

# THE MENA YOUTH CONUNDRUM

Generating Productivity, Preventing Disillusionment

أكاديمية  
الإمارات  
الدبلوماسية  
EMIRATES  
DIPLOMATIC  
ACADEMY

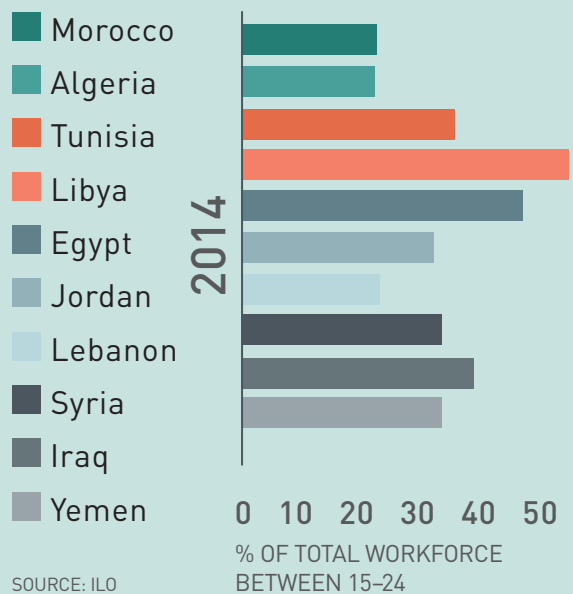


Youth unemployment in the MENA region is the world's highest and without serious action, it is set to increase further.

Already before the Arab uprisings, the World Bank estimated that the region needed to create 100 million jobs to absorb all those entering the workforce. Social uprisings, conflicts and war in several have now exacerbated the situation.

Social misery is not the only consequence. Crime and extremism feed on socio-economically deprived youth. Asked about reasons why youth would join Daesh, MENA youth indicated a lack of jobs and opportunities as the most important driver.

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT



## SHAPING UP FOR GROWTH FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

**TODAY'S WORLD IS GLOBALIZED, COMPETITIVE AND DRIVEN BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR. MENA YOUTH, THEIR PARENTS AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO ENABLE GROWTH IN THIS SECTOR.**

Embed critical thinking and problem-solving skills into the school curriculum and encourage diverse interests.

Encourage vocational training, teach marketable skills and ensure a link with on-the-job experience.

Raise youth with an entrepreneurial mindset and value private sector careers and self-employment.

Ensure that the private sector can operate smoothly, reduce the paperwork and incentivize start-up businesses.

Make sure to tackle the right issues by systematically consulting youth and including young representatives in policymaking.

Explore all opportunities provided by the ICT sector in order to scale solutions, in education, skills training and job creation.

## A ROLE FOR DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Channeling the creative energy of young adults in MENA into productive livelihoods will have a positive effect domestically. It will also increase regional stability and international security.

Ensure youth-related issues are a recurrent agenda item in international meetings and create implementation-focused regional task forces.

Work with international business to map (and then address) employment and skills needs as well as the barriers to job-creating (foreign) investment.

Incentivize development agencies and the private sector to design aid projects to improve MENA youth's competitiveness, where possible linked to actual jobs.

Invest in relevant research and partner with the private sector to explore the scaling of education and employment solutions through ICT.