

The MNA region of the World Bank Group is organizing a workshop, “Young People in Arab Countries: Promoting Opportunities and Participation” to be held on April 28-30, 2010, in Marseille, France.

Young People in Arab Countries: Promoting Opportunities and Participation”

***Marseille, Conference
April 28-30, 2010***

The conference “Young People in Arab Countries: Promoting Opportunities and Participation” is co-organized with the newly established Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), a multi-partner center administered by the World Bank and designed to act as a catalyst and facilitator for developing collaborative programs. The three days conference will take place in Marseille at the premises of the Ecole de la Deuxieme Chance (School for Second Chance), a pioneering and one of the most successful programs in non-formal learning and job placement benefitting school drop-outs residing in poor urban neighborhoods. It will offer a review of good practices and state of the art knowledge on the above-mentioned issues, while engaging governments, young representatives of civil society and relevant youth organizations across the various themes. 120 participants from Arab and other countries are expected to participate to the workshop.

The workshop has the objective of engaging various stakeholders and partners to develop concrete areas of collaboration on how to best address the needs of young people in Arab countries, especially those facing multiple disadvantages. While the event will have a special focus on young people in Southern Mediterranean countries, stakeholders will be included from across the Middle East and North Africa Region as the approaches and investment requirements are of relevance to a larger group of countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region.

The workshop aims at providing an enabling forum to:

- Discuss good practices in youth employment policy and overall youth policy implementation, including mechanisms to institutionalize youth participation in public policy;
- Share some successful interventions implemented in Arab countries and elsewhere supporting integrated youth development; specific case studies will be presented so as to discuss scaling up or replication options;
- Discuss the state of statistical and overall analytic knowledge on youth employment and participation in the countries under consideration, the measures in place to address these issues and the remaining gaps;
- Identify priority areas for capacity building from the point of view of public and non-governmental stakeholders;

- Announce winners for the grant competition to be launched by the Global Fund for Youth Investment, a World-Bank based multi-donor trust fund which supports innovative projects for youth entrepreneurship and active citizenship.

The workshop will include:

- **The opening session** with focus on presenting the meeting's objectives and a brief regional overview of existing data, knowledge gaps and existing measures addressing disadvantaged youth in Southern Mediterranean countries. This session will include opening remarks by partner institutions such as the League of Arab States, Union for the Mediterranean, City of Marseille, Young Arab Leaders, as well as the World Bank.
- **Three Plenary Sessions** will focus on the following areas: (i) Youth Employment Policies: (ii) Youth Policy Implementation: Priorities and Challenges Ahead: and (iii) Developing and Scaling Up Youth Investments. The third plenary session will, in particular, explore opportunities for scaling up or launching new youth-focused operational projects in the region building on the good practices existing in the MENA Region and elsewhere. The discussion will focus on case studies on integrated youth development covering life and employability skills building, integrated youth-friendly services, job placement, entrepreneurship, and youth participation at community level and in public life.
- **Five break-out sessions** will be dedicated to the following themes.
 - Research Agenda for Youth Development
 - Capacity Building to Implement Youth Policy and Investments
 - The Role of Private Sector in Supporting Income Opportunities for Young People
 - Youth & Local Development
 - Youth Green Employment

The Expected Outcomes are:

- A shared commitment for investing in youth in Arab countries is agreed upon;
- Operational partnerships are established around the three programmatic areas: (i) research; (ii) scaling up investments and (iii) capacity building;
- Establishment of a more easily accessible database with youth relevant data, analytic work and other resources is agreed among key partners as a major output of the program;
- The GFYI grant competition is awarded.