight: https://www.insight.com/en_US/content-and-resources/gated/insight-intelligent-technology-pulse--the-impact-of-covid-19-on-public-sector-ac1218.html

International Labour Organization. (2020). *ILO Sectoral Brief: COVID-19 and the Public Service*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

Jackson, E. A. (2020). Importance of the Public Service in Achieving the UN SDGs. In W. L. Filho, A. M. Azul, L. Brandli, A. L. Salvia, & T. Wall (Eds.), *Decent Work and Economic Growth: Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 1-11). Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority. (2019). *Kuwait Advances in Global Competitiveness Index 2019*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority: <https://www.kdipa.gov.kw/en/kuwait-advances-in-global-competitiveness-index-2019/#:~:text=Kuwait%20has%20advanced%20by%208,2018%20out%20of%20140%20countries.>

Lucarelli, G. (2020, November 26). *10 years out: Can the hive mind still save us?* Retrieved December 29, 2020, from UNDP Accelerator Labs: <https://acclabs.medium.com/10-years-out-can-the-hive-mind-still-save-us-f771500661c>

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Mello, L. d., & Ter-Minassian, T. (2020). *Digitalisation Challenges and Opportunities for Subnational Governments*, OECD Working Papers on Fiscal Federalism No. 31. Paris: OECD.
- Nasser, S. (2018). Boxed Women in Public Administration - Between. *Journal of International Women's Studies Glass Ceilings and Glass Walls: A Study of Women the Arab States*, 19(3), 151-171.
- New Kuwait . (2020). *Kuwait National Development Plan*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from New Kuwait: <http://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/plan.aspx>
- OECD. (2010). *Progress in Public Management in the Middle East and North Africa: Case Studies on Policy Reform*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2020). *Public Administration: Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2020, November 10). *The territorial impact of COVID-19: Managing the crisis across levels of government*. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from Tackling coronavirus (COVID-19), Contributing to a global effort: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=128_128287-5agkkojaaa&title=The-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government
- Roddis, E., & OBE, R. G. (2020). *An emerging legacy: How COVID-19 could change the public sector*. Retrieved November 20, 2020, from Deloitte: <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/public-sector/articles/an-emerging-legacy-how-corona-virus-could-change-the-public-sector.html>
- Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., & Woelm, F. (2020). *The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19. Sustainable Development Report, 2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schuster, C., Weitzman, L., Mikkelsen, K. S., Meyer-Sahling, J., Bersch, K., Fukuyama, F., et al. (2020). Responding to COVID-19 through Surveys of Public Servants. *Public Administration Review*, 80(5), 792–796.
- Sørensen, C., & Snis, U. L. (2001). Innovation through knowledge codification. *Journal of Information Technology*, 16(2), 83-97.
- Steiner, A. (2020, September 3). *UNDP Executive Board: Speech at the Second Regular Session of UNDP Executive Board 2020*. Retrieved December 26, 2020, from UNDP: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/speeches/2020/undp-executive-board.html>
- The Institute of Internal Auditors. (2011). *Supplemental Guidance: Public Sector Definition*. USA: The Institute of Internal Auditors.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- The World Bank. (2019). *Doing Business 2020: Kuwait Ranking Improves from 97 to 83, Joins the Top-10 Improvers in the World*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from The World Bank: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/10/24/doing-business-2020-kuwait-ranking-improves-from-97-to-83-joins-the-top-10-improvers-in-the-world>
- UN/DESA. (2020, June 11). *UN/DESA Policy Brief #79: The role of public service and public servants during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Retrieved November 14, 2020, from United Nations: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-79-the-role-of-public-service-and-public-servants-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- UNDP. (2019). *UNDP Digital Strategy*. Retrieved December 27, 2020, from <https://digitalstrategy.undp.org/assets/UNDP-digital-strategy-2019.pdf>
- UNDP. (2020, November 14). *UNDP: Our focus*. Retrieved from UNDP Arab States: <https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/our-focus.html>
- UNDP and MBRF. (2020). *Global Knowledge Index*. United Arab Emirates: Al Ghurair Printing and Publishing.
- UNDP's Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity Group. (2014, January). *Innovation for Development: UNDP's Dossier of Work*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from UNDP: <https://www.undp.org>
- United Nations. (2017). *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, Special session 2017, 28 November 2017*. DP/2017/38. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations. (2020). *E-Government Survey 2020: Digital Government in the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development*. New York: United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- United Nations. (2020, July). *Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arab Region, An Opportunity to Build Back Better*. Retrieved October 30, 2020, from United Nations: <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/covid-19-and-arab-region-opportunity-build-back-better>
- World Bank. (2020). *Governance COVID-19 Response: Managing the Public Sector Wage Bill during COVID-19*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Economic Forum. (2018). *The Arab World Competitiveness Report*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
- World Economic Forum. (2019). *The Global Competitiveness Report 2019*. (K. Schwab, Ed.) Switzerland.

1

ANNEX 1. LIST OF FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWEES

No.	Name	Position	Country
1	Prof. Nissaf Ben Alaya	General Director of the National Observatory for New and Emerging Diseases, Ministry of Health	Tunis
2	Eng. Ghada Labib	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Telecommunication & Information Technology	Egypt
3	Mr. Mohamed Hasan Al Sabba	E-Training Advisor and Director of Innovation Programme, Bahrain Institute for Public Administration	Bahrain
4	Mr. Ahmed Laamoumri	Permanent Secretary in Charge of the Administrative Reform, Ministry of Budget, Finance and of the Administration	Morocco

2

ANNEX 2. LIST OF WEBINAR SPEAKERS

No.	Name	Position	Country
Moderator: Dr. Faleh AlRashidi, Advisor to HE The Secretary-General of The Supreme Council for Planning & Development, Kuwait.			
DAY 1: Crisis management			
1	Dr. Mohamed Odeh	Head of National Centre for Disaster Risk Management	Palestine Kuwait
2	Dr. Mishal Alrubaie	Deputy Minister, Ministry of State for Youth Affairs	
3	Mr. Fadi Yarak	Director-General of Education, Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Lebanon
DAY 2: Processes and Procedures			
4	Mr. Naser Mohamed Al- Krawi	Council Member, Tripoli Municipality Council	Libya
5	Dr. Hazem Rahahleh	Director-General, Social Security Corporation	Jordan
6	Eng. Ghada Labib	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Telecommunication & Information Technology	Egypt
DAY 3: Team management & employee productivity			
7	Mrs. Salma AlEssa	Controller, Quality Assurance State Audit Bureau	Kuwait
8	Mrs. Fatima Darwish	Chief Auditor State Audit Bureau Kuwait	Kuwait
9	Mr. Ahmed Laamoumri	Permanent Secretary in Charge of the Administrative Reform, Ministry of Budget, Finance and of the Administration	Morocco

3

ANNEX 3. ORIENTATION SESSIONS AND SKILLS WORKSHOP AGENDA



	Monday 14 September (Day 1)	Tuesday 15 September (Day 2)	Wednesday 16 September (Day 3)	Thursday 17 September (Day 4)
18:30-20:00		Webinar & Q/A Three Arab States public sector representatives discuss challenges faced in: Crises Management	Webinar & Q/A Three Arab States public sector representatives discuss challenges faced in: Employees Productivity	Webinar & Q/A Three Arab States public sector representatives discuss challenges faced in: Processes and Procedures
20:00-21:30	Orientation How are we going to work? introduction to the mural, slack, and to the Coaches, detailed program and expected outcome	Orientation Introduction to human-centered design mindset and observation methodologies	Orientation Introduction to problem definition and ideation techniques	Orientation Introduction to behavioral insight principles and experimentation
	Friday 18 September (Day 5)	Saturday 19 September (Day 6)	Sunday 20 September (Day 7)	Monday 21 September (Day 8)
18:00-20:00	Ideathon Coaching/ capacity building and mentoring session (optional Zoom help)	Ideathon Coaching/ capacity building and mentoring session (optional Zoom help)	Ideathon Coaching/ capacity building and mentoring session (optional Zoom help)	Ideathon Early submission to Coaches 12:00 mid- day Submission deadline 23:59

4

ANNEX 4. LIST OF COACHES NAMES AND BACKGROUND

No.	Name	Position	Country
1	Mr. Abdelhamid Ezzat	Communications Specialist, United Nations Development Programme Innovation Lab	Egypt
2	Dr. Ahmad AlQatan	Assistant Professor, Kuwait University	Kuwait
3	Dr. Atef Rawahneh	Expert in local economic development and public administration	Jordan
4	Ms. Carla Groom	Head of Behavioural Science, UK Department for Work & Pensions	UK
5	Ms. Darine Elhage	LLM in human rights, peace- building and development practitioner in MENA	Lebanon
6	Mr. Elia Korban	President WIN Group	Lebanon
7	Dr. Faleh AlRashidi	Advisor to Secretary-General, General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development	Kuwait
8	Mr. Faris AlObaid	Advisor to Secretary-General, General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development	Kuwait
9	Dr. Fatemah Mosawai	Founder and Manager of Kafo Platform and AlPassion Social Enterprise	Kuwait
10	Ms. Fatma AlHajri	Head of Steering Committee of Behavioral Economics, Oman Vision 2040	Oman
11	Ms. Fatmah Shah	Management Analyst, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research	Kuwait
12	Dr. Hashim AlHonayan	Strategic Management Consultant, Ministry of Finance	Kuwait
13	Ms. Ines Cheniour	Consultant in Innovation, United Nations Development Programme	Tunisia
14	Mr. Ismail Radwan	Lead Economist GCC at The World Bank	Kuwait
15	Mr. Khaled Abu Shady	Management Consultant	Egypt
16	Mr. Khalid AlHashash	Knowledge-Economy Specialist, Kuwait Knowledge Economy Centre	Kuwait
17	Mr. Mamoun Attali	Program Analyst on Governance, United Nations Development Programme Palestine	Palestine
18	Mr. Mohamed Al Sharif	Governance Specialist	Bahrain
19	Dr. Mohammed AlOlayan	Assistant professor Department of Environmental Technology Management, Kuwait University	Kuwait
20	Dr. Mosaad Abdel Hammed	Professor of Public Administration Senior Management and Development Advisor	Egypt
21	Mr. Muhamad Shabarek	Innovation Project Manager, United Nations Development Programme Syria	Syria
22	Dr. Odeh Al-Jayyousi	Professor and Head of Innovation and Technology Management, Arabian Gulf University	Jordan
23	Mr. Osama Mansour	Head of Exploration - Accelerator Lab, United Nations Development Programme Libya	Libya
24	Mr. Saad Al Rubaiaan	Government Communication Consultant	UAE
25	Mr. Vrouyr Joubanian	Head of Experimentation, United Nations Development Programme Accelerator Lab Lebanon	Lebanon
26	Mr. Wael Osman	CEO of RYTS Global / Pixonal	Egypt
27	Ms. Wafa Saad	Advisor on Public Policy - MENA	Canada

5

ANNEX 5. EVALUATION GRID

No	Theme	Criteria	Evaluation
1	How well is the problem identified? (Clear identification of existing problem/s)	The problem is clearly identified, and barriers to productivity are clearly highlighted	100
2	How well does the solution/idea address the identified barriers to productivity?	The solution is well articulated and linked to increasing productivity	100
3	Is the solution innovative? (Creativity and innovation of suggested solution)	The solution is based on a new innovative idea	100
4	Is it feasible to implement the solution in the COVID-19 context?	The entry point and the implementation plan are relevant in the COVID-19 context	100
5	How applicable is this solution beyond the COVID-19 context?	The transition of implementation beyond the Coved- 19 context is well articulated	100
6	Is this something people would be incentivized/motivated to use	user adoption element is well set (User adoption, sometimes called onboarding, is the process by which new users become acclimated to a product or service and decide to keep using it).	100
7	Sustainability of solutions: Doe the proposed set of solutions can also be effective in the longer term?	The long term effect and impact is highlighted and is realistic	100
8	Replicability	How adaptable and replicable is the solution across different organizational contexts? (The crosscutting organizational specificities are highlighted)	50
9		The degree to which a proposed idea is applicable to more countries in the Arab Region (The crosscutting specificities for the Arab countries are highlighted).	20
10	Scalability	The solution is scalable to a scale larger than the project scope	70
11	Overall benefit to people residing in the Arab Region, economic impact	The value proposition for the people residing in the Arab Region is well identified (people-centered)	40
12		The potential of job creation	20
13	The degree to which a proposed idea can contribute to national development priorities.	The Linkage to national development priorities is well defined	50
14	The degree to which a proposed solution shall contribute to any SDG (or SDGs).	the project helps to achieve at least 1 goal of the SDGs, and the linkages is well identified	50
Total			1000

6

ANNEX 6. LIST OF SELECTION CRITERIA

- How well is the problem identified?
- How well does the solution/idea address the identified barriers to productivity?
- Is the solution innovative?
- Is it feasible to implement the solution in the COVID-19 context?
- How applicable is this solution beyond the COVID-19 context?
- How adaptable are solutions across different countries and organizational contexts?
- Is this something people would be motivated to use?
- Does the proposed set of solutions can also be effective in the longer term?
- Overall benefit to people residing in the Arab Region, economic impact (job creation)
- How replicable is the solution?
- Is the solution scalable?
- The degree to which a proposed idea can contribute to national development priorities
- The degree to which a proposed idea is applicable to more countries in the Arab Region.
- The degree to which a proposed solution shall contribute to any SDG (or SDGs).



WORLD BANK GROUP