



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO EVALUATION INSIGHTS

IOS EVALUATION OFFICE

EVALUATION OF THE NETWORKS OF

MEDITERRANEAN YOUTH (NET-MED YOUTH) PROJECT

#20

AUGUST

2019



EVALUATION INSIGHTS provides a snapshot of UNESCO's work in evaluation. Its purpose is to share insights and ideas with all interested stakeholders and to feed into ongoing discussions about the contribution of evaluation to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

NET-MED Youth at a glance

NET-MED Youth, a regional project funded by the European Union, was implemented by UNESCO from 2014 until 2018. With a budget envelope of over 9.6 million Euros, it aimed at the creation of an enabling environment for young women and men from nine of the Southern countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy - Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia – to develop their competencies, exercise their rights and meaningfully engage as active citizens in the development and implementation of national strategies affecting youth.



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With a comprehensive and needs-based approach tailored to the respective national contexts, NET-MED Youth responds to the challenges experienced by young women and men in the region. The Project was implemented through interdisciplinary activities in three thematic areas: (i) **youth policy development with the participation of youth**; (ii) **fair and objective coverage of youth news, rights, achievements and perspectives** and positioning of youth vis-à-vis national policies, and (iii) **youth skills development and labour market transitions**. Regional initiatives connecting youth with policy makers, media and other relevant actors across the Mediterranean aimed at providing responses to challenges affecting youth.

The evaluation assessed the overall performance of the Project and identified lessons learned to inform the design and management of future projects and activities aiming at youth engagement as well as any other youth-related interdisciplinary work of UNESCO.

Key messages emerging from the evaluation



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High relevance and platform for interdisciplinary approaches

NET-MED Youth demonstrated high relevance to UNESCO's Strategic Objectives and commitment to the 2030 Agenda of 'leaving no-one behind'. UNESCO provided an innovative platform for interdisciplinary and inclusive approaches in the field of Youth through the cooperation between the UNESCO Education, Communication and Information and the Social and Human Sciences Sectors. The Project succeeded in incorporating in its design and implementation the aspirations and views of youth in the beneficiary countries. While successful in enhancing youth representation in the public sphere at the country level, and in ensuring representation of youth at global events such as the Global Forum on Youth Policy in Baku in 2014, the diverse country contexts did not allow to fully exploit the Project's regional dimension.

Meaningful results

The Project attained a very good rate of completion of each planned activity. The achievements of NET-MED Youth were found to be satisfactory across the thematic areas in all countries and in line with the initially established intervention logic. Overall, the evaluation found that the Project significantly contributed to increased youth mobilization and participation and to meaningfully strengthening access and networking with and among youth organizations. This also helped push the youth agenda forward within the respective national contexts.

Approach to youth engagement and empowerment as a comparative strength

The UNESCO approach that focuses on engagement and commitment of youth participants and Youth Working Groups was highlighted as a particularly positive feature for strengthening the commitment and ownership by youth. Engagement of youth as actors and partners clearly established a comparative strength throughout the Project implementation in all countries. Only in some country specific contexts, youth engagement had not been able to be fully applied during the design and conceptualization stage of the Project.

Gender equality and inclusion well embedded transversally

Gender equality and inclusion of disadvantaged groups were found to be central features and valued components of NET-MED Youth across the nine countries. They were transversally embedded in all the Project Expected Results and the related activities, in terms of equal representation and content. Nonetheless the evaluation found that gender equality and inclusion could have been communicated and promoted more explicitly as thematic priorities, in particular with respect to the UNESCO global priority Gender Equality and Agenda 2030.

Potential for strategic partnerships and longer-term sustainability can be further explored

Although longer-term ownership and sustainability provisions beyond the project duration were not structurally built into the Project framework from the outset, both ownership and sustainability were implicitly considered at the inception stage and later devolved into national and local-level activities. Despite the numerous strategic partnerships and alliances established, and the ample potential for replication and scaling-up across all countries and levels, the absence of explicit replication and exit strategies represented some risks for the overall longer-term sustainability potential of the Project results.

Conclusions and lessons learned

Overall, NET-MED Youth was confirmed as a successful initiative that achieved significant results and created a momentum for youth empowerment and for advancing the Youth agenda in the respective countries. The Project contributed meaningfully to capacity development at the individual level and brought about cultural changes at institutional levels, in particular for youth organizations, media outlets, and national governments. For many young

women and men, the project provided an opportunity to engage with young people outside their existing networks, and to gain increased awareness about the challenges of youth in other countries.

The NET-MED Youth brand and the UNESCO-EU partnership provided increased recognition and credibility to the interventions carried out by youth within their communities. The NET-MED Youth contribution in the context of the Agenda 2030 resulted not least from UNESCO's good practices in working with Youth through active engagement of youth as actors and partners. NET-MED Youth successfully incorporated youth aspirations and represented a new and more comprehensive approach to youth engagement and empowerment in an interdisciplinary fashion.

The high potential for replication of NET-MED Youth, as a continuation or as an example of good practice for a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to youth engagement is thus to be further explored.



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The way forward

The evaluation therefore suggests to build on the momentum created and the good results achieved by seeking financing for a continuation or replication of NET-MED Youth, by institutionalizing the NET-MED Youth brand as an example of good practice and a basis for new thinking on which to build UNESCO's work, in particular future initiatives with a focus on Youth.

The evaluation also proposes to integrate the lessons learnt from youth interventions in the design of future projects, to build on the experience gathered, both in terms of success stories and challenges, to reinforce measures for strengthening the regional dimensions, as well as to consider the development of comprehensive ownership, sustainability and exit strategies from a project outset. Furthermore, it recommends to embed gender equality and inclusion even more firmly as a thematic focus.

Access [HERE](#) the full report.