

Invest in youth to boost Jordan's economic and social development, says new OECD Development Centre study

Amman, 20 February 2018 - With close to 70% of the population being below age 30, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a very youthful country. With such a large young population, investing in young people is not just a matter of rights; it is also a matter of smart social and economic development, according to the OECD Development Centre's [Youth Well-Being Policy Review in Jordan](#).

Over the last two decades, Jordan has made considerable socio-economic progress. However, young Jordanians still face multiple challenges. The OECD Development Centre's analysis of youth well-being in Jordan uses an innovative multi-dimensional approach to assess their situation in health, education, employment and civic participation.

"Youth is a formidable asset for Jordan's economy. But it will take new policy action to fully tap its potential and turn it into sustainable economic and social gains.", said Ian Brand-Weiner, Economist at the OECD Development Centre while presenting the study in Amman.

The *Youth Well-being Policy Review of Jordan* reveals that young Jordanians enjoy high access to education - 60.5% of 25-29-year-olds have a secondary or higher degree - yet, both quality and relevance are of particular concern. Jordanian students' results in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have declined or stagnated.

Moreover, close to one-third of young people in Jordan are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET). The NEET rate among young women is triple that of young men (43.8% vs. 14.5%). This is partly explained by the prevalence traditions and domestic tasks. Moreover, young Jordanians who do work often take informal jobs that do not match their qualifications and receive poor wages. Given the strong growth of medium-skilled professions in sectors such as tourism and hospitality, construction, retail trade, and textiles and clothing, investing in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) is key to improving labour market outcomes for youth. However, quality, relevance, coordination and governance in that sector need to improve for it to become an attractive alternative for young Jordanians.

Civic engagement by young Jordanians is limited. While youth recognise the importance of political participation, only a very small percentage are members of formal civic groups: 2.7% of a charitable society and 2.3% of a youth, cultural or sports organisation.

Investing in young people as agents of economic and social development is increasingly recognised in the political discourse. Adopting a national youth strategy would give the political impetus to increase investment in youth programmes and improve co-ordination among sectoral ministries.

"The Ministry of Youth, being on the threshold of a new phase, looks at all the issues that concerns youth with the utmost transparency, and through which, they wish to express their sincere appreciation to the efforts made by the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development for its active contribution in integrating young people.", said Mr Haditha Al Khreisha, Minister of Youth.

The newly established Ministry of Youth will need to take leadership in pushing the youth agenda forward and engaging youth in the policy debate on how to unlock their potential to become the engines of economic and social progress.

"The engagement of the EU towards youth in Jordan is directly linked to the priorities of the recommended National Youth Strategy, such as entrepreneurship, education, good governance, citizenship, employment and prevention of violent extremism.", said Jacob Arts, Attaché and Programme Manager of Education and Youth at the European Union Delegation in Jordan.

Press contacts

For more information or to obtain a copy of the study, journalists are invited to contact

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The *Youth Well-being Policy Review of Jordan* is part of the OECD Development Centre's Youth Inclusion Project, co-financed by the European Union. The project covers eight other countries: Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Malawi, Moldova, Peru, Togo and Viet Nam.

Find more about the study: <http://oe.cd/1h0>