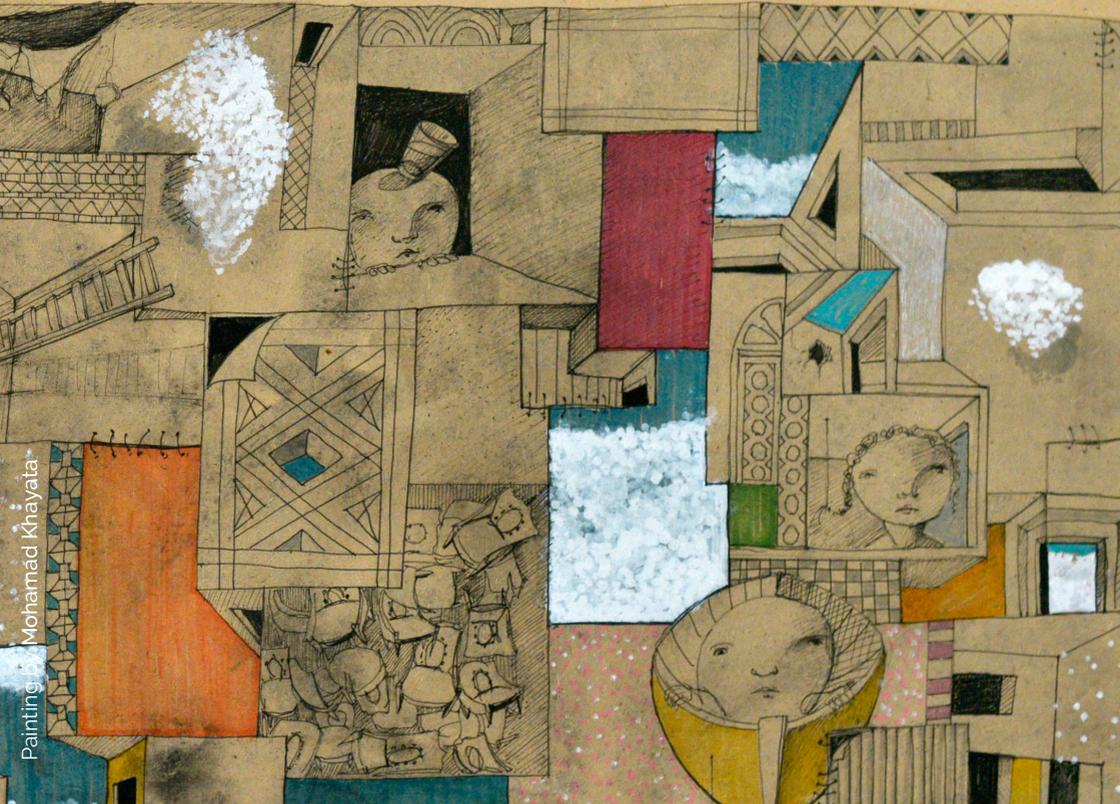


Youth in the Arab Region

ADP dedicates this special edition to the youth of the Arab region, acknowledging the challenges they face and the roles they can play in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Painting by Mohamad Khayata

Youth in the Arab Region

A Special Edition by the Arab Development Portal (ADP)

#YouthForumAr

Adolescents and youth in the Arab region currently account for nearly one-third of the total population. In this region, youth have emerged as a catalysing force for positive change and proved to be integral to building a more prosperous and stable future for themselves and their communities. In recognition of their key role, the Arab Development Portal (ADP) dedicates this special edition to the youth of this region, acknowledging the challenges they face and the potential they carry to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in their countries and the region.



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



Launched in April 2016, the Arab Development Portal is a bilingual data warehouse and knowledge platform offering high quality data across 15 development topics in the Arab region at the international, national and regional levels. Aside from its rich database that include 6,800+ indicators, ADP publishes insightful resources, including blogs, publications, infographics, among others, and organizes youth-related activities and events that aim to stimulate data-driven debates and to enhance data literacy towards the Sustainable Development Goals.



ADP is a joint initiative between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Coordination Group of Arab, National and Regional Development Institutions (CG), the Islamic Development Bank, and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID).

YOUTH IN THE ARAB REGION: opportunities and challenges

With 115¹ million adolescents and youth², the region is endowed with key resources for advancing its economic and social development. In a region currently experiencing intersecting crisis and protracted conflicts that have weakened the gains of development, 14 Arab countries are classified as low and medium youth development countries in 2016, according to the latest Youth Development Index³. That said, unleashing the youth potential implies acknowledging the challenges they face and rediscovering the opportunities that exist. This also entails investing in the basic services that enhance their capabilities, particularly in education, health, ICT and other areas, and ensuring open channels of civic participation.

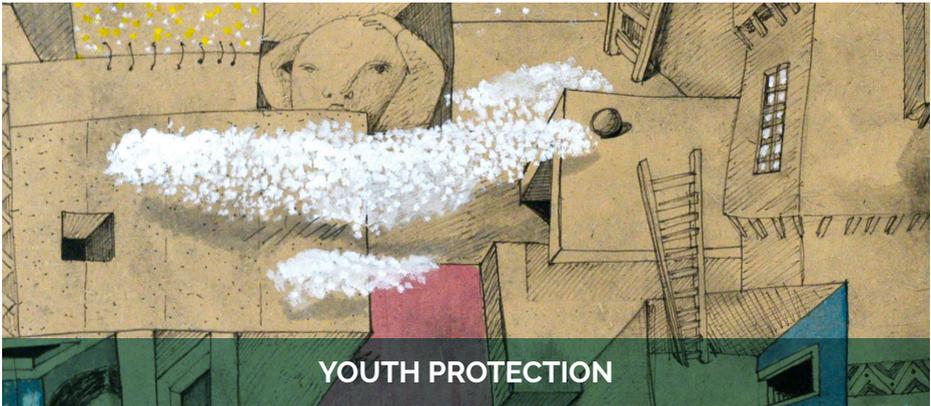
Youth Development Index (YDI), 2016

	YDI, score 1- 0 (highest level)	Rank (out of 183)		YDI, score 1- 0 (highest level)	Rank (out of 183)
Mauritania	0.430	172	Oman	0.611	99
Comoros	0.462	158	Libya	0.635	82
Djibouti	0.462	158	Lebanon	0.649	76
Yemen	0.478	152	Qatar	0.650	75
Iraq	0.494	145	Kuwait	0.678	56
Sudan	0.515	140	Saudi Arabia	0.681	54
Egypt	0.530	138	Bahrain	0.717	41
Syria	0.531	137			
Algeria	0.560	126			
Palestine	0.560	126			
Morocco	0.575	120			
Jordan	0.586	114			
Tunisia	0.597	110			
United Arab Emirates	0.599	107			

Low youth development	
	Low 0-0.494
	Medium 0.494 - 0.607
	High 0.607 - 0.67
	Very high >0.671
High youth development	

The Youth Development Index (YDI) ranks 183 countries according to the prospects of young people in employment, education, health, civic and political spheres. Youth in the YDI correspond to the population with ages 29-15. The YDI both showcases the best-performing countries and serves as a warning light for low-scoring countries. Somalia is not covered by the YDI.

Source: The Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016.



YOUTH PROTECTION

The Arab region has witnessed important gains in the health sector as a result of technological innovations and human ingenuity⁴, life expectancy increased from 47 years in 1960 to 72 years in 2019⁵. Furthermore, under five mortality rate in the Arab region significantly decreased from 81.2 per 1000 live births in 1990 to 37 per 1000 in 2017.⁶ Nonetheless, youth in several Arab countries still suffer from health-related and protection challenges. Early marriage is still prevalent in the region, with nearly 20 percent of women aged 20–24 years old getting married before reaching 18 years, and with the highest prevalence registered in Somalia at 45 percent.⁷ The Female Genital Mutilation remains prevalent in few Arab countries, including Egypt and Sudan at 87 percent⁸.

The regional adolescent birth rate, at 47 births/1000 women, is the third highest across regions, after Sub-Saharan Africa (100 births/1000 women) and Latin America and the Caribbean (61 births/1000 women). Highest values are recorded in Somalia (100 births/1000 women), Iraq (80 births/1000 women) and Mauritania (79 births/1000 women).⁹



YOUTH EDUCATION

Over the last two decades, the Arab region has witnessed a rise in youth literacy rate and a narrowing education gender gap. The gains witnessed in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels show that adolescents and youth are increasingly accessing education. However, many education systems in the Arab region continue to suffer from major deficiencies, among which are access to quality education and governance of public education institutions.¹⁰ The overall advances in education have also masked striking disparities among and within countries. In prolonged conflicts, several countries in the region have experienced a disruption in students' access to education. In fact, the region – which, until few years ago, had the goal of universal education well within reach – today faces increased risks and challenges, with around 12 million adolescents and youth being out of school.¹¹



Youth unemployment rate in the region is the highest in the world, at 26 percent, ranging from less than 12 percent, the world average, in five GCC countries, namely Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Comoros and reaching higher than 30 percent in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Libya and Palestine. Particularly among young women, the unemployment rate, at 39 percent, is also the highest in the world and double that of the rate among young men. Youth labour market inactivity is also quite high in the region. On average, only 30 percent of youth are actively participating in the labour market. Only 1 out of 8 young women are engaged in the labour force, with young female labour force participation rate being the lowest across all regions.¹²

Youth Unemployment rate (percent)

Palestine	45.9	Djibouti	21.3
Libya	42	Syria	19.6
Jordan	36.7	Lebanon	17.6
Tunisia	34.8	Iraq	16.5
Egypt	32.4	Mauritania	16
Algeria	30.8	Kuwait	14.4
Sudan	27.1	Comoros	8.5
Saudi Arabia	25.6	Oman	8.4
Somalia	24.9	United Arab Emirates	7.6
Yemen	23.4	Bahrain	5.3
Morocco	21.9	Qatar	0.6

Source: ILO, 2019. ILOSTAT

In addition to limited job creation, the youth in the Arab region are reaching their adult years in a context where income inequality across and within countries is rising and economic growth is slow at 3 percent in 2019¹³. Poverty prevalence is also high, where 25 percent¹⁴ of the region's population is considered poor or vulnerable to multidimensional poverty. In the region, nearly 39 percent of working youth were poor in 2016, living below the moderate poverty line of \$3.10 per day.¹⁵

Most pressing challenges in seven Arab countries as perceived by youth:

	Economic situation (poverty, unemployment, inflation)	Financial and administrative corruption	Internal stability and security	Religious extremism	Other
Algeria	49.7 %	27.4 %	5.7 %	3.8 %	12.7 %
Palestine	65.4 %	14.7 %	9.3 %	2.6 %	7.5 %
Jordan	52.8 %	16.8 %	6.5 %	6.0 %	17.4 %
Lebanon	63.8 %	22.9 %	4.1 %	3.5 %	5.7 %
Morocco	63.5 %	15.1 %	7.7 %	5.1 %	5.9 %
Tunisia	43.2 %	18.5 %	9.3 %	18.4 %	9.8 %
Egypt	74.5 %	10.6 %	3.4 %	5.0 %	5.9 %



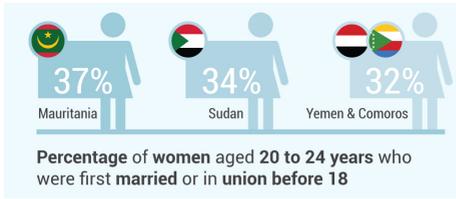
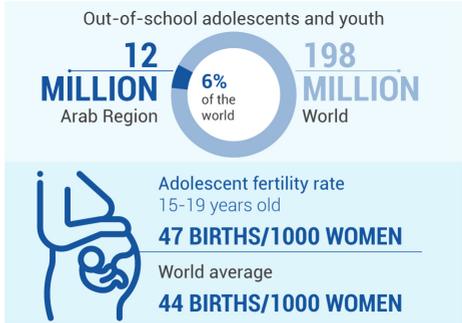
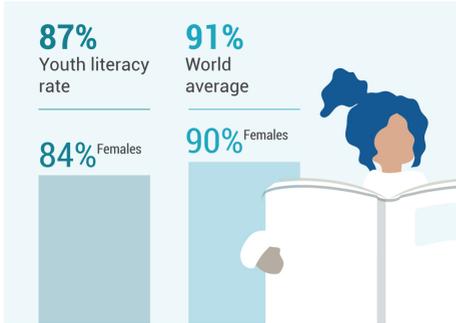
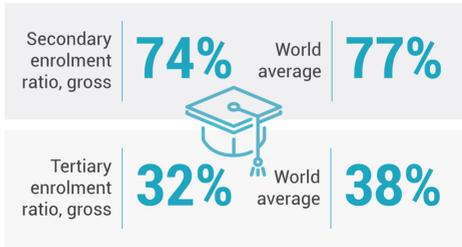
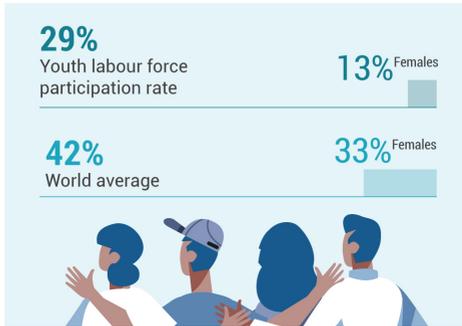
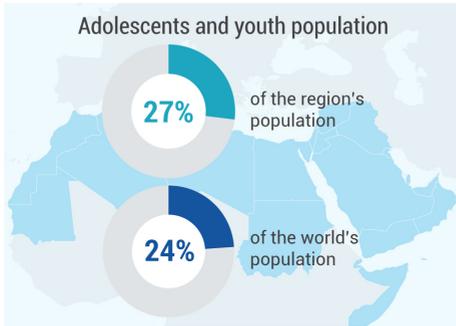
In 2017, almost 29 million people, equivalent to 7 percent of the population, were forcibly displaced, mainly due to conflicts. The challenging economic conditions in several Arab countries have also forced people to emigrate.¹⁶ As shown by the Human Flight and Brain Drain indicator, in the Fragile States Index, which takes into consideration the economic impact of human displacement, all Arab countries –with the exception of the GCC countries and Jordan, have scored above 5, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 indicating the worst scenario.¹⁷ The percentage of people thinking about emigrating for economic reasons varied from 41 percent in Palestine and 48 percent in Algeria to 80 percent in Jordan and 78 percent in Egypt.¹⁸



An increasing number of people have been accessing the internet, estimated at 49 percent of the population in 2017, up from 7 percent in 2000¹⁹, including an increased use of social media networks, especially among youth (64 percent of social media users are under 30 years old²⁰). However, connectivity remains an issue, including speed and network congestion. Fixed-broadband subscriptions remain low at only 5 percent in the Arab region. In terms of speed, a high share of subscribers at 31 percent in the Arab region still had subscriptions at speeds below 2 Mbit/s in 2017, compared to a share of 89 percent in Asia and the Pacific and 87 percent in Europe at speeds equal or above 10 Mbit/s for the same year.²¹

Financial inclusion is still limited in the Arab region, especially for youth, with only 21 percent of youth reporting that they have an account at a bank or financial institution. Only 13 percent reported that they have a debit card and 10 percent used the internet to pay a bill or buy something online over the previous year. Borrowing from a financial institution to start, operate, or expand a firm or business is limited to 1 percent of the region's youth.²²

ARAB REGION'S YOUTH IN FIGURES



* Youth account for the population aged 15 - 24 years old; adolescents and youth account for the population aged 10-24 years old; UNESCO Arab States' averages do not include Comoros and Somalia.

Sources: United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019; ILO, ILOSTAT 2018; UNESCO, UIS Institute for Statistics 2018; The World Bank, World Development Indicators June 2019 & Global Findex Database 2017; UNICEF, Global Databases October 2018, according to latest available data as of July 2019.



ADP's YOUTH PAGE

This page is the output of a joint collaboration between UNDP and UNICEF. It offers a space for youth, researchers, academics, entrepreneurs, civil society practitioners, policy makers, among others, to access, use, analyse, review and monitor data that relate to youth in the Arab region. Cross-cutting with other development topics such as Labour and Employment, Education, Demography, Banking and Finance, and others, the ADP's Youth Page provides users with access to international, national and regional youth datasets for 22 Arab countries, among other knowledge resources. **Through ADP's Data Visualization Tool and ADP's Sustainable Development Goal's Tracking Tool**, ADP users can also access and visualize SDG-related youth datasets.



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for every child



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

UNDP and UNICEF have joined forces to give a stake to the youth of the region. Through the ADP's Youth Page, youth can:

- Tell the stories of their lives;
- Make data-driven decisions;
- Enrich their research content, blog posts and podcasts;
- Visualize national and international data that relate to them;
- Conduct multi-country comparisons and access latest reports.



Youth



The **ADP's Youth Page** is specifically dedicated to conveying the youth challenges through data. Navigating it, you will be able to access, use, analyse and monitor data that relate to the 115 million adolescents and youth of the Arab region. To access the ADP's Youth Page, please visit: <http://data.arabdevelopmentportal.com/topics/Youth-14/International/>

650+ Youth indicators

121,000+ Youth datapoints

44 national and international data sources

Youth Overview
Youth Statistical Snapshot
Youth Infographics and Factsheets
Youth Publications

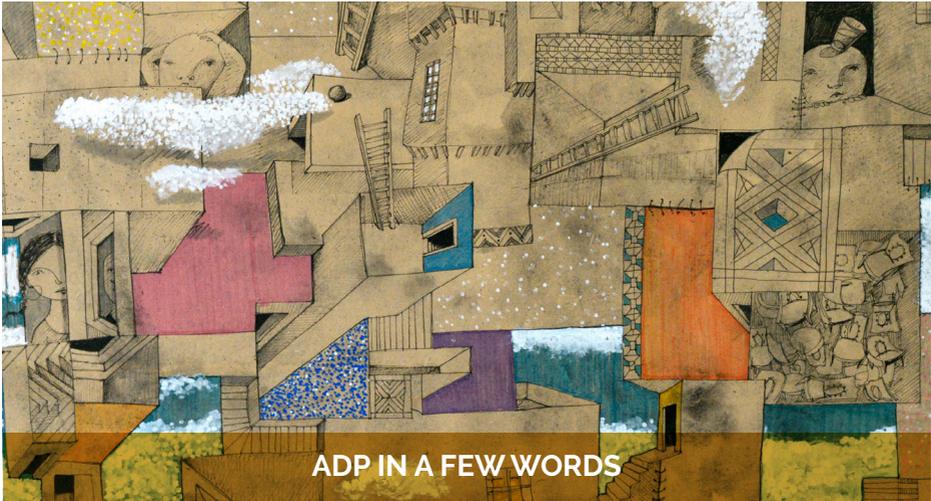
9 development topics

Demography
Health
Education
Labor and Employment
Gender
Banking and Finance
Poverty
Information and Communications Technology
Governance

Historical data between 1990 and latest available

Users

University students/ Researchers/ Data analysts and scientists/
Academics/ Entrepreneurs/ Civil Society practitioners/ Community leaders/
Activists/ Policy makers



Do you want to write a story, an article, a paper, create a podcast or a blog, make an evidence-based decision, or simply know more about your country or the Arab region? ADP is your one-stop-shop for data on development in the Arab region! Select a topic and dwell into data analysis and data visualization. You can visit the Arab Development Portal on:

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M. Klenz 2019