

# Doha Briefing 2018

“Focusing on Families to Support the Implementation of the SDGs ”

## Integrating a Family Perspective in the Localization of the SDGs and Arab Youth within the Context of Family Policies

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# Key Messages & Recommendations: Family Policies and SDGs

- 🕒 The absence of the family perspective in SDGs could be considered as **an opportunity** to focus on its integration in national development strategies and plans
- 🕒 Policies should be designed to **empower families** and give them more choices in line with the SDGs framework
- 🕒 **Develop family policies** that lead to:
  - ❖ Self-sufficient and resilient families
  - ❖ Healthy and educated children
  - ❖ Improved access to decent work for family bread-winners, men and women alike
  - ❖ Better work–family balance
  - ❖ Gender equality
  - ❖ Fulfillment of children’s rights
  - ❖ Stronger intergenerational bonds
- 🕒 Promote an **inclusive social protection system** that allows individuals to exit poverty reduction programs without forfeiting their rights to social protection.

# Key Messages & Recommendations : Children & Parenting

- 🕒 The provision of policies supporting **parental education** to contribute to the achievement of SDGs
- 🕒 **Family support programs** are indispensable tools for promoting children's development, reducing family poverty, and preventing intergenerational transfers of income and welfare ingredients
- 🕒 Extending the use of **couples' counseling** to children and young people's mental health services
- 🕒 **Family-work balance policies** are important to helping achieve a fairer distribution of household duties and child-care responsibilities
- 🕒 Promoting **family' involvement in quality and inclusive education**
- 🕒 Acknowledging the role of **grandparents** in parenting

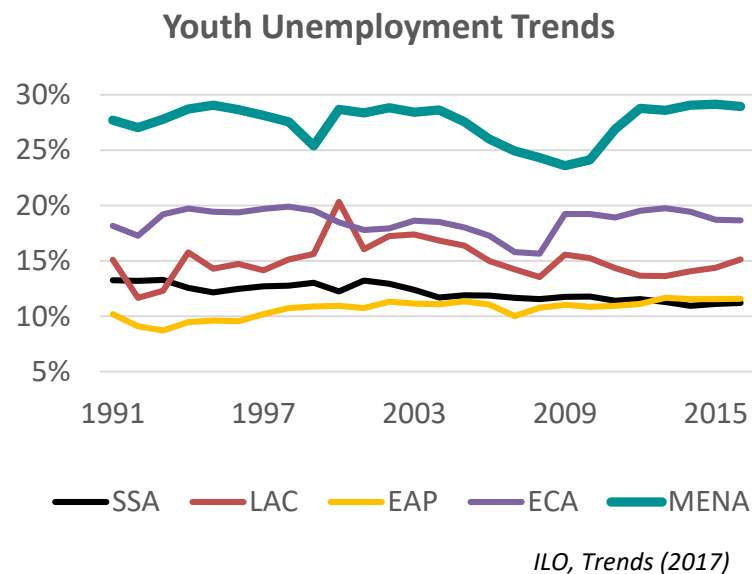
# Key Messages & Recommendations: Women & Youth

- Promote family policies that takes into account the status of **women's autonomy** for all
- Alleviate **legal barriers and legislative** shortcomings to gender equality
- Overcome region-specific gender stereotypes
- Youth policies can be more effective when approached through a **family lens**
- Family policies need to ensure **safe transition to adulthood**
- Build **capacity** for the youth to ensure equal opportunities for boys and girls to access quality education and decent jobs
- Youth in the Arab region experience the highest incidence of informal employment.

# The MENA\* Youth Employment Challenge

## Main Issue: Youth Social-Economic Exclusion

- 🕒 MENA consistently has had the **highest rates of youth unemployment** in world (30% in 2016).
- 🕒 Youth queue up for jobs in the **public sector**
- 🕒 Scarcity of jobs in the **formal private sector**
- 🕒 Schools provide limited marketable skills
- 🕒 Few opportunities to gain work experience
- 🕒 **Family pressures** limit interest in some careers
- 🕒 **Family financial support** can delay job take up



\* Most available data is for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which is mainly formed of Arab countries.

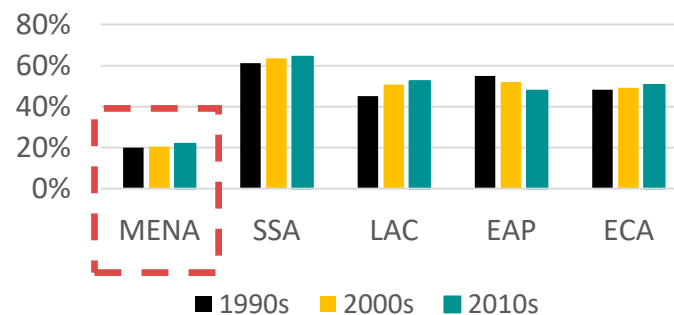
Other regions are Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), East Asia and Pacific (EAP) and Europe and Central Asia (ECA). North America is omitted.

# Female Labor Force Participation (LFP)

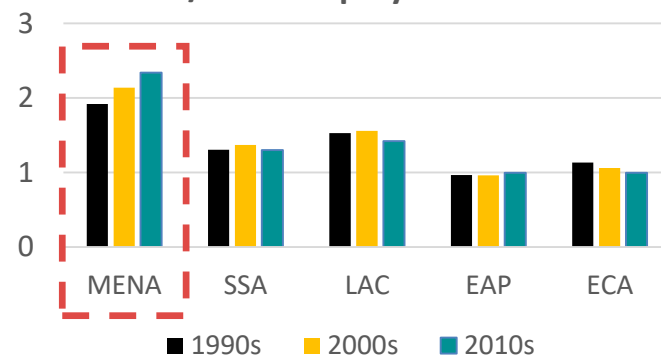
## Main Issue: Female Social-Economic Exclusion

- MENA has by far the **lowest female labor force participation rates** in the world (21% in 2016)
- MENA also has the **highest gender differences in unemployment rates** (2.3 times in 2016)
- Social and family norms regarding female work
- Limited range of **socially acceptable jobs**
- Preference for jobs with good work conditions
- Strong preference for jobs in the **formal sector**
- Weak **social support structures** (ex. day care)
- Reliance on family support gives families a say

Female LF Participation Rates



Ratio F/M Unemployment Rate



# The Plight of Migrant Workers & Refugees

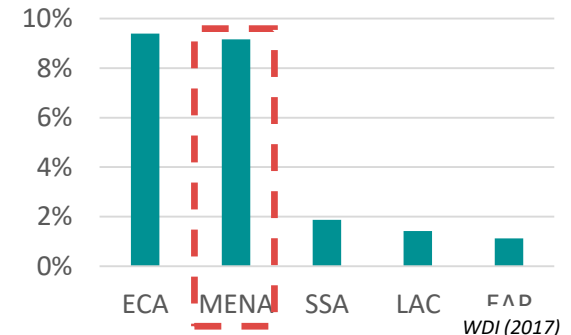
## Integration of Migrant Workers

- Among the **highest population shares** in the world
- Mainly in the Gulf, but also Lebanon, Jordan, etc.
- Limited ability to change jobs or start a business
- More flexibility would promote economic growth

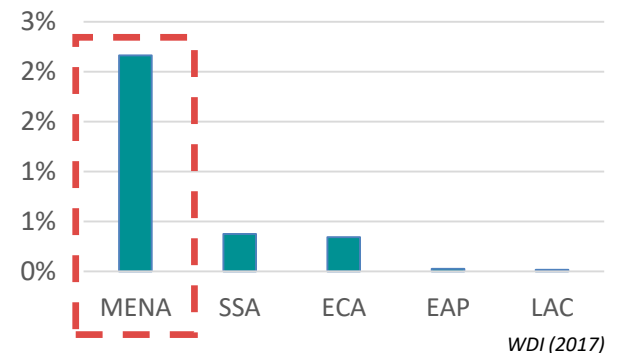
## Integration of Refugees

- By far the highest population share in the world
- Inability to access jobs in the formal sector
- Deterioration in their socioeconomic conditions
- Enormous pressures on **host communities**

Population Share - Migrants



Population Share - Refugees

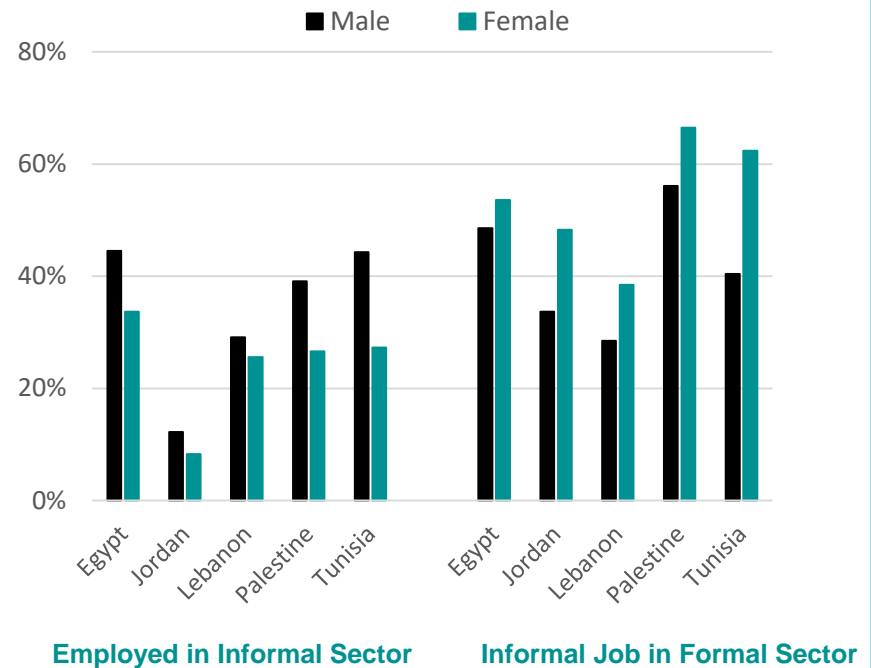


# Large Informal Sector

## Main Issue: Insertion into the public sector and formal private sector

- Large **unregulated informal economy** covering over **60%** of MENA workers
- Informal employment rates among youth may be as high as **80%**.
- Informal jobs typically lack stability, social protection, legal recourse and benefits
- **Young women** are less likely than young men to work in the informal sector
- Young women more likely than young men to have informal job in formal sector

Youth Employment in Informal Sector by Gender



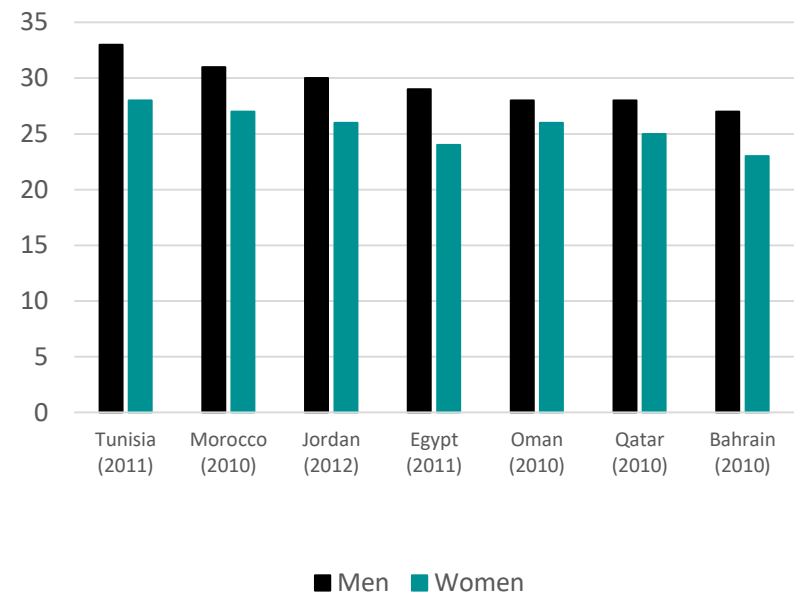
Source: SWTS (2015)



# Family Formation and Cohesion

- 🕒 Delayed marriage and family formation has become a major problem in the MENA region.
- 🕒 In Tunisia, the mean age at first marriage reached 33 for men and 28 for women in 2011.
- 🕒 Delayed marriage can lead to frustration, unrest and radicalization among a country's youth.
- 🕒 Major reasons for delayed marriage include:
  - ❖ Lack of decent employment opportunities.
  - ❖ Poor quality, low wage, unstable jobs.
  - ❖ The high cost of marriage and buying a house.
  - ❖ High rates of migration, especially among men.
- 🕒 These factors also affect family cohesion.

Mean Age at First Marriage



Source: UNDP (2016); ESCWA (2013)

# National Policies for Promoting Youth Employment

## Family Policy – Before Marriage

- ✔ Financial support for low-income families
- ✔ Policies / programs to support family cohesion
- ✔ Neutralize social stigma for entry-level jobs
- ✔ Neutralize stigma for female employment

## Family Policy – After Marriage

- ✔ Improve access to affordable housing
- ✔ Reduce barriers to female employment
- ✔ Support affordable daycare and preschool
- ✔ Policies / programs to support family stability

## Education Systems

- ✔ Focus on relevant, marketable skills
- ✔ Improve career guidance & work experience

## Public Sector

- ✔ Align salaries / benefits with the private sector
- ✔ Improve governance and limit corruption

## Private Sector

- ✔ Reduce barriers to starting & running a business
- ✔ Limit cronyism, especially on small scale

# Arab Youth & Family Policies: Points for Discussion

- ✔ Families in the Arab region play an important role in supporting their youth.
- ✔ Many actions help; covering aspects of social protection that are lacking in the region.
- ✔ Others actions hinder youth development and efforts to form families of their own.
- ✔ This is part of the Arab context and is expected and accepted by most youth and adults.
- ✔ Family policies are needed at the national level to support and complement their role.
- ✔ Globally, families, as a unit, have been suppressed and marginalized in the SDGs.
- ✔ Arab countries should focus on families as key actors in the development process.
- ✔ This is part of the important process of contextualizing and localizing the SDGs.



# DIFI

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البحوث لدعم السياسات الأسرية  
Research to advance family policies

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