



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa
Office for North Africa

BEING **YOUNG** IN THE **MAGHREB**





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Economic Commission for Africa
North Africa Bureau

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IN THE MAGHREB

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BEING YOUNG IN THE MAGHREB

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PREFACE

In the International Year of Youth 2010-2011, the North Africa Bureau of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA/NA), in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union and support from UNICEF and UNESCO commissioned a study on the youth of the five Arab Maghreb Union countries, especially the most vulnerable, in a bid to better understand what the young are going through, what they want and what they contribute to the development and construction of their societies. This study represents the first initiative having the aim of combining a qualitative and quantitative approach to presenting a vast portrayal of the situation of adolescents and youth in the Maghreb.

In this region the young are at the heart of the protest movements and the currently on-going political and social transformations. In their respective countries they have taken the initiative and have pooled their efforts in favor of greater dignity, social justice and more freedom. Beyond this point, their struggle triggered the arousal of a youth-based citizen awakening. As the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon recently put it «since the dawn of the Arab spring, the youth of the world has invaded the streets clamoring for greater opportunities to partake in economic and political life».

«Let's listen to them, continues the Secretary General, out of fear that forthcoming decades could see the development of instability and alienation thereby dampening the outlook for peace, security and prosperity for all.»

This call for listening to the world's youth mirrors the approach behind the study entitled «Being Young in the Maghreb». On the basis of a review of literature, analysis of statistical data and series of interviews with institutional players, civil society and others, it entails a diagnostic of the situation of education and training, employment and leisure-time activities, health, vulnerability and participation of the young, as well as an analysis of public policies on youth and series of guidelines for the future.

Further, on the basis of their testimony and words, this study expresses the indignation of adolescents and the young, their zest for life and hope of being understood and listened to. To everyone interested in new generations, it offers to all an inside view of the Maghreb and its youth.

Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane
Director, ECA North Africa Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document contains a synthesis of the outcome of research performed on the existence of youth rights among young people aged 15 to 24 in the five countries of the Arab Maghreb Union in the framework of the International Year of Youth 2010-2011. This study entitled "Being young in the Maghreb" was commissioned by the North Africa Bureau of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA/NA) in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union with support from UNICEF and UNESCO. It seeks to understand what North African youth are experiencing and what their hopes are, and what they could contribute to the development and construction of their respective societies.

This study represents the first initiative seeking to present a wide diagnostic of the situation of adolescents and young people in the Maghreb. Combining a quantitative and qualitative approach, it tackles the issues of education, employment, leisure, health, vulnerability and participation of the young, in addition to the question of inter-generational dialogue and youth policies implemented in the region. Conducted according to a participative approach, this study as based on the testimony of young folks themselves, expresses their indignation, their zest for life and hopes of being understood and listened to. In conclusion, it proposes a series of guidelines helping young people to expand their participation in development and procure better implementation of their rights.

People under 25 represent more than half of the population in the Arab Maghreb Union countries and the young aged 15 to 24 approximately one fifth. Everywhere, except in Mauritania, the relative weight of youth is expected to decline over the next decade. The current demographic thrust of youth might constitute a window of opportunity fuelling growth in the countries of the Maghreb provided pertinent, equitable and inclusive policies are implemented.

The governments of the region are facing considerable pressure on the education and training system because of the need for heavy investment. Access to education has moved ahead strongly in all cycles but the system suffers from a crisis in quality and absence of equity hampering yield both internally and externally. Illiteracy affects millions of youngsters while the literacy and informal education policies remain insufficient. As for training, the whole system is undersized, rigid and poorly integrated into the educational system. They are marked by the predominance of residential training which is less profitable than alternating training and learning. Training offerings are not very accessible to the young or little educated youth and definitely not geared to the needs of businesses.

The rate of unemployment and inactivity of the young stems from the steady growth in the number of first job seekers, the failure by the local economies to create jobs and poor adaptation of the educational and training system. Women and degree-holders are the categories most affected by joblessness. The answers to the employment crisis remain inadequate given the scope of the challenge whether in intermediation services or support to entrepreneurship, while a greater number of the young, including degree-holders, tend to join the informal sector.

Given the high number of inactive youths, leisure takes on leading importance in their daily lives. However, a large proportion of young people use time unproductively to chat with friends, stroll about or watch television. The phenomenon of the gang group most often composed of boys is spreading. Through group dynamics, they share experiences and create sub-cultures adults find

hard to understand. A new phenomenon is that genuine friendships go hand in hand with virtual relationships, youth in the Maghreb being deeply involved in the digital revolution. Cultural, artistic and sports activities are developing but remain little attractive and lacking in diversity.

The vulnerability of teenagers and the young is multidimensional. This is translated by the rise in high risk behavior like smoking, drugs and alcohol, unprotected sex, suicide attempts and the desire to immigrate. Certain categories seem to be particularly vulnerable such as street children, the disabled, the sexually abused, youngsters at odds with the law, single mothers, and young girls suffering from gender-based exploitation and violence. Regarding these issues civil societies have played a pioneering role but governments have lost time to establish pertinent social services even though some progress has been made, in particular in the area of HIV and AIDS prevention.

Young North Africans enjoy few occasions to participate in decision making. In face of the difficulties the young endure to attain independence, the family constitutes a safe haven and place of increasing dependency. Further, while civic education, good citizenship and knowledge of rights have been institutionalized, this has not been followed by spaces for dialogue and effective participation. With little representation in elected circles, in the Maghreb the young have been at the forefront of social movements. While aspiring to democracy and social justice they want nothing to do with conventional politics and opt for new forms of commitment such as militancy via social networks, demonstrations, and for a minority, radicalism. Even though partaking little in associations, the young favor the development of volunteer endeavors.

Relations between the generations remain marked by traditional education based on patriarchy and obedience. Many taboos limit spaces for dialogue between parents and siblings, while adolescents need to share their questionings and concerns and stay informed about the risks involved. In addition, they want to marry and start families. To become adults the young have to increasingly postpone this ideal due to the longer period of study and insecure economic straits. Breaking away from traditional living values, they are for the mononuclear family and underline their determination to freely choose a spouse.

For decades the young have remained absent from governmental policies in North Africa. These policies were restricted to defining the objectives with limited resources, in particular in connection with sports and leisure time. In the late 2000s, some governments took stock of the disarray of the young and the potential risk it poses to the stability of North African countries. The Arab Spring further convinced them of this and the implementation of «multisectoral» or «integrated» policies on youth could become one of the strategic priorities for the governance and social policies in the region.

The new and better coordinated policies on youth could reside in the intersectoral nature, fair analysis of the situation, sustainable youth participation and the relatively high degree of political determination to reform the methods of governance and the mobilization of considerable resources, in particular with regard to the most vulnerable. In consideration of the principal conclusions of this study a few major guidelines emerge in seven key areas:

1. Promoting decent jobs and entrepreneurship by giving priority to the governmental agency developing research and prospective studies, strengthening intermediation services, developing active policies on the labor market geared to little educated and underprivileged youth, help for young entrepreneurs, adherence to labor laws in the private sector and continuing to the fight against exploitation and all sorts of traffic in the informal sector.

2. Building the internal and external efficiency of education by furthering the fight against dropouts and «second chance» schools, stimulating demand for secondary education for girls, the poor and rural dwellers, intensifying reform for quality education, revision of the guidance systems, aligning university and professional training with market needs, developing technical and alternating training and learning, and moralization of educational institutions.
3. Developing adolescents and the young participation by lending support to associations and independent networks and linking them to the design, implementation and follow-up of policies, encouraging renewal of the political elite, developing volunteer activities, creating effective mechanisms for participation in education and leisure-time structures and building awareness among communities of the rights and benefits of participation.
4. Developing health services adapted to adolescents and the young by eliminating the legal impediments to universal access to sexual and reproductive health, the creation of integrated and well adapted programs, developing sex education, streamlining of abortion laws, the provision of help for the victims of sexual violence, strengthening of the fight against early marriage and developing mental health services.
5. Creating a leisure-time policy encouraging human development and creativity by associating youth organizations with the development of policies and management of leisure-time spaces, developing partnerships, creating diversified, quality sports infrastructures particularly in semi-urban and rural areas, encouragement of sports among girls, the development of reading and creativity, live entertainment and discovery travel as well as learning about the media and new information technologies.
6. Seeking equity by creating a continuum of services and care between child protection and youth policies, granting special attention to adolescents, strengthening the gender approach, boosting the representation of all categories of youth in participative mechanisms and ensuing special protection for the most vulnerable.
7. The fight against social and cultural norms unfavorable to the rights of adolescents and the young by encouraging the discussion of taboos in the media and civil society and by implementing information campaigns on the negative consequences of certain social norms and discriminatory practices.

FACTS AND FIGURES¹

- Illiteracy still affects millions of youths aged 15 to 24 in the Maghreb, particularly in Mauritania (33%), Morocco (23%) and Algeria (8%). Women are the principal victims especially in Morocco where the gender gap reaches 17 points (F: 32%; M: 15%), vs. 7 in Mauritania and 5 in Algeria. The possibilities of training and reintegration for those excluded from education are low in all NA countries.
- Secondary education (junior high and high school) is showing progress but remains inaccessible to many youths particularly in Mauritania and Morocco. The gross rate of school attendance in this cycle (2009) reached 24% and 58%, respectively vs. 90% in Tunisia and 96% in Algeria. In the Maghreb underprivileged and rural girls are the very first to be excluded from secondary education. Access to higher education has increased twofold in ten years in Algeria and in Tunisia, where about one third of the young population are enrolled. It is on the increase in Morocco but concerns only one out of eight young people and remains weak in Mauritania with less than one young person out of 20. There is a majority of young girls in this cycle in Tunisia and Algeria but this segment constitutes a minority in Morocco and Mauritania.
- The North Africa sub-region holds the world record for youth unemployment aged 15 to 24 with an average in 2009 of 23.7%. In the Arab Maghreb Union countries the rate of joblessness among the young, depending on national data, ranges between 18% in Morocco and 22% in Algeria, 29% in Tunisia and over 50% in Mauritania.
- Unemployment affects females more than males and degree-holders more than the young with little or no education. In Algeria, the rate of joblessness of young degree-holding females (34%) is three times higher than for males (11%). In Morocco the jobless rate among young degree-holders comes to 27% (vs. 17% among the young without education).
- Evaluating the number of the jobless is not enough to grasp the scope of inactivity among the young. Estimated to be of 60% in the Arab region (MENA), here again the rate of inactivity is the highest in the world for youths unable to find any work or who have given up looking and consequently are not included in unemployment figures.
- Time spent with friends remains the main pastime of nine out of ten young North Africans, the other predominant distraction being television and Internet use which has literally exploded over ten years especially in Morocco where the number of users per 100 inhabitants grew from 0.7 to 49 between 2000 and 2010 and in Tunisia from 2.8 to 37. In Algeria and Libya this number is not so large (12.5 and 14 respectively) and it remains very weak in Mauritania (3).

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the sources of quantified indicators come from or are supported by publications on United Nations websites. Availability of data on Libya is rare.

- Risk-prone health practices among adolescents and the young is rising: smoking where the age of smoking the first cigarette and drugs taking is moving forward especially among boys, unprotected sex is spreading while cases of depression and suicide attempts appear to be on the rise, above all among girls.
- The attraction of migration affects nearly 40% of youth in the central Maghreb as is reported by a number of national and international surveys. Young people are greater in number than their elders to seek out illegal immigration and are fully aware of accepting the consequences and sometimes mortal risks of such an undertaking.
- Young dependents counting on their families to an advanced age seek to help with domestic tasks but partake very little in decision-making concerning the group or their own personal situation. The young suffer from the sometimes severe restrictions on individual freedoms, especially girls. In Morocco nearly 38% of young girls say they are hit by psychological impediments and hurdles to their freedom, reports a recent national survey.
- Young females are almost absent from elected bodies and fewer than 10% are active in associations. In spite of this, they do engage in certain types of political activism, in particular through social networks. From January to April 2011 during the Arab Spring, the number of Facebook users rose to 536 000 in Tunisia, 590 000 in Morocco and 561 000 in Algeria.
- While the great mass of young people hopes to marry and start a family, the age of the first marriage is steadily pushed back, by 9 years in Tunisia and Morocco and 11 years in Algeria over the past 50 years. Henceforth it occurs increasingly later in comparison to the age of marriage desired by youth.

I. Context of study

To help ease the difficulties experienced by adolescents in building the present and future, the United Nations as of 1995 initiated the United Nations World Action Program for Youth for 2000 and beyond, with the aim of better understanding the problems of youth and improving chances to participate in the life of society.

To rekindle this dynamic, the International Year of Youth was proclaimed by the United Nations on 12 August 2010 on the theme: «Dialogue and Mutual Understanding». This initiative had the aim of building awareness among governments, the media, civil society and international cooperation organizations of the need for greater association of youth in reflections on public policies to better identify their concerns and to mutually define the means of providing answers.

The study entitled: Being Young in the Maghreb therefore forms a part of this framework. It was conducted in a particularly troubled context while many of the States in this region are experiencing unprecedented uprisings and revolutions widely fuelled by the young. This study therefore provides certain keys for understanding the reasons behind this explosion, the determination of letting youths be heard and demands for change.

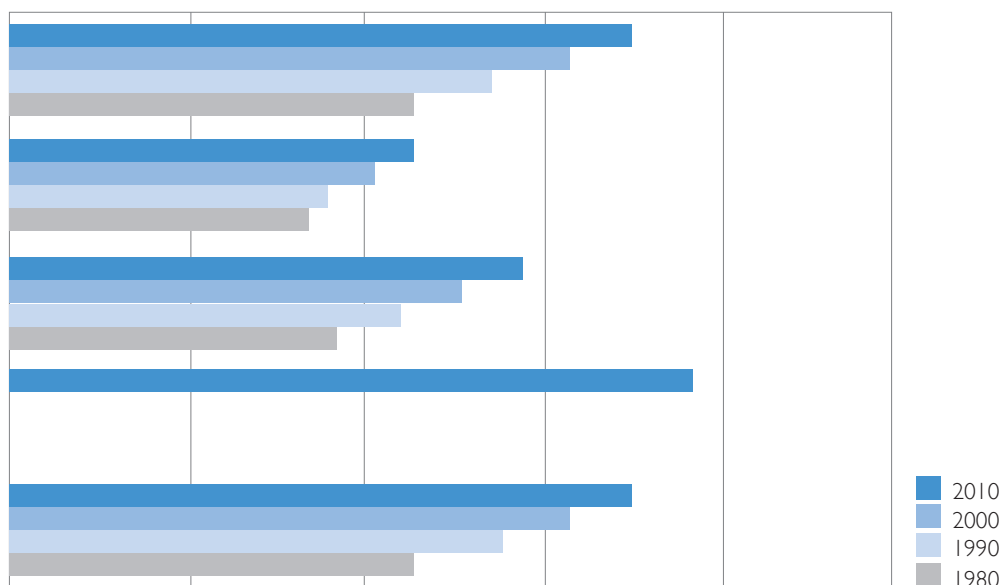
Approaching the world of youth makes it possible get an idea of the considerable challenges the governments and societies of the Maghreb will have to confront over forthcoming years. Although insufficient, considerable progress has been made over the past decades, in particular in the field of legislation where the States have ratified the major conventions on human rights, especially for children and the young, and proceeded to the harmonization of national laws and international standards.

Further, heavy investments in the social sectors and modernization of the economies has made it possible to improve the living conditions of local populations and the establishment of rights of youth with regard to education, as shown by the situation of the human development index in the region's five countries.

Table and graph I.1.: Trend in human development index (HDI) 1980-2010

HDI	1980	1990	2000	2010
Algeria	0.454	0.551	0.624	0.696
Libya	nd	nd	nd	0.770
Morocco	0.364	0.435	0.507	0.579
Mauritania	0.332	0.353	0.410	0.453
Tunisia	0.450	0.542	0.630	0.698
MENA Average	0.444	0.516	0.578	0.641
World Average	0.558	0.594	0.634	0.682

Source: Report on Human Development 2011, UNDP.



However, the pace of action has diminished over the past decade. While their parents witnessed a net improvement in living standards and considerable changes in access to basic social services, the young generation has been particularly hard hit by the slowdown in progress and rising unemployment.

To this is added the world economic crisis that struck in 2008.

In the absence of effective public policies in favor of youth, currently at the pinnacle of its demographic push, resources have seemingly remained focused in the hands of the elders, thereby disrupting youth empowerment. Political evolution and corruption, widening inequality, the progress achieved in education and the effects of globalization have sharpened the quest by young people for change.

Along with changes in society, these multiple factors have contributed to upset the «conventional» lines of youth evolution punctuated by a succession of events: end of studies and training, access to the labor market, and the starting of a family. The events normally marking the transition to adulthood have become increasingly obscured and many young folks feel growing revolt and identity malaise. This is mainly due to the deepening of inter-generational and other disconnects

Furthermore, today's youth searches for identity and challenges pre-established models previously transmitted by older people, particularly their parents. External constraints impeding the pace of empowerment are added to more intimate factors and concerns upsetting the approach to adulthood and the building of identity, factors that have become more complex than previously.

Table 1.2. :A few benchmarks on the five Arab Maghreb Union countries

Indicator	Algeria	Libya	Morocco	Mauritania	Tunisia
Population (millions)	36	6,4	32,3	3,5	10,6
Average age	26,2	25,9	26,3	19,8	28,9
Urban population (%)	67,1	78,1	58,8	41,7	67,7
Life expectancy	73,1	74,8	72,2	58,6	74,5
GNI/inhabitant (\$)	7 658	12 637	4 196	1 859	7 281
Ranking in HDI (out of 187)	96e	64e	130e	159e	94e
Ranking in gender inequality (out of 187)	71e	51e	104e	126e	45e
Population living on less than \$1.25 per day (%)	nd	nd	2,5	21,2	2,6
Rate of adult illiteracy	72,6	88,9	56,1	57,5	77,6
Public spending on education (% of GDP)	5,8	3,9	5,5	2,5	6,2
Govn't spending on health (% of GDP)	3,6	1,9	1,7	1,6	3

Source: Report on Human Development, 2011, UNDP.

2. Objectives and methodology

2.1 Objectives of study

The principal objective of this study is to improve knowledge of the situation, the expectations and outlook for adolescents and young people in the five countries of the Arab Maghreb Union, i.e. Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia, and highlight their contribution to development. The study gives an updated and dynamic vision of the reality experienced by these young men and women, particularly with regard to the most vulnerable, i.e. rural and semi-rural residents, the unemployed, those working in the informal sector, and the young living in conditions of severe insecurity. The principal topics of the research carried out in the framework of this study include education and training, employment and economic integration, leisure-time activities, health, vulnerability and the participation of adolescents and youth.

More precisely, the objectives of this study are to identify and analyze the role and situation of adolescents and youth in the development process and the stakes facing the future of societies in the Maghreb, the opportunities and constraints involved, the conditions required for improving their situation, the experiences likely to serve as models making it possible to encourage the participation of the young, and the capacities of the participating parties, young people themselves, civil society, the private sector, the media, and partners in international cooperation to promote adolescents and young people rights implementation.

2.2 Definition of youth

To study the situation of the youth, it is also necessary to determine what exactly is covered by this concept. Youth is generally defined as the transitional period from childhood to adulthood. During this phase, individuals live in a climate of physical, social and other changes enabling them to gradually free themselves from dependency on others and achieve independence².

² Report on development in the world 2007.

«Youth is a period when one begins to have problems but which is also one of the most beautiful things. It is the age of discovery.»

Moroccan high school student

This phase differs from one country to another and partially depends on the socio-cultural context and institutional and legal framework of each State. The definition of youth can also be affected by a wide range of factors such as the average age at which children complete their education and training or reach legal age when they can begin to work, marry, vote and do military service.

Youth is therefore defined more as a state the limits of which are indefinite and relative, rather than a clear-cut age. Therefore it is logical that the age brackets taken into consideration can vary from one body to another as is shown in the below table:

Body	Age bracket
United Nations General Assembly	15-24 years of age
WHO	10-24 years of age
UNICEF	10-19 years of age
African Union	15-35 years of age
Depending on country	15-24, 15-29, 15-35, 0-25 and 12-30 years of age

In compliance with the terms of reference, this study uses the definition of the United Nations General Assembly according to which youth is the age of transition where the young aged 15 to 24 evolve from adolescence to adulthood, from the learning stage to active life, from an imagined to an all too real world.

The data insofar as possible comply with this definition except when the only information available in the countries concerned by the study is based on other criteria.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Methodological approaches

This study has been carried out according to human rights and the gender approach, in other words an approach emphasizing the rights of young men and women as spelled out in international conventions, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols, the Convention on the removal of all forms of sex discrimination against women and the international pacts pursuant to civil rights and policies as well as economic, social and cultural rights. The gender dimension was transversally integrated to reflect the constraints in connection with the promotion of equality between girls and boys.

The Methodology is also based on an approach based on equity with particular stress placed on vulnerable and marginalized youth. This approach makes it possible to grapple with the ever-growing gaps emerging hand in hand with the application of the rights of youth in the Maghreb.

Generally, the consultants adopted a participative and concerted approach. They implicated partners in the conducting of the study and its logistic organization, and above all directly consulted youth on all the topics discussed.

They took it to heart to consider in well-balanced fashion the legitimate points of view expressed in the framework of the research via interviews and focus groups. The said points of view were systematically interspersed with data gathered via statistical and documentary analysis.

2.3.2 Methodological approach and data collection

The framework of analysis of this study made it possible to confront rights and the expectations of youth on their actual situation and the existing institutional responses so as to assess the gaps that have to be filled, measure the progress achieved and principal constraints, identify the roles, capacities and best practices of those in charge of achieving human rights and recommend the priorities for building integrated and inclusive youth policies throughout the whole region.

On the basis of available data, the consultants were particularly attentive to suggesting an analysis shedding light on the existing discrepancies (per age, gender, living standards, place of residence, regional belonging) and unequal access of youth to rights and existing services. However, the scarcity of disaggregated indicators in the countries of North Africa did not make it possible to go more deeply into the analysis of the discrepancies to the extent desired.

The conclusions drawn in this report are based on a review of literature, an analysis of quantitative data on the five countries of the Maghreb, and study of the qualitative data gathered in four countries (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia) via a series of 76 interviews and 10 focus groups (for further information, see appendix).

The study was conducted between July and November 2011, the investigation work in the four countries was extended from early September to late October.

2.3.3 Principal constraints

The consultants were up against certain difficulties in conducting this study, including:

- Restricted availability of data: the quasi absence of recent consolidated data on Libya, the lack of data and reports specifically dealing with North Africa while extensive information is available about the global Arab region (MENA), the scarcity of disaggregated data on the situation of youth in Arab Maghreb Union countries, and the low level of data on Algeria in some sectors.
- Difficulties in approaching certain taboo subjects with youth, such as sexuality and family disputes;
- An overly restricted calendar and resources given the scope of the study (five countries, several topics) and late roll out of the study and in-the-field investigations.

3. Results of study

3.1 Signification Of Youth In The Maghreb

3.1.1 The «thrust» of Youth, opportunity ... or source of tension?

On average, youth under 25 represents more than one half the populations of Arab Maghreb Union countries and the bracket aged between 15 and 24 only represents nearly one fifth.

This demographic «thrust» of the youth population linked to the high level of fertility from 1980 to 2000 and the following demographic transition represents a great opportunity for growth to

the extent in which it allows the region's economies to profit from a high number of individuals at the pinnacle of their productive^{2 3}capacity while young children and the elderly are relatively few in number.

However, this virtuous dynamic can come about only if the States implement the requisite incentive-building policies, in particular in the key areas of education and training, employment and other social sectors such as health and leisure time.

If not, if they will feel impoverished and marginalized with the young could constitute a powerful destabilizing force engendering conflicts and difficult-to-control social movements. Linked to factors inherent to the political regimes in place, such as poor management and authoritarianism, the rise of the frustrations among the youth in the MENA region, including the Maghreb partially explains the uprisings of the "Arab spring".

In the five Arab Maghreb Union countries the mass of youth is more or less great depending on the history and degree of advancement of the demographic transition of the country in question.

In [Algeria](#), the demographic transition is not yet over, the share of 15 to 24 year olds in the total population rose by 37% from 1966 to 2008, climbing from 15.8% to 21.8%. The downturn observed after 2006 (see table below) might slow in the future given the rekindling of the birth rate witnessed over the past few years.

Table 3.1. :Trend in structure of youth in Algeria 1966-2008

	1966	1977	1987	1998	2006	2008
15-19	9.0	10.3	10.9	12.0	11.2	10.7
20-24	6.8	8.5	9.7	10.0	11.3	11.1
15-24	15.8	18.8	20.6	22.0	22.5	21.8

Source: General Commissariat for economic planning and outlook.

In 2008, the population numbered 34.8 million persons, of which 50.6% males and 49.4% females globally spread out as follows:

- 28% children and young adolescents [aged 0-14]
- 22% adolescents and the young [aged 15-24];
- 50% adults (aged over 25).

In [Libya](#), the population amounted to 6.4 million people in 2010, among which a total of two million migrant works who have now left the country in great numbers. The highly urbanized population (87%) is very young.

Among the most recent estimates, average age 50% of the inhabitants was under age 20⁴ and 33.6% between 0 and 14.

The population of Libya continues to grow but the demographic transition is underway. In 2006 the birth rate was estimated at 26.5‰ the composite fertility rate being 3.3 children per woman⁵, vs. 7.6 in 1971.

³ The young: an underestimated trump card, World Bank 2007

⁴ P. Gourdin, «Géopolitique de la Libye /Geopolitics of Libya», in review Géopolitique (18 September 2011), <http://www.diploweb.com/Geopolitique-de-la-Libya.html>.

⁵ http://dictionary.sensagent.com/démographie+de+la+Libya/fr-fr/#cite_note-CIA-0.

In **Morocco** the demographic transition has entered into its very last phase. The fertility rate is now only 2.19 children per woman⁶, i.e. just slightly above the threshold of generation renewal (2.1).

In 2010, people under 25 years represented 47% of a total population estimated at 32 million inhabitants, urbanized by 58%⁷. The population breakdown is as follows:

- 27% children and young adolescents [aged 0-14];
- 20% adolescents and youth [aged 15-24];
- 53% adults [aged over 25].

According to government resources⁸, more than one fourth of the Moroccan population is concentrated in semi-urban areas and nearly one half of youth living in urban areas belong to families whose father, originally of rural origin, has changed the place of residence.

Mauritania has the youngest population in the region. The situation thereof is more akin to that of the countries of West rather than North Africa. It is far from having achieved its demographic transition. Mauritania's population grew almost twofold from 1977 to 2000⁹ and 62% of Mauritians are currently under the age of 25.

According to the nation statistics Bureau (ONS), the global population is estimated at 3.3 million spread out as follows:

- 42% children and young adolescents [aged 0-14];
- 20% adolescents and youth [aged 15-24];
- 38% adults [over 25].

The sedentary lifestyle trend gathered speed during the last decade with 53% of the Mauritanian population concentrated in urban areas in 2010, (vs. only 38% in 2000) and the urban population was even larger among youth (59%). Another noteworthy phenomenon, young adult males living in urban areas outnumber young females.

Tunisia is the region's sole country to have accomplished its demographic transition in less than a half century made possible by the proactive policies put in place since independence in the form of legal reforms, the massive schooling of boys and girls, promotion of the female condition, access by women to contraception, legalization of abortion, and upgrading the place of the child in family life, etc.

The composite fertility index evolved from 7.2 children per women in 1966 to 2.05 in 2009, i.e. the strictly necessary level for renewal of the generations, the gross birth rate settling at 17.7% in 2009.

In 2011 the population of Tunisia was estimated at 10.7 million two thirds of which resides in urban areas. The global spread is the following:

- 24% children and young adolescents [aged 0-14];
- 19% adolescents and youth [aged 15-24];
- 57% adults (over 25).

⁶ According to the National Demographic Survey by the High Commissariat for Economic Planning 2011.

⁷ Data from High Commissariat for Economic Planning, http://www.hcp.ma/Taux-d-urbanisation-en-par-annee-1960-2050_a682.html

⁸ Ministry of Youth and Sports.

⁹ Census of 1977 and 2000.

Table 3.2. : Breakdown of Tunisia's population per age bracket (%)

Age	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
0-4	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.0	8.0	8.1
5-14	18.6	18.1	17.4	16.7	16.4	15.9	15.6
15-19	10.7	10.4	10.5	10.1	9.6	9.4	9.0
20-24	10.2	10.0	10.3	10.4	10.2	10.1	9.9
25-29	8.8	9.0	9.0	9.2	9.5	9.5	9.5
30-34	7.5	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.7	8.1	8.3
35-39	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.0	7.0	6.9	7.0
40-44	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.7	6.9	6.8	6.8
45-59	13.1	13.4	13.8	14.5	15.0	15.5	15.9
60 and +	9.3	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.7	9.8	9.9

Source: National Statistics Institute.

3.1.2 Demographic outlook

According to forecasts, the relative significance of adolescents and youth aged 15 to 24 among the populations of the five Arab Maghreb Union countries will slow over forthcoming years, except in Mauritania.

In [Algeria](#), the population is expected to reach 40.56 million people in 2020 and 45 million in 2025 according to estimates. The age bracket of 15 to 24 will include 5.95 million adolescents and youth in 2020, i.e. 14.7% of the global population total vs. 21.8% in 2008.

However, this share could shoot up again after 2020, given the high birth rate starting the year 2000. The gross birth rate was up by 27% between 2000 and 2008, i.e. from 19.3‰ to 24.5‰. This thrust is largely explainable by the resumption of marriages representing a historical rate of over 10% in 2008, vs. 5.8% in 2000.

In [Morocco](#), further to the continued drop in fertility from 5.52 children per woman in 1982 to 2.19 in 2010, the rate of demographic growth fell from 2.36 in 1980-1985 to 1.09 in 2005-2010, according to the High Commissariat for Economic Planning.

Henceforth, the relative demographic weight of youth aged 15 to 24 will drop according to the forecasts, and entail 20% of Morocco's total population in 2010 to 16.5% in 2020.

Table 3.3. : Trend in weight of 15 to 24 year olds in the population of Morocco

Year	Number of youth (in million)	Percentage of global population
2004	6.16	20.6
2011	6.34	19.7
2020	5.82	16.5

Source: High Commissariat for Economic Planning.

[Mauritania](#) differs from the other countries. Even though it has dropped over 20 years, fertility remains very high at 4.7 children per woman in 2007¹⁰ vs. 6.2 in the 1980s. Therefore, the demographic weight of youth has risen slightly since 2000 and is not expected to slow for a long while.

¹⁰ Surveys per clusters of multiple indicators (MICS), Mauritania-UNICEF, 2007.

In Tunisia, according to the National Statistics Institute the assumption retained is founded on a moderate continuation of the drop in fertility. Therefore the composite fertility index, estimated at 2.05 in 2009, is expected to be of 2.01 in 2029 and later to stabilize to 2039.

According to forecasts, the population should reach 12 million in 2024 and 13 million in 2039. At that date the relative weight of children and youth will have fallen.

Table 3.4. : Projected population according to age bracket by 2039

Year	2019	2024	2029	2034	2039
Aged 0-4	7.6	6.8	6.0	6.4	6.4
Aged 5-14	14.9	14.6	13.7	13.9	12.9
Aged 15-59	64.5	63.3	62.6	61.5	60.6
Aged 60 years and more	13.0	15.2	17.7	18.2	20.1

Source: National Statistics Institute.

3.2 Education and training

The opportunities for youths of integrating society in pushing back poverty for generations to come are closely tied to access to equitable and high quality education from pre-school to advanced studies.

«We cannot pull ourselves out of poverty without getting rid of ignorance.»

Young Mauritanian

Since independence population growth and the need to educate cohorts of increasingly numerous children and youth constituted one of the main challenges for the States of the Maghreb. These countries devote an important share of their resources to the development of the educational sector and generally instituted important reforms since the late 1990s. However, the outcome is not on a par with the outlays made available.

Given the low external and internal yield of the system, clearly demonstrated by the twofold rise in repetition and dropouts and the difficulties encountered in the integration of new arrivals on the labor market, education is not playing its role of a social elevator for millions of North African children and youth and the almost universal lack of schools and second chance training which does not allow excluded youngsters to maintain any hope of exiting precarious economic life.

3.2.1 Low level efficiency of educational systems and insufficient access to secondary schools

Substantial progress has been registered over the past few decades in the sphere of basic education¹¹. Today the Arab Maghreb Union countries have almost managed to make universal primary education and eliminate the gap in gender parity in this cycle.

¹¹ According to the definition of UNESCO, basic education requires at least nine years of education (pre-school not included).

Table 3.5.: Gross and net rates of school attendance at primary level, 2000 and 2009

Year	Algeria		Libya		Morocco		Mauritania		Tunisia	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
2000	108	92	119	nd	92	76	86	63	115	96
2009	108	95	nd	nd	107	90	104	76	108	99

Source: UNESCO Statistics Institute.

This region also registered growth in the rate of enrolments in secondary education but at an overly slow pace compared to the performance in other developing regions. For example, while they have caught up with East Asia and Latin America in terms of universal primary school attendance, the AMU countries still remain substantially behind with regard to secondary education¹². The rates of transition from primary to secondary are low (between 34% for the very lowest in Mauritania and 91% for the highest in Algeria¹³). School attendance in this cycle still is lacking among too many adolescents, particularly in Mauritania and Morocco¹⁴.

Table 3.6. :Taux bruts et nets de scolarisation dans le secondaire, 2000 et 2009

Year	Algeria		Libya		Morocco		Mauritania		Tunisia	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
2000	nd	nd	nd	nd	38	30	18	16	76	63
2009	96	nd	nd	nd	58	nd	24	nd	90	nd

Source: UNESCO Statistics Institute..

In spite of gobbling generally over 5% of GDP and 20% of government budgets the educational systems in this region are not very efficient due to two major factors: deficient quality and lack of equity.

The low quality of education is particularly demonstrated by the rate of class repetition and school dropouts at all levels, as well as the high number of semi illiterate or very low level adolescents and youngsters. This can be seen in the disappointing results obtained in international tests of the TEIMS type (Third international survey on math and science), PEEI (Program for the assessment of international students) or PASEC (Educational System Analysis Program.) Even though the MENA region received satisfactory scores, youth of countries like Morocco or Tunisia straggle behind¹⁵.

According to certain analyses, the main causes of the low quality of learning in North African countries are: pedagogical approaches and assessment methods that do not foster critical or analytic thinking and hamper creativity, the absence of priority given to scientific and technical education and the highly politicized problem of language. Another issue is the avoidance of use of mother tongues, little coherent use of literal Arabic and foreign languages (almost everywhere

¹² A path not yet completed: reform of education in the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank, 2007.

¹³ World Youth World Report 2010, United Nations, 2010.

¹⁴ Data for school attendance at secondary level is only partial and does not allow precise analysis of the situation of this cycle (in particular due to the lack of data on net rates).

¹⁵ The Young: an underestimated trump card; toward a new agenda for the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank, 2007.

French with perhaps the exception of Libya). North African youngsters are therefore poorly equipped to integrate the world of globalized knowledge and contribute to economic growth¹⁶.

As for the lack of equity in the system, this has been noted in several national reports regarding the entire MENA region¹⁷. According to the World Bank the non-poor students living in urban areas often enjoy better access to education in the primary and secondary cycles than needy youngsters in rural areas.

Hurdles encountered are due to the offer (lack and poor condition of infrastructures, teaching staff poorly distributed, often absent, badly distributed, inadequate pedagogy, curricula not matched to the local environment) and demand (lack of resources and the significance of the cost of opportunity, prejudices and social expectations regarding females).

In addition, the States have not or only very tentatively implemented massive social mobilization campaigns or social protection schemes, such as conditions transfers in cash, to encourage the neediest and most marginalized families to send their children, particularly girls, to junior high and high school.

Sixty years after independence, North Africans are still all too numerous to suffer from illiteracy, particularly in Mauritania and Morocco and to a lesser degree in Algeria. This hinders their personal development and limits their productivity. The first victims of youth illiteracy are females, particularly in Morocco, even if the gender gap has decreased over the past 20 years.

Table 3.7. : Literacy rate of the young (aged 15-24), per gender, 1985-2008

Year	Algeria			Libya			Morocco			Mauritania			Tunisia		
	F	H	T	F	H	T	F	H	T	F	H	T	F	H	T
1985-1994	62	86	74	96	99	98	46	71	58	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
2005-2008	89	94	92	100	100	100	68	85	77	63	71	67	96	98	97

Source: World Youth Report 2010, United Nations, 2010.

In [Algeria](#), the public authorities have been particularly attentive to education. The principles¹⁸ on which the educational system is based consist of guaranteeing the right to education, the generalization of compulsory education for all children aged 9 to 16 inclusive, to guarantee free education and keep close watch over equal access to education and training.

The Algerian educational system consists of three sectors attached to three separate ministries which seemingly engender discontinuity between the programs administered in high school and later at the university. Elementary, middle (equivalent to junior high) and secondary school (equivalent to high school) is attached to the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education is attached to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and Vocational education which provides practical training targeting access to employment attached to the Ministry of Vocational Training.

¹⁶ Educational Reform can empower youth in Arab countries and help build human development, UNESCO/EFA 2009.

¹⁷ Analysis of literature showed no existence of any study or composite document about the educational system specifically devoted to the Arab Maghreb Union or any single regions of 'North Africa.

¹⁸ Decree n° 76-35 of 16 April 1976 completed and amended by a series of other laws.

While public expenditure on education represented 4.3% of GDP in 2008¹⁹, the population of 6 years of age and more attending a general education, technical or vocational training schools is estimated at nearly 8.5 million persons, according to the most recent general population census in 2008. As for the level of instruction, 46% of the school population of 6 years of age attends a primary school, 30% middle school and 14% secondary school.

Even though in primary and junior high education the proportion of girls is not as high by three points as for boys, this trend is the opposite for secondary school. Once enrolled in schools, girls continue their studies for as long as possible being well aware that a diploma can help better integration into the working world. In addition, school enables them to hold their heads high in both the private and public arena. Boys appear to be less attached to the worth of a diploma and count much more on networking for finding employment.

The progress accomplished by the Algerian education system has made it possible to make universal elementary education. The survival rate in the last year of elementary school was of 93% in 2005-2009, reports UNICEF²⁰. In secondary education (junior and high school), the net rate of school attendance generally moved forward over the past few years and appears to be among the highest among students in the region at 65% for boys and 68% for girls in 2005-2009, UNICEF reports.

Further to a reform implemented as of school year 2003-2004, some defects were uncovered in connection of the inadequacy of the curricula, programs and teaching methods and the lack of skilled teachers and resultantly dealt with. This reform made it possible to reconfigure the primary and medium cycles, strengthen the teaching of languages and the introduction starting elementary education of scientific and technical subjects, drawing and music. Further pre-school was made compulsory as of school year 2008-2009²¹.

This reform occurred further to an alarming report produced at the end of the 20th century. It shed light on the high rate of repetition (10% to 16%) and dropout: nearly 500 000 pupils left schools each year without any degree of qualification and one third left school before the end of elementary education²². In 2005²³, boys were more highly affected than girls by school dropouts, in particular because they no longer saw school as a stepping stone for social success given the rate of joblessness among degree-holders. Nearly one third of pupils aged 11 to 14 spoke about poorly adapted and difficult school programs as the cause of dropouts, and 65% declared having left school due to being at odds with teachers.

In **Libya**, elementary education is free for all children of school age. School attendance is compulsory up to the preparatory cycle and is ensured by the State²⁴.

Data on education in Libya is very scarce. More often than not it consists of estimates impossible to confirm for lack of reliable in-the-field surveys. By way of information, according to a United

19 World Bank data, Public Expenditure on Education (% of GDP), <http://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS/countries>.

20 http://www.unicef.org/french/infobycountry/Algeria_statistics.html

21 Imène Benharkat, The Algerian Educational System, in *Revue du laboratoire d'analyse des processus sociaux and institutionnels*, n°5,

September 2008, <http://www.umc.edu.dz/vf/index.php/production-scientifique-et-pedagogique/revues-de-laboratoires/974-les-cahier-lapsi-nd5>

22 Imène Benharkat, «The Algerian Educational System», in *Revue du laboratoire d'analyse des processus sociaux and institutionnels*, n°5, Sep-tembre 2008, <http://www.umc.edu.dz/vf/index.php/production-scientifique-et-pedagogique/revues-de-laboratoires/974-les-cahier-lapsi-nd5>

23 National Center for study and analysis on planning /IQRA, School dropouts and its determinants, Algiers, 2005.

24 Law n° 90 of 1975 on compulsory education stipulating that primary and preparatory education is compulsory for all girls and boys starting 6 years of age.

National publication²⁵, the rate of enrolment in education for aged 6 to 14 was of 100% in 2006 (97% for girls vs. 104% pour for boys). Par ailleurs, l'UNESCO²⁶ estime qu'en 2002, le taux brut de scolarisation était de 114% dans le primaire and de 110% dans le secondaire.

Table 3.8. : Rate of enrolment in basic education of children aged 6 to 14 years

Years	Girls	Boys	Total
1995	90	92	91
2006	97	104	100

Source: United Nations.

In Morocco education is the leading national priority after territorial integrity and absorbs over 6% of GDP. In En 2009, the Ministry of National Education, Higher education, Managerial Training la and Scientific Research (MEN) absorbed 29% of the Government budget²⁷. However, the system is struggling to get out of «chronic crisis»²⁸ experienced over decades. In quantitative terms its performances remain below that of its central Maghreb neighbors, particularly for secondary education, while an equally preoccupying crisis of quality also puts a brake on yields.

Further to the ambitious reform initiated in 2000 with the adoption of the National education and training Charter, substantial progress has been achieved in widening access at all level of educations, the partial absorption of discrepancies with regard to gender, the place of residence, the renewal of school programs and manuals and the decentralization of system management²⁹. However, in light of an evaluation process carried out in 2008³⁰, the pace of reform has proved to be too slow and an emergency plan 2009-2012 was developed. The said plan is currently in the process of implementation.

Progress in the field of education of children and the young continues to come up against four major problems, namely incomplete and unequal access to basic education (primary + junior high), the low degree of system efficacy, the deficient quality and pertinence of apprenticeships and problems in management and steering of the system.

A disquieting number of children of compulsory school age (aged 6-15) still leave school without having acquired the adequate level of basic skills. The 5.7 % rate of dropouts in primary education and 13.6% in junior high education are among the highest in the Arab region and struggle to keep abreast, in particular in the secondary cycle.

25 National Report presented in compliance with paragraph 15 a) appendix to resolution 5/1 of the human rights council, Great Libyan Arab and socialist Jjamahiriya, United Nations General Assembly, August 2010.

26 Statistics ISU in brief, Education profile (all levels) Libya, UNESCO. http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=289&IF_Language=fra&BR_Country=4340&BR_Region=40525.

27 For year 2009, <http://www.finances.gov.ma/portal/>

28 Term used by His Majesty the King Mohammed VI in His speed on education in 1999.

29 Education in Morocco: sector analysis, UNESCO, 2010.

30 See the conclusions of the Higher Education Council Report on the status and outlook of the education and training system, 2008.

Table 3.9. : Rate of repetition and dropouts in junior and high school, 2010-2011

Percentage (%)	Junior high education			High school education with educational qualifications.		
	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year
Rate of repetition	7,6	7,6	31,1	8,8	12,7	33
Rate of dropouts	8,4	6,3	16,6	5,8	6,5	15,4

Source: National Ministry of Education.

In addition, even though it has shown rapid progress over ten years, access to junior high and high school remains insufficient. According to updated data if the National Ministry of Education in 2010-2011, the net rate of junior high attendance was of 51% and of high school 27%. It is highly unequal depending of the place of residence. Therefore, an adolescent has three times the opportunity of going to junior high if he/she grows up in an urban area than if he/she grows up in a

rural area where the number of junior highs and services making it possible to increase attendance (boarding schools, school transport) are highly inadequate. Worse, a young urban dweller enjoys nine times greater opportunity than his/her rural counterpart to attend high school.

Gender discrepancies to the detriment of girls are less so but nonetheless noteworthy at the junior high level, especially in the countryside.

«With regard to studies, we don't have a good basis because State schools don't provide any. Teachers are not motivated and are often absent, all the time on strike and do not give any of the information we need in order to succeed because anyway they know they will be paid whether they work or not. In addition, they must be made to deliver more and propose extra teaching and remedial courses in the evening. It is not possible to have the level if no private teaching occurs in addition. Some teachers push their students to do so with themselves and they favor them afterwards. Others do by giving them good grades. There are many problems, favoritism, harassment of girls, and cheating.»

Omar, 20 years of age in vocational training, Morocco (Salé)

In terms of level, formal apprenticeships suffer from a series of problems tied to the lack of initial and in-service training and professionalism of teacher and the poor management thereof (insufficient inspection, low coherence in assignments ...). Furthermore, the touchy problem of language creates hurdles for the students as well as teachers thereby contributing to the production of generations of bilingual "semi-literates". Indeed, the spoken languages (Moroccan Arabic dialect, Amazigh and Hassani) are far removed from literal Arabic used in schools and French taught starting the elementary level. The recent introduction of Amazigh as a new language of teaching and the prospects of its spread³¹ could complicate even more the process of education for the great majority of young Moroccans. Only a small privileged minority, schooled in the

³¹ The 2011 constitutional reform led to the recognition of Amazigh as an official language.

private sector³² where general the quality of education is better currently can escape from these language problems.

«In addition, there's the issue of languages. In the public sector, we are limited by our weak level in French and English, sometimes even in classical Arabic, which is a very difficult language. To have a good level in languages, one has to study in a private school and it is expensive.»

Hichem, 19 ans, student, Morocco (Salé)

«We do have a good basis in French. At school, we study in Arabic but after the baccalaureate, we need to study in French for most professions, mainly in the scientific fields.»

Naïma, 17 ans, high school student, Morocco (Salé)

Informal education making it possible to «rescue» excluded youth remains largely undersized and affects only 6.5% of the millions of unschooled or dropouts aged 9 to 14 including only one out of five who complete the education program³³. In addition, the system rarely offers the beneficiaries to rejoin the curriculum or any training in the formal sector:

Altogether, in Morocco the combined effect of blatant insufficiency of the pre-school sector (which is not compulsory), incomplete access to elementary education, the high rate of dropouts at the primary and secondary levels, the low quality of basic education and limited coverage of informal educational programs for children aged 9 to 16, represent major sources of concern about the spread of illiteracy among the young.

In [Mauritania](#), the issue of education above all is marked by the continuation of the steady growth in number of staff, the insufficiency of financial, infrastructure and human resources, very low yields and quality, especially at the secondary level, and worsening of the language problem.

Given demographic growth, the educational system continues to be hit by strong sources of pressure which will remain over forthcoming years in the secondary cycle. The share of school age children in this cycle (aged 12-18) indeed represented 15.8% of the total population in 2008 and will increase to 16.5% in 2015³⁴.

Furthermore, while available assessments show that the fundamental cycle only allows about one half of the students to become literate³⁵, the secondary level does not constitute a priority for the government. Generally, State investment in education remains insufficient representing only 18.4% of current expenses in 2008³⁶.

In addition, the secondary cycle is the poor relative of the educational system. One observes an increase in the budgetary shares allocated to basic and higher education to the detriment of the

32 Private schools represent 5% of the education sector

33 Education in Morocco: analysis of the sector; UNESCO, 2010.

34 Report on the Status of the national educational system (RESEN) Mauritania, 2010.

35 According to the MICS study 2007, the probability of remaining illiterate after six years of study is approximately 50%.

36 This value is below the initiative-building framework of the Fast-Track initiative (20%) and below that of African countries of a similar wealth level (25.1%).

share allocated to the secondary/second cycle (the share of the first cycle remains unchanged) rising from 14.1% in 2004 to 8.7% in 2008.

The iniquity of the system which penalizes rural dwellers and girls has been widely shown and analyzed. The chances of completing the elementary cycle are much lower for rural dwellers (22% vs. 54% for urban dwellers), as well as the probability of passing on to the first to the second cycle (13% vs. 48% for urban dwellers). These differences are even greater upon considering access to the second cycle of secondary education.

If one takes account of the level of wealth, the chances of completing the elementary level are twice as high for a child in the quintile of the wealthiest households than for a child of the first quintile. Chances of accessing junior secondary school are 44% for the first group and 17% for the second.

Even though the discrepancies between genders are less marked than according to the place of residence or the level of wealth, they still remain very real. The probability of a boy completing basic education is of 42%, but only 34% for a girl. The higher the education levels the more the discrepancies widen. A girl has twice fewer opportunities to complete the secondary second cycle than a boy. Marriage is the primary factor leading to dropout in high schools by girls.

«In elementary education I had good experiences until the 6th year when the teacher was terrible. He often beat me. Even when I mustered a good answer I was afraid and couldn't say anything about it. In junior high school I went to a private school. There when you say you haven't understood they say okay no problem. Because of all that, we have shortcomings.»

Fatuma, age 24, baccalaureate level, unemployed, Mauritania (Sebkha-Nouakchott)

«There are too many subjects in addition to two languages. Another problem is that the baccalaureate is a blockroad. There are too many failures.»

Aïssata, age 22, baccalaureate level, jobless, Mauritania (Sebkha-Nouakchott)

«Often the teachers never showed up. At that time we were happy and had lots of fun with friends. Besides they never explained anything. They don't know how to impart knowledge even when they have some. It wasn't possible to say that we hadn't understood because we were too afraid or there was too much noise.»

Ahmadou, 24 year of age, certificate level, jobless (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)

The problems of quality, pedagogy and poor disciplinary methods, the lack of professionalism and ethics of teachers, crumbling and poorly outfitted infrastructures, etc. are unanimously singled out by students and education decision-makers in the public and private spheres. The rate of success for the baccalaureate, hovering around 20%, bears witness to the massive lack of knowledge of students who manage to reach the final year.

Without doubt it is in Mauritania that the language issue is the most pertinent. For a long time the system was divided between one path in French basically followed by black Mauritians and another in Arabic followed by Moors. This configuration, stemming from an increasingly wide cleavage between the two young populations, was done away with by the reform of 1999 targeting unification of the educational system and society through the introduction of bilingualism. Since that time, all students follow the same program where science is taught in French and literary subjects in Arabic³⁷.

However, substantial dysfunctions have been identified in the implementation of this reform and which worsened the learning difficulties of youth. These difficulties are linked to the weak competencies of teachers, in particular with regard to language. The assessment carried out on all teachers at the elementary level in 2008 showed that only 497 teachers out of more than 11 000 had a real grasp of the two languages used in teaching. At the secondary level the lack of teachers qualified to teach equally well in French or English is particularly significant. As a result, experts estimate that upgrading of the teaching staff today constitutes the leading priority of the forthcoming ten years program³⁸.

In Tunisia, public education has always been a priority ever since the time of independence. This sector absorbs approximately 22% of the State budget and 7% of GDP. The law of 1958 instituted the single, coeducational, free-of-charge and universal school. The law of July 1991 strengthened the right to instruction which, inter alia, deals with compulsory school attendance and the penalization of parents who take their children out of school before the age of 16. The first clause of this law, paragraph 3, recalls the role played by the school in the preparation of «pupils to a life leaving no room for any sort of discrimination or segregation based on gender, social origin, race or creed»³⁹.

Today staff has begun to dwindle ostensibly due to the pressure felt by the system, while more and more young Tunisians are going to school. They stay there longer than older people did and inequalities between boys and girls are being reduced. Henceforth, girls repeat classes less, see greater success and are in greater number than boys in the second cycle of basic (junior high) and secondary education.

Table 3.10. : Illiteracy rate by age bracket in Tunisia 2004-2010

Year	1 st elementary cycle		2 nd elementary and secondary cycle		Total
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	
2001-2002	625 164	688 672	529 867	497 945	2 341 648
2009-2010	484 198	524 402	520 339	447 369	1 976 308

Source: National Statistics Institute.

School is not perceived in the same manner by girls and boys. For girls study means freedom. It allows them to go out, to know people, and escape family control. Boys appear to experience more difficulty in adapting to the rigidity of the school system and discipline. For many, school represents an opportunity to let off steam.

³⁷ Students in the final school year 2010-2011 were the first one to pass the single baccalaureate.

³⁸ Report on the Status of the national educational system (RESEN) Mauritania, 2010.

³⁹ Law on reform of the educational system n°65-91, 29 July, 1991.

«This summer I got bored a lot. Once back to school time I was glad to be with my friends again. I am glad to be able to study because that allows me to learn».

Habiba, age 15, student, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

«This summer I got bored but when I went back to school I started to get fed up. In addition I like to tease teachers; sometimes I do it on purpose to make them kick me out of the class where I get so bored».

Nabil, age 15, student, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

«I quit school, before I liked it but afterwards I started to play hooky and to hang out with other youngsters to play with Play Station. Now I regret it because to work you have to have at least a minimum level».

Loti, age 17, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

As of 2002, education reform opened the doors to substantial progress including universal access to elementary school and improvement in the rate of attendance at junior and high school. On top of that the rate of success was up and dropouts down, programs renovated and teaching methods modernized⁴⁰.

In spite of this many problems still exist among which illiteracy among the young even though it has strongly diminished. This is largely due to high rates of dropout in past years.

Table 3.11 : Taux d'analphabétisme par tranche d'âge en Tunisie 2004-2010

Age bracket	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
10-14	2.3	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.2
15-19	4.4	3.3	2.6	2.7	2.2	2.1	2.0
20-29	8.8	7.1	6.2	6.1	5.4	4.9	4.7
30-39	19.7	17.3	15.9	15.1	13.9	12.4	11.6
40-49	26.8	25.1	24.6	24.1	24.0	23.0	22.4
50-59	45.3	42.8	40.7	39.1	37.3	34.3	33.0
60-69	71.3	71.9	68.8	65.8	64.9	61.7	59.9
70 and plus	83.1	86.2	84.7	82.1	82.6	82.6	80.8

Source : Institut national de la statistique.

In 2010, a national study on youth out of school⁴¹ showed that 6% declared never having been to school, with a high level of discrepancy depending on the place of residence (10% in rural areas and 3% in urban areas). It also showed that illiteracy hit girls more than boys and the principal causes of girls' not attending school were unfavorable prejudices, the cost of education, health issues and the distance between home and school.

In addition, dropouts continue to occur at the junior high and high school level and many adolescents still leave school before the age of 16. In 2008-2009 nearly 12% of pupils in school at

40 Adolescents and youth in Tunisia: data and challenges, United Nations, 2007.

41 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on risk-prone behavior among unschooled youth in Tunisia, Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS, 2010.

the 1st and 2nd levels left high school⁴². Between June 2010 and March 2011, 254 000 youth over age 16 left school without any diploma, reports a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education⁴³.

In Tunisia school dropouts constitute an under analyzed phenomenon as the system in place to 14 January 2011 tended to conceal the issue. According to that study⁴⁴, the reasons for adolescents and youth dropping out are primarily linked to the absence of desire to continue studies (45%), too many repetitions and failures (32%), the family's inability to cover expenses (18%), family problems (8%) and expulsion from school (7%). Other grounds can also factor in such as the joblessness of degree-holders, and the feeling of injustice felt at the high school level, or with regard to the string pulling some youth benefit from to get jobs.

«High school makes necessary certain choices with regard to guidance. Students are pushed one way or another without being asked for their opinion».

Mourad, age 17, highs school student, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

«Teachers always ask what our fathers do and according to that place us to the front or back of the classroom».

Karima, age 20, in vocational training, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

Today's adolescents and youth appear to stress values other than education: earning money quickly and easily, working including without qualifications, consumption, being able to go out. Some dream of escaping to Europe, and others, especially males identify with "models" of the political, sports or artistic world having made a success of their lives without having wasted time at school.

The challenges faced by Tunisia in the educational arena are many indeed. This refers to increasing the quality, equity and efficiency⁴⁵ of the system. On the first point the weakness of acquired knowledge needs no further demonstration and has been proven by numerous international assessments (TIMMS, PISA). It is thought to be linked to a pedagogical approach favoring bombardment of the brain rather than reflection. Since the 1991 reform Tunisian education appears to place emphasis on universal and encyclopedic knowledge, recounts a recent report⁴⁶. Substantial efforts must be made to strengthen mastery over certain fundamental transversal competencies such as analysis, synthesis, research and the utilization of information as well as the linguistic abilities of pupils in both Arabic and French⁴⁷.

As for equity, even though gender discrepancies have been eliminated, they still remain substantial depending on the place of residence and between regions. The most privileged areas are in Greater Tunis and on the eastern coast of the country while the center and south are hit by multiple deficits. The external efficiency of the very weak and does not allow the integration of cohorts of educated youth on the official labor market.

42 Ministry of Education, Contribution of the Ministry of Education in the editing of the annual report on the condition of Youth, Tunis ME, 2010.
43 <http://transrealisme.org/articles/54/le-dcrochage-scolaire-comment-y-remdier>

44 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on risk-prone behavior among unschooled youth in Tunisia, Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS, 2010.

45 Adolescents and youth in Tunisia :data and challenges, United Nations, 2007

46 Ministry of education, the new reform of the Tunisian education system, upgrading program of the project «The school of tomorrow» (2002-2007).

47 Ministry of education, the new reform of the Tunisian education system, upgrading program of the project «The school of tomorrow» (2002-2007).

3.2.2 Higher access to advanced education but poorly adapted university and training possibilities

Access to higher education substantially increased over the past decade, especially in Tunisia and Algeria where university enrolment was up twofold. Although highly developed, the offering remains undersized in all countries while an increasing number of young people reaches the secondly level and expresses the desire to continue studies for learning a trade or profession.

Even if the reputation of degrees is falling in the minds of youth who deem that personal relations constitute an equally important trump card for finding employment, they still remain applicants for university and vocational training reinforcing their self-esteem and the possibility of opening the doors to knowledge, the official labor market and consumer society.

However, literature and qualitative data single out the inadequacy between higher education and labor market needs, and young people are beginning to lose confidence in the worth of education and meritocracy.

Table 3.12 : Gross rate of enrolment in higher education per gender, 2000 and 2009

Year	Algeria			Libya			Morocco			Mauritania			Tunisia		
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
2000	na	nd	14	45	46	46	8	11	9	nd	nd	5	17	18	17
2009	36	25	31	nd	nd	nd	12	14	13	2	5	4	42	27	34

Source: UNESCO Statistics Institute

Even if the reputation of degrees is falling in the minds of youth deeming that personal relations constitute an equally important trump card for finding employment, they still remain applicants for university and vocational training reinforcing their self-esteem and the possibility of opening the doors to knowledge, the official labor market and consumer society.

As for vocational training able to ensure better integration on the labor market than the university, it remains undervalued. It is seen more as a second chance open to mediocre or failed students rather than the beginning of a socially recognized path to professionalism. Paradoxically, high quality training is rarely accessible to unschooled adolescents and young people or early school leavers.

In Algeria, the State devotes nearly 6% of its budget⁴⁸ to higher education and in 2008, 75% of Algerians age 16 and above had a higher instruction level: 7.9% women vs. 7.1% men⁴⁹. Like national education, higher education formed the subject of assessments shedding light on the difficulties of so many degree-holders to get a foothold on the labor market and the absence of adaptation of degrees to the working world.

As of 2003, this sector saw reform leading to the gradual establishment of the LMD system (in order words Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate). This was meant to foster the professionalization of teaching to make degree-holders functional on the labor market and to mitigate dropouts and the number of students leaving the university without any degree⁵⁰.

48 Finance Act 2007, JORA N° 82.

49 General population census 2008.

50 Ahmed Semri, Reform of Algerian educational system: about articulation between, secondary education and the LMD system of higher education mathematics, 2009.

However, the Algerian university is still unable to efficiently answer the major challenges made necessary by the unprecedented development of science and technology, the arrival of globalization of the economy and the knowledge-based society⁵¹. ... The system suffers from several dysfunctions from the structural and organizational, pedagogical and scientific standpoint of the training administered. Access to the university is based on a centralized guidance system that can lead to a feeling of frustration and dead ends as evidenced by the high rate of failure and the long student frequentation in the university structures. In addition, the training opportunities upon arrival at the university are often little coherent compared to the different baccalaureate series.⁵²

Further, in Algeria higher education suffers from the lack of sufficiently qualified teachers: in 2007⁵³, out of the 23 205 teachers administering courses to the 647 371 students enrolled in universities, only 3 442 were professors or lecturers which had an effect on the quality coupled with a feeling of frustration among students.

«At the university I am normal. I go there to fill up inactive time».

Sabri, 24, student, Algeria (Oran)

«The university is just a show. You give or don't give your everything to your studies, it's all the same. For example, resources are lacking; the library is in a terrible state. Books are unavailable, it has become a place for discussion and meetings ... I am disappointed and can no longer stand the injustice existing at the university».

Hakima, age 23, student, Algeria (Algiers)

«I am dumbfounded by the lack of seriousness at the university, in administration and among professors. I did not take an exam because I lost my grandfather. Nobody was prepared to listen to me. Everyone just sent me to see someone else».

Sara, age 22, student, Algeria (Algiers)

A study conducted by degree-holders themselves on the content and evaluation system conducted from 1980 to 1995⁵⁴ and Constantine University make it possible to identify the following points:

- The content of training programs is more theoretical than practical while the theoretical notions transmitted are insufficient and unsatisfactory: many theories are not taught and generally are not up to date.
- The university curriculum basically deals with the development of students' ability to understand and learn by heart. The fulfillment of students is not on the agenda of the programs.
- The evaluation system is not intended to train because it basically deals with the ability of students to reproduce the courses. Grading is not always objective and those who deserve to be so are not the only ones to be accepted.

51 Ministry of Higher Education and scientific research, Reform of higher education, the reason for reforms, Study Day on the: LMD system. Experience and Outlook» - University Center of Souk-Ahras, p. 2.

52 Ministry of Higher Education and scientific research, Reform of higher educations, the reason for reforms, Study Day on the LMD system. Experience and Outlook» - University Center of Souk-Ahras.

53 Lamri Moussaoui, Training system in the development of competencies, the Algerian experience, World Committee for life long learning, 2011. http://landrypp.free.fr/doc/CMA_FP_Algersie.pdf

54 «Evaluation of university training : degree-holder points of view», in Study on the management of higher education in Africa, Association of African universities with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Government and the Swedish Agency for international cooperation for development (AIDS), <http://www2.aau.org/studyprogram/pdffiles/boubekeur.pdf>.

The findings which still today remain pertinent, contribute to explaining the low rate of attainment of the operational objectives, efficiency and integration of degree-holders. According to the study, the Algerian university does not provide education to the managerial candidates needed by the economy;

«In my opinion the university is a waste of time».

Meher, age 21, student, Algeria (Oran)

«I had lots of ambition. I thought that the university was going to guarantee me work and money. I feel as if I have done nothing with my life».

Slim, 24, student, Algeria (Oran)

As for vocational training in Algeria, the infrastructures amounted to 587 units and 654 000 interns in training in 2008⁵⁵. The technical and vocational training sector issues diplomas and qualifications for a wide variety of specializations. The sector suffers from the low level of the training administered and insufficient internal and external yield, while the rate of dropouts remains high (over 14% in 2005)⁵⁶.

In Algeria vocational training is confronted with numerous problems. The large flow of youngsters out of school, access to training without any selection constraints, the failure of school guidance experiences, the problem of internal bridges between the levels of training and the absence thereof to higher education which impacts the efficiency of the sector affect the statute and image of vocational training⁵⁷.

In **Libya**, the gross rate of schooling in higher education was of 53% in 2002⁵⁸. Little data is available about this country but according to United Nations report on human rights in Libya⁵⁹, much has been done in the field of education so as to ensure the presence of human resources able to contribute to development.

In the framework of a national program launched in 2006, university infrastructure has been reinforced and special attention paid to extra university activities, in particular sports and culture, workshops for the fight against AIDS and volunteer work programs. In 2010, there were 14 universities offering education in all areas of specialization comprising a total of 188 science, liberal arts and teacher training departments spread over all regions of the country⁶⁰.

According to the same source, at the international level Libya appeared to be a pioneer country for schooling and equal gender opportunity at all levels of education. It purported that the level of instruction saw great improvement thanks to the policy of free compulsory education for all.

In **Morocco** the most recent data shows that the rate of unemployment of youth is the highest among those exiting the secondary cycle (33% boys, 50% girls) and that it is also very high among

55 Portal of prime minister of the Democratic and Peoples Republic of Algeria, http://www.premier-ministre.gov.dz/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=243&Itemid=154

56 OCDE, Perspectives économiques en Afrique, 2008, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/3/48/40568587.pdf>

57 Lamri Moussaoui, The training system in the development of competencies, the Algerian Experience, World Committee for life long learning, 2011. http://landrypp.free.fr/doc/CMA_FP_Algerie.pdf

58 ISU, Statistics in brief, Education profile (all levels) Libya, UNESCO, http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=289&IF_Language=fr&BR_Country=4340&BR_Region=40525

59 National report presented in compliance with 15 a) of the appendix to resolution 5/1 of the Human Rights Council, Great Arab Libyan socialist and people's republic, United Nations General Assembly, August 2010.

60 National report presented in compliance with paragraph 15 a) of the appendix to resolution 5/1 of the Human Rights Council, Great Arab people's and socialist Jamahiriya of Libya, United Nations General Assembly, August 2010, p. 11.

degree-holders of higher education: 29% among young males and 25% young females⁶¹. These alarming figures are symptomatic of some sort of failure in the education and training system.

The Moroccan University which had a great heyday in the 1960s and 1970s is also hit by the quality crises affecting the entire educational sector. This decline is partially tied to the explosion in number and the growing recruitment of low level teachers at the outset of the 1980s. In 2009 the university system all domains taken together, welcomed approximately 350 000 students and produced more than 42 000 graduates per year. It is composed of 15 universities grouping together 320 units, 6 research institutes and 49 doctorate study centers. Also there are 19 university campuses accommodating 40 000 residents, 60% which are females, reports the National Ministry of Education, Higher Education, Training of managerial staff and Scientific Research (MNE).

The balance sheet drawn up in 2008 by the Education Council shows that internal and external yields are poor. The rate of dropouts amounts to nearly 22%, the rate of diplomas is of no more than 45% and scientific output is falling behind⁶². The inadequacy between the needs of the economy and university education is illustrated by the low level in the rate of insertion meaning only one graduate out of four, while the majority of young people study a curriculum of human and social sciences mediocre from the standpoint of quality often leading to nothing more than a dead end.

Furthermore, the different fields are not well focused on the employment needs generated by the implementation of major strategies and national projects by 2020, particularly with regard to tourism, agriculture, fishing, solar energy and social sectors. The need to direct the Moroccan university toward the globalization of knowledge, heretofore the subject of little attention, has led to reforming of the system around a few major areas: reorganization of university training focusing on the LMD architectures (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate), greater autonomy of universities, the creation more competitive focuses and the establishment of bridges to the European knowledge space. Infrastructures, often antiquated, are being refurbished and the hosting capacity will be enlarged over forthcoming years to meet the challenge of growing demand, the accent being placed on the granting of scholarships for the most underprivileged⁶³.

Clearly separate from national education, vocational training is attached to the Ministry of Employment and has public structures in charge of steering its activities along with training services: OFPPT/Vocational training and Job Promotion Bureau. Alongside in-service training, initial vocational training is structured around three elements, namely residential training within public or private establishments (78% of total number), alternating training (7%) and training by doing (15%). The some 400 vocational training entities cover the greater share of trades and professions (in particular, administration, management, business and trade, industry, craftsmanship, new technologies). The total number of participants is steadily rising (fewer than 20 000 students after independence, over 220 000 in 2004). The most recent studies conducted in this sector bear witness to a final exam success rate of 85%. However the rate of integration barely reaches 50%.

Here again the sector suffers from many dysfunctions including the accommodation capacity corresponding to only one fifth of demand. The offering is little directed toward businesses along with the predominance of residential training which is less profitable than alternating training and apprenticeships. In addition, as the guidance system is deficient in secondary education, the

61 Promoting participation and opportunities to the benefit of youth, World Bank, Preliminary Results, 2011.

62 Interview with Ahmed Akhchichine, Minister of National Education, Higher Education, Managerial training and Scientific Research, Le Matin, 16/10/2009.

63 Interview with Ahmed Akhchichine, Minister of National Education, Higher Education, Managerial training and Scientific Research, Le Matin, 16/10/2009.

training sector is little connected to the educational system, whence numerous frustrations and failures among youth⁶⁴.

«There is a problem of guidance. There is no relationship between what is done at high school and the profession proposed afterwards. Personally, I got my liberal arts baccalaureate. After I went to the OFPPT to look for some kind of training but there were few openings for liberal arts, and jobs are very scarce. For me all I had was a Travel Agency and I wasn't interested in it a bit. I held on for six months and then dropped it. It's been a year since I've done anything at all: I tried to take the examinations to become a gendarme but there were tests in the French language and I just didn't have the requisite level. This year I think I'll enroll in economics.»

Mohamed, age 22, unemployed, Morocco (Salé)

Further, the absence of a bridge between general and vocational education encloses the student in a system that does not allow the most deserving in vocational instruction to access higher education.

The training system is highly unequal⁶⁵. It helps rural youngsters only partially and is inoperative for reintegrating or recycling young workers in the informal sector and teenage school leavers. These marginalized youth, girls in particular, enjoy the possibility of studying in literacy centers and/or training under the tutelage of Entraide Nationale or The Ministry of Youth and Sports run with support of NGOs. However, both obsolete and of pitiful quality, these entities are often nothing more than siding spaces.

In **Mauritania**, only 4% of youth have any higher education (2% girls). However, the sector has seen high growth since 2004. The number of participants is growing at a pace of about 7% per year and this year is expected to exceed 20 000⁶⁶. In 2011, some 2 400 young scholarship holders studied abroad among whom one third in Morocco. However, the system used for granting scholarships, based on the outcomes level, leads to a brain drain.

In spite of development of the sector, university offerings remain insufficient and little adapted to the needs of the economy. Undersized, the system is unable to absorb the annual 6 000 high school graduates, but keeping in mind that only one student in terminal classes out of five manages to pass this exam.

The higher education system only dates from the mid-1980s and is made up of two universities: the University of Islamic Sciences created this year and the University of Nouakchott which offers four faculties (medicine, science and technology, letters, Law and economics). To be noted is that there are no engineering schools apart from an Institute located in Rosso training agricultural engineers only. The public system is completed by six professional entities, one accounting and administrative institute and a polytechnic school inaugurated this year. The private sector is little developed and unregulated⁶⁷. The Bachelor is the highest degree offered by the university.

64 Education in Morocco, Sector Analysis, UNESCO, 2010.

65 Education in Morocco, Sector Analysis, UNESCO, 2010.

66 Higher Education Directorate of the National Ministry of Education

67 Two decrees were published in 2011 to regulate the sector but have not yet become operational.

In addition, the sector suffers from a lack of follow-up data, in particular on the quality of the existing fields and the integration of degree-holders. At the university the faculty of law and economics along with letters and humanities and ISERI constitute the basic share of higher education students (76% in 2008)⁶⁸. This reality is perceived as a matter of concern given that outside public administration there are so few jobs available in these sectors.

Technical and vocational training has seen a quantitative jump over the past few years. The numbers of students have increased more than twofold rising from 1 916 in 2001 to approximately 4 000 in 2011⁶⁹.

The system consists of 18 technical and professional high schools and a training center. It issues three types of degree: the BTS and BT for baccalaureate holders and the CAP for junior high students. Annually it takes in 2 000 candidates and puts out about 1 500. The graduates of entrance exams are spread out across the various disciplines according to rank: those on the top enjoy a choice; the others have to accept the remaining posts.

According to the scattered data available, half the concerned young people find jobs upon completion of their education but only 18% have jobs matching their qualifications.

As is underlined by the people in charge, the FTP network, characterized by a largely undersized accommodation capacity compared to needs, is reserved to youth with a certain level of education. It therefore leaves behind 40 000 to 50 000 individuals with little or no literacy arriving every year on the market and whose only choice to work in the informal sector under often degrading conditions, or to revert into inactivity and delinquency.

In 2002, the national institute for promotion of FTP was created to raise adequacy between training available and demand on the labor market. It has produced a few studies to better understand the dynamics and needs of the job market. However, the task at hand is not any easy one as government and corporate entities do not fully control economic activity due to climatic and political hazards, and lack the planning capacity and inability to anticipate recruitment needs.

The inadequacy between the educational and training system and real needs of economic players is evidenced by the high rate of joblessness among youth (see below) while sectors in expansion such as mines (iron, gold, etc. and building and public works have difficulty in finding the profiles they need on the local market. As a result, businesses prefer hiring foreign workers or sometime unskilled youth who they train themselves.

In a bid to solve these dysfunctions, the institute is currently working with the World Bank on a project for the creation of short-term training programs with the corporate participation. It also plans on setting up an apprenticeship system for youngsters excluded from the educational system. This project which is to be financed by the Islamic Development Bank is to ensure literacy, training and certification of youth in more advantageous trades in collaboration of small formal and informal enterprises.

⁶⁸ Report on the status of the national educational system (RESEN) Mauritania, 2010.

⁶⁹ Report on the status of the national educational system (RESEN) Mauritania, 2010 and data of 'INAP-FTP.

Heretofore only a few non-governmental players have executed pioneering work in the areas of training for unschooled and marginalized young people (or «talibes», i.e. urban and rural youth living in extreme poverty), like Caritas or Doulos Community.

In Tunisia, higher education occurs in the same spirit as National Education: guaranteeing knowledge to all Tunisians thanks to social support provided by the State to students wanting to do advanced studies (scholarships, residence, and transport). Even though just after independence the majority of faculties saw the light of day in the district of Tunis, other institutions were gradually created in different regions to foster regional development and absorb a growing number of baccalaureate holders. Since the law of 2002 placing the university as a center of regional development, the Tunisian university experienced a type of decentralization: in n 2010-2011 there were 13 public universities⁷⁰ comprising 193 higher educational and research establishments 30 of which are placed under the joint tutelage of MESRS and other ministries⁷¹.

Registration in the university requires a baccalaureate degree but no other criteria of selection. For the back to school period in 2010-2011, 85 705 new baccalaureate holders (including Tunisian students holding equivalent baccalaureates and foreigners) enrolled. Education is free and the State grants scholarships to low income students in a bid to support more democratic practices at the university. Altogether in 2010-2011 a total of 98 533 students including 616 foreigners received a university stipend out of a total number of 346 876.

The number of students has exploded since independence. They multiplied by 4.5 over a stretch of ten years while the proportion of young girls rose from 40.5% to 61.2%. Young females seem to “hang on” to studies more greatly in hopes of obtaining a degree likely to guarantee financial autonomy. In addition, a degree can help escape from family control and enhance the ability to enter new relationships and social networks.

Tableau Table 3.13. : Evolution des effectifs dans les universités publiques 1960-2010

Year	Students	% girls
1961-1962	2 310	5,0
2010-2011	346 876	61,2

Source : Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche scientifique.

This rapid increase in the number of students is not only due to the demographic surge but also from improved rates of schooling, the decentralization of universities and reforms in the educational system including compulsory schooling to age 16 and the elimination of the junior high entrance exam. This policy led to a record net rate of schooling in higher education in North Africa estimated to be of 37% in 2010-2011 vs. 25% just ten years earlier.

In 2010, more than 86 000 students in higher education received a degree⁷² but many simply joined the masses of job seekers: in 2011 degree holding job seekers amounted to 217 800 and the unemployment rate of degree-holding women was twice that of men (48% vs. 24%)⁷³. Females

⁷⁰ Universities of: Tunis, Manouba, Tunis El Manar, Ezitouna, Carthage, Jendouba, Sousse, Monastir, Kairouan, Sfax, Gafsa, Gabes and Virtual University.

⁷¹ Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, L'enseignement supérieur en chiffres/Higher education in figures, 2010-2011.

⁷² Ministry of Higher Education and scientific Research, higher education in figures, 2010-2011.

⁷³ INS, Press Conference pursuant to the initial results of the national survey on employment, 2011, Tunis, November 2011.

appear to suffer more from discrimination by employers who prefer men considered as less likely to fail to come to work (maternity leave, child care) and more mobile.

As for vocational training, it basically targets administering the knowledge required for practicing a trade or profession, prepare for integration into active life and the inclusion of training in vocational training facilities, alternating training, vocational apprenticeship, and distance learning. In-service vocational training has the aim of adapting labor to the state of technology and professions and allows the acquisition of new competencies. In 2006-2007, 34 new centers were created and 48 restructured for a training offering equivalent to 64 000 positions (vs. 36 000 in 2003).

In 2007, Tunisia had 343 authorized vocational training centers and 133 private centers. The number of graduates in authorized training centers saw rapid growth. In five years it doubled rising from 15 000 in 2001 to 31 000 in 2006. However it remains relatively weak as the great majority of youth prefer to continue schooling in general education⁷⁴. The vocational training sector suffers by overly rigid programs leaving little room for initiatives on the part of teachers. Besides, teachers are poorly prepared for their duties because vocational training does not even form a part of initial training⁷⁵.

Given the low quality and efficiency of higher education in North Africa, many baccalaureate and degree holders seek to go abroad. Their project for departure is motivated due to wide variety of reasons: the discovery of other cultures, obtaining a prestigious degree, finding training unavailable at home, escape from failure, escape from unwanted university guidance, take advantage of residence abroad or even to engage in political militancy difficult to do in their home country.

For example, it is estimated that the number of North African students in France numbered about 53 000 in 2009. Most study for their Masters (51%), Bachelors (38%) or Doctorate (11%) degrees⁷⁶. Moroccans are the leading contingent of foreign students in France even though their number dwindled from 16% in 2002 to 11% in 2009⁷⁷.

Leaving home to study abroad is not a recent phenomenon in North Africa. From times immemorial youth left to «seek knowledge» far from home to the East as well as to the West. The destination changes depending on the time and prevailing situation, but the phenomenon persists. Since the time of intensification between the two shores of the Mediterranean as of the 19th century, many young North African, especially males, were educated in Western universities. This phenomenon played an important role in the training of North Africa's political and intellectual elites. Today in a world context strongly marked by economic values, Western countries increasingly perceive cooperation in higher education as a marketing tool. Once returned to their respective countries, the elite from the South educated in the North are more inclined to open thereto their domestic markets.

Certain young people decide to stay abroad after completing their studies thereby contributing to what is known as the brain drain. But many North African still prefer to return home. In spite of the problems of integration and adaptation often experienced, generally their stay abroad only reinforced their self-confidence and identity, once back home leading them to defend their values of openness to others and integration of their country into the regional and world environment.

74 Economic outlook in Africa, Tunisia, OCDE, 2008, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/24/38/40571890.pdf>

75 Ministry of Education, new reform of the educational system in Tunisia, Program for implementation of the «School of Tomorrow» project (2002-2007).

76 State of higher education and research in France, with 35 indicators, Paris, Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2011.

77 State of higher education and research in France, 35 indicators, Paris, Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2011.

3.3. Youth unemployment and inactivity

3.3.1 Unemployment and inactivity of young at record levels

Given the lack of adaptation of the education and training system together with the unprecedented number of new arrivals on the labor market, things have become very rough for job seekers in North Africa. Job availability is undergoing considerable pressure with the growth in population, the demographic thrust of youth and the increasingly high participation of women in active life, even if it remains limited in comparison to the rest of the world.

Altogether the Arab region's (MENA) active population⁷⁸ is expected to increase by 80% between 2000 and 2020⁷⁹ and according to ILO data it is the North Africa sub-region that holds the world record of youth joblessness⁸⁰.

Table 3.14 : Key indicators of youth on the labor market, 2009 (%)

Region	Rate of unemployment for population aged 15 to 24.	Employment-population ratio
Developed economies and EU	17.7	41.4
Central and SE Europe and CIS	20.8	33
East Asia	8.9	54
South East Asia and Pacific	14.7	44
South Asia	10.3	41.8
Latin America and the Caribbean	16.1	43.9
Midde East	23.4	27.9
North Africa	23.7	29
Subsaharan Africa	11.9	50.6
World Average	13	44.4

Sources: International Labor Organization (ILO), Trends in Econometric Models, April 2010 and Global Employment Trends for Youth, 2010.

Although relatively limited among the young and at the primary and illiterate level, unemployment is highly concentrated among secondary education graduates and degree-holders. Apart from the fact that education does not play its role of social integration, this situation is explainable by the fact that civil service which traditionally offered posts to the most highly educated, today is no longer in a position to hire.

The indicators also show that unemployment affects more greatly young women than men. The arrival of women in active life still entails various impediments and even if women manage to find work they are often confronted with hurdles in their professional career and receive lower pay;

In addition, globalization which has led to the installation in Arab Maghreb Union countries of multinationals or delocalized enterprises tend to offer little qualified jobs, poorly paid and often temporary thereby contributing to the professional instability of the young. As for the private sector, it does not generate high benefits and is no longer sought after by the young; some

⁷⁸ The active population refers to all persons of working age available on the labor market. On the contrary the inactive are people who have no or are not looking for a paid activity.

⁷⁹ According to estimates by the World Bank.

⁸⁰ Unemployment affects the young of employable age actively seeking jobs according to the ILO definition.

employers hire employees without a contract and do not pay overtime or refuse to provide the adequate insurance usually required.⁸¹

Given the scarcity of stable and worthwhile jobs, qualitative data clearly show access to work is the leading concern of the young.

Apart from unemployment, available studies shed light on the very high level of inactivity⁸² of North African youth. Estimated at 60% in the Arab region (MENA)⁸³ the rate, once again, is the highest in the world for the young unable to find employment or even having ceased to look.

While their trust in meritocracy appears to be dwindling or disappearing in some countries, the young increasingly turn to family support to access active life and a steady income. Many look for small underpaid and uninteresting jobs in the informal sector.

Inactivity and boredom constitute the daily menu of a great number of young people, even more so given that leisure and sports activities are often sub-standard or little adapted to their expectations. Available qualitative data show that a considerable proportion of young North Africans spend their time unproductively, chatting with friends, navigating on Internet, watching TV or simply twiddling their thumbs.

Inactive and dependent, these young folks express a feeling distress and humiliation. They suffer, sometimes to a much older age, from having to submit to the dictates of their parents and being dependent and incapable of autonomy, deprived of helping others or starting a family.

All analyses show that apart from the direct loss it represents for the economy, inactivity of the young represents a considerable social cost by abetting exclusion. The inability to find work gives rise to a feeling of uselessness and emptiness that can lead to psychological problems, violence or drugs.

In [Algeria](#), the active population doubled in 20 years and inactivity was estimated to affect 10.8 million people in 2008, i.e. 32% of the total resident population. Women represented less than 17% of all active persons in 2008 vs. 9% in 1987.

For youth aged 15 to 24, the rate of activity stands at 28%, with a large gap between boys (47%) and girls (9%). Due to the longer period of schooling and vocational training, this rate is not so high among the young aged 25 to 34 (58%).

Table 3.15. : Rate of activity according to age and gender in Algeria (2008)

Age bracket	Male	Female	Total
Aged 15-24	46,5	8,9	28,2
Aged 25-34	90,8	23,9	57,5
Aged 35-54	92,4	16,8	53,9
Aged 15-60	75,0	15,7	45,9
Aged 60 and over	17,5	2,0	9,7
Together	68,9	14,2	41,7

Source: National Statistics Bureau.

81 Some employers go as far as having them sign post-dated resignation letters to avoid paying personnel expenses beyond certain duration of employment.

82 Young unemployed not actively looking for work are deemed to be inactive and not jobless.

83 The young: an underestimated trump card. – Toward a new agenda for the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank, 2007.

In Algeria, the jobless population is estimated to be over one million persons, i.e. a rate of 10%. Unemployment affects women more (19%) than men (8%) and primarily employable young people. The unemployment rate of the young aged 16 to 24 reaches nearly 22% - almost one active young person out of five, while this rate is of 7% for people aged 24 and above. Joblessness among the young boosts sometimes long term dependency on parents.

The share of the young in the total number of unemployed amounts to 46%. Access thereof to the labor market, in Algeria like in the other countries of North Africa, often requires a lengthy period of waiting. There seems to be discrimination on the job market with regard to the young.

Moreover, unemployment affects even more young degree-holders. While the unemployment rate among the population without any degree is no higher than 7%, for degree-holders from higher education it surpasses 21%. The unemployment rate of degree-holding females (34%) is three times higher than for men of the same category (11%).

Table 3.16. : Rate of unemployment according to age and gender in Algeria (2008)

Age bracket	Male	Female	Total
Aged 16-24	18,6	37,4	21,5
Aged 25 years and over	5,4	15,0	7,1
Together	8,1	19,1	10,0

Source: National Statistics Bureau.

«I had no problem with my work. I got my baccalaureate degree. I did not want to go to the university. I found work without wasting time at the university.»

Mejedi, age 22, supervisor, Algeria (Oran)

«There are no jobs out there. Young folks don't accept extenuating work. Studying just to become a vendor, I am in no state of mind to do it.»

Meher, age 21, student, Algeria (Oran)

The mobilization of informal resources from inside or outside the family in the professional trajectory of many young Algerians often turns out to be indispensable. Obtaining information and advice on job offers, having the right "connections" in order to be hired, building on personal relations for solving administrative impediments in connection with setting up a project, the need to borrow money from a relative or friend and the ability to benefit from family support to create a business all constitute useful practices sought after by the young for accessing active life.

Young Algerians tend to lend importance to the role of social capital in seeking and obtaining a job. Today the general trend is to believe that social networks are what determine failure or success of the individual and not merit. One of the direct consequences of this widely spread idea is the lack of motivation with regard to schooling and vocational training. The outcomes of recruitment exams in both the private and public sector are often the subject of criticism, particularly on the part of the candidates not selected.

«All family members work in the same business. The father retired only after managing to place all his children in the business. It's scandalous. The only way to get in is by being pushed. Entry exams are worth nothing. There is no hope for the desperately unemployed.»

Slim, aged 24, student, Algeria (Oran)

In [Algeria](#) there is a system of assistance for professional integration of the young (DAIP) which includes pre-employment contracts (CPE) and paid local integration jobs (ESIL), addressing young degree and non degree-holders with vocational training, as well as those without any training or qualification and currently unemployed. The DAIP provides hiring initiative for the young after a one-year contract through contributions to remuneration by the State (on average from 40 to 50%) for a total duration at times of up to three years. The system for the social integration of young degree-holders created in 2008 operates in the same way. These schemes make it possible to put on the market more than 600 000 jobs every year. Even though temporary, this job offer financed by the Government budget contributes greatly in the struggle against unemployment and exclusion.

In [Algeria](#) micro credits were introduced in the late 1990s and currently there is a mechanism for helping young entrepreneurs seeking to create new microenterprises managed by the National employment Agency for the Young (ANSEJ) and a system for the granting of micro credits to already existing small economic activities, work at home, craftsmanship and services, etc. managed by the National Agency for the Microcredit Management (ANGEM). One of the impediments encountered in these mechanisms is the low level of technical assistance to micro entrepreneurs. Beside the microfinance sector is still far from attaining its full development potential in the country.

In [Morocco](#), the active population is growing annually by some 130 000 people. It was estimated at 11.4 million in 2010, including 52% city dwellers and 26% females.

The number of active young aged 15 to 24 amounted to approximately 2.3 million in 2010. They represent 20% of the active population vs. 23% in 2005. Apart from demographic reasons this decline is explainable by the longer time spent on schooling and the growing number of young discouraged from looking for work.

The rate of activity of the young aged 15 to 24 grew from 43% in 2005 to 36% in 2010. Per gender the rate of activity among young men registered the strongest decline (from 60% to 53%) while for females it dropped a bit less (from 23% to 19%).

At the national level, the unemployment rate has fallen back somewhat over the past few years dropping from 11% in 2005 to 9% in 2010⁸⁴, while it slightly increased for the young. It reached its highest level in the 15 to 24 age bracket with a rate of 18% in 2010, slightly up compared to 2005. Youth unemployment reached a high point of 31% in urban areas vs. 8% in rural areas. It is higher among females than males.

84 Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training.

Table 3.17.: Youth unemployment in Morocco per level of education in 2009-2010

Study level	Girls (%)	Boys (%)
None	19	14
Elementary	34	17
Junior High	47	27
High School	50	34
Higher education	25	29

Source: World Bank⁸⁵.

The rate of youth unemployment in Morocco is inversely proportional to the education level. It affects three times more higher education degree-holders, in particular those holding general degrees such as history-geography, Islamic studies, Arabic literature, than uneducated youth. However, in quantitative terms the majority of jobless youth have little no education: only 5% come from higher education and 19% from high school education.

The unemployment figures do not suffice to understand the scope of inactivity among Moroccan youth. In reality only one third works and the remaining two thirds is inactive and often too unmotivated to look for work.

«La vie des jeunes est parfois agréable et facile. Mais elle est aussi pleine de difficultés pour faire des études, travailler, gagner de l'argent. Le travail et la réussite, c'est pour les fils de ministre, les riches, ce sont toujours les mêmes familles qui en profitent.»

Youssef, 21 ans, étudiant, Maroc (Salé)

«Pour moi, c'est une question de logique : si j'étudie, c'est forcément pour travailler ensuite. Je veux avoir mon indépendance et pouvoir aider les gens qui en ont besoin.»

Latifa, 23 ans, étudiante, Maroc (Salé)

«Life of the young is sometimes pleasant and easy. But it is also full of difficulties for studying, working, and earning money. Work and success is for the sons of ministers, the wealthy, it's always the same families who take advantage.»

Youssef, age 21, student, Morocco (Salé)

«For me, it's a question of logic: if I study it's necessarily to find work afterwards. I want my independence and to be able to help people in need.»

Latifa, age 23, student, Morocco (Salé)

Moroccan youth is very much aware of the impediments limiting the opportunity to achieve professional success. Some speak about the insufficient level of schooling and foreign languages (because their families did not have the means to pay for a good private school), which closes the

⁸⁵ Promoting participation and opportunities addressing youth, Preliminary outcomes, World Bank, 2011.

doors to better education, as well as the paucity of financial resources and network of relations impeding them from being pushed into jobs or the need to bribe someone.

In spite of difficult conditions, the majority of Moroccan youth, including females, look to the future through professional success⁸⁶. Many young females see their material independence as a forerunner to marriage and a means of exerting influence on their family and future couple. However, this finding required analysis with regard to young uneducated rural females who can only look to the future as being housewives and mothers.

Confronted with the problem of inactivity of the young and the rise of protests, the Moroccan authorities have multiplied initiatives over the past decade. As a first step this entailed the creation of intermediation bodies. In 2001, an Agency for the promotion of employment and competencies (ANAPEC) was established with 74 Bureaus spread across the country, 400 advisers and 600 000 job seekers registered (including 200 000 truly employable job seekers). In addition, in 2004, private recruitment agencies were institutionalized (to date 27 have been authorized). These mechanisms have been streamlined over time but their effectiveness remains very limited. Only 14% of young people are aware of the name of ANAPEC (4% in rural areas) and 2% of unemployed youth use it⁸⁷. Further the State within

In 2006, ANAPEC initiated two measures targeting the promotion of salaried jobs for young degree-holders. The IDMAJ program is aimed at the young without experience and who sign a contract for a paid internship lasting 24 months in a corporate entity. The corporate entity is granted tax breaks. The rate of integration of the beneficiaries is estimated at 40% upon completion of the contract. A second program, christened TAEHIL, has the aim of requalification of baccalaureate holders and vocational training graduates to meet the specific needs of businesses and large structure-building projects in Morocco's economy.

Deemed insufficient in face of the growing pressure by the young, these systems were strengthened in 2011. The IDMAJ system was improved and new possibilities of internships subsidized by the State were proposed to long time unemployed degree-holders. Further, while 46% of youth want to work in the public sector⁸⁸, the State has resumed its policy of «social» recruitment after years of efforts to do away with this deficit-generating system.

A new job promotion instrument is constituted by the 'integration contract for young degree-holders implying joint funding by ANAPEC of internship contracts approved by the said body.

The Government also announced the forthcoming creation of an indemnity system for the unemployed able to warrant at least six months of contributions. However, for the time being, this system remains under study.

A close look at public policies fostering youth employment gives evidence to the high concentration of resources on the most highly educated minority which is also the most demanding, while masses of unemployed and uneducated youth asking for technical qualifications are left in the lurch. Similarly, young farmers, breeders or fishermen (representing one fifth of young workers in Morocco) receive little support even though they constitute a highly valuable force for innovation.

86 Young people in Morocco, lifestyles, opinions, values and aspirations, synthesis of the results of a qualitative study conducted in 2010 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

87 Promoting participation and opportunities addressing youth, World Bank, Preliminary results, 2011.

88 Promoting participation and opportunities addressing youth, World Bank, Preliminary results, 2011.

However, their modernization projects in the primary sector come up against patriarchal norms predominating in rural areas.

In Mauritania, the rate of activity amounts to 52% and global level of unemployment to 31%, according to the most recent survey⁸⁹. The jobless rate varies very little according to the place of residence (31.3% and 31.1% respectively among urban and rural dwellers)⁹⁰ and qualification level⁹¹. Altogether it is much higher among females than males with a male/female ratio of 0.54.

Unemployment affects more greatly the young among which it is estimated that one half remains jobless. Therefore, 67% of active females aged 15 to 24, and 44% males in the same age bracket are unemployed. The rate falls afterward with age, irrespective of gender or place of residence.

«I am suffering by being 25 years old and still dependent on my parents.»

*Mokhtar, age 25 unemployed degree-holder,
Mauritania (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)*

In terms of the employment dynamic, annually the market receives 40 000 to 50 000 new job seekers, including:

- Approximately 3 000 degree-holders: 1 500 to 1 800 higher education degree-holders (including candidates with studies abroad) and 1 200 to 1 500 degree-holders coming from technical and vocational training programs;
- 2 000 candidates coming from higher education or FTP without degrees;
- Approximately 10 000 coming from secondary education (without baccalaureate);
- 20 000 coming from basic education (dropouts);
- Approximately 5 000 never having gone to a modern-type school.

Moreover, it is estimated that each year the Mauritanian economy created 25 000 new jobs. The structured sector offers 4 000 to 5 000 new posts including 1 000 to 1 500 for degree-holders while the informal sector (rural and urban) accounts about 20 000 new job seekers per year (for the most part without degrees)⁹². Altogether the rate of integration hovers only between 41% and 50% and the major share of integration possibilities occurs in the informal economy.

According to analysts, the high rate of youth unemployment is reflective of the inadequacy existing between the educational and training system and the job market (see above), as well as a whole string of socio-economic and cultural factors including:

- Speedily accelerating sedentary life of the population attracting to cities people of nomadic culture little adapted to the types of job existing in urban centers;
- The hierarchical nature of society and sequels to slavery which implied division between «noble» and «common» trades and youth rejection of manual, non- prestigious and low paid activities;
- The low retention and poor quality of the education system producing masses of youth of low or no literacy level;

⁸⁹ Permanent survey on living conditions of households, 2008.

⁹⁰ Ministry of employment and vocational training, Summary report on studies pursuant to qualification needs of the national economy, December 2009.

⁹¹ RESEN 2010.

⁹² Ministry of employment and vocational training, Summary report on studies relative to the needs in qualification of the national economy, December 2009.

- The basically informal nature of the economy little attractive to young people. Many look to the official sector but do not have the qualifications meeting the requirements of this sector;
- Difficult working conditions and a culture of exploitation wrecking relations between employees and employers;
- Low pay (minimum wage of approximately 100 Euros per month in the official sector) while the cost of living continues to rise;
- Political instability hampering economic development;
- «Wastefulness», corruption and cronyism fostering a culture of easy money turning youth away from productive work.

«In our country young people consist of four categories: unemployed degree-holders, those who want training but are unable to, those who are looking for work but are not qualified, and those working in the informal sector.»

Ousmane, age 23, hairdresser (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)

The Ministry in charge of employment created in 2007 has among its specific targets; the young. In addition, to foster the integration of young people, in January 2005 a National Agency for the promotion of youth employment (ANAPEJ) was created. In 2010 it reported 20 000 enrollees, mostly higher education or bacculaureate degree-holders⁹³. However, this agency is little known by ordinary young people and has recently seen its reputation dented by a scandal involving falsified invoices. Further to its disappointing and much criticized results all the same it has seen its capacities strengthened, its administrative and financial situation cleaned up and restatement of its mission designed to foster self-employment and enterprising spirit. The same results can be applied to bodies in charge of vocational training such as the National Institute for the promotion of technical and vocational training (INAP-FTP) created in 2003 which also manages a fund entitled «Autonomous Fund for the Promotion of Technical and Vocational Training (FAP-FTP); Centers for vocational and Refresher Training (CFPP) including the one in Nouakchott and 9 regional centers, the four technical and vocational education high schools each specialized in a particular area (industry, fishing, agriculture and business); and last but not least the Higher Center for technical education (CSET) created in 1980.

The players in international cooperation also try to get youth and businesses together. The European Union funds the CAP integration project implemented by French NGO GRET in the typical quarters of Nouakchott. This project (4 000 young people registered) makes it possible to advise, guide and assist young people in defining their professional project and in all they do in seeking employment.

Given the weakness of modern intermediation bodies young people have no other alternative than to look for piece work. This common practice entering into positive law consists of seeking help from a middleman (piece worker) to get a position in an enterprise, ready to accept overly low pay and non-regulatory working conditions. Much sought after in the building trade, guardianship and for domestic help piece work is recognized by the Labor Code even it contributed to the insecure status of laborers.

⁹³ Ministry of employment and vocational training and New technologies, Summary of achievements on 30 June 2010.

In Tunisia the unemployment rate rose from 13% in 2010 to more than 18% in 2011 due to the economic difficulties the country is grappling with since the downfall of the former regime. This has taken place in the form of strikes, social conflicts, departure of some foreign investors and the return of migrants working in Libya. Today fighting to get a job to keep one's position in the working milieu increasingly plays a role in the lives of Tunisian youth.

In 2010, the youth unemployment rate was estimated to be nearly 29% for young people aged 15 to 19 and 30% among the 20 to 24 year olds. Joblessness affects the internal regions than the coastal ones. In 2008, the highest rate of unemployment among young people of 20 to 24 years of age was registered in the region of the South-West (48%), followed by the North-West (43%). The socio-economic difficulties make the process of gaining autonomy increasingly hard among the young of Tunisia.

Table 3.18. :Trend in rate of unemployment per age bracket

Age bracket	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Aged 15-19	27.7	27.9	29.3	29.6	33.6	28.7
Aged 20-24	28.4	27.6	27.3	27.9	29.9	29.7
Aged 25-29	21.6	21.1	21.8	22.9	25.7	24.2
Aged 30-34	11.6	11.1	11.6	11.6	11.4	12.0
Aged 35-59	18.1	18.4	15.2	14.2	17.0	15.9
Aged 60 and higher	1.2	2.2	2.4	1.8	1.2	3.0
Total	12.9	12.5	12.4	12.4	13.3	13.0

Source: National Statistics Institute.

Analysis of the split up of unemployment per age bracket shows that since 2007, 25 to 29 year olds are the most strongly affected. One can also deduce according to the data of the 2010 national survey on unemployment that nearly 70% of the unemployed are under 30 years of age. In an increasingly competitive context, professional insertion has become very long and difficult.

Table 3.19. :Trend in the distribution of the unemployed per age bracket (2005-2010)

Age bracket	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Aged 15-19	13.4	13.3	13.0	12.0	11.5	9.6
Aged 20-24	29.0	28.1	28.4	28.5	26.5	27.5
Aged 25-29	27.7	27.7	30.0	32.5	33.4	32.6
Aged 30-34	13.1	12.8	13.4	13.2	13.1	15.0
Aged 35-59	16.5	17.4	14.1	13.4	15.3	14.4
Aged 60 and over	0.3	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.9

Source: National Statistics Institute.

In Tunisia unemployment affects females more than males, at 27% and 15%, respectively according to the 2011 national survey on employment. Although in greater number in educational structures, women are faced with difficulties of integration into the labor market, in effectively managing their professional career and benefiting from opportunities equal to those of males. In addition, the rate of female unemployment is thought to be underestimated to the extent in which certain women

drop their search for work when they figure there is little opportunity to do so or because a family member looks after them (father, spouse).

The initial results of the 2011 national survey on employment reveals that 29% of degree-holders from higher education are unemployed, while over the past few years the country has experienced a rapid jump in the student population. The 2011 survey shows that higher level technicians are the most greatly affected by unemployment at a rate of 43%.

The young are aware that they will encounter difficulties in finding a job. Their concerns in this regard are increasingly on the rise. They think that studying does not prepare them well enough for the working life and that the amassing of degrees is no guarantee for finding quality employment.

«The education I received at the university is far from what we needed to find a job and work.»

Foued, age 26, unemployed, Tunisia (Sfax)

«Education at the university is highly theoretical. I had no internship during my university education. Looking for work requires competencies that I finally realize I don't have.»

Najwa, age 25, unemployed, Tunisia (Sfax)

«I regret the investment I made in studies. My degree is worthless and not even recognized. Every time I have to explain what kind of studies I did.»

Marwa, age 25 ans, Tunisia (Sfax)

In front of the unbroken rise in number of the unemployed, the programs of the National Fund for employment (FNE) was restructured in 2009 according to three major guidelines: (i) targeting the most vulnerable categories, in particular long term unemployed degree-holders; (ii) linking training to integration into a business and (iii) linking training into the enterprise in addition to (iii) simplifying procedures fostering employment.

The offerings of the FNE have been restructured into 6 major programs:

- Training session for initiation to professional life (SIVP): the objective being to help the participant acquire professional competencies designed to facilitate integration. This type of training session addresses first time job seekers holding a higher education degree or equivalent for at least six months. The contract is for one year renewable in exceptional cases and in another host business.
- Contract for the integration of degree-holders in higher education: the objective being to allow the beneficiary to acquire professional qualification alternating with a private business and public or private training entity in compliance with the requirements for a position in which the said business commits to hiring. The target is comprised of higher education degree-holders unemployed for at least three years after graduation.
- Contract for the adaptation and professional integration: the objective being to allow the job seeker and non-holder of a higher education degree to acquire the professional qualification in compliance with the employment required by a private business and which did not find satisfaction given the unavailability of labor required on the market. This contract targets job seekers holding no higher education degree.

- Contract for re-integration into working life enabling someone who has lost his/her job to acquire new competencies in compliance with the previously set requirements within a private business. The target consists of permanent and temporary wage earners having lost their job.
- Employment-solidarity contract: the objective of this contract being to foster the integration of various categories of job seekers into working life through specific actions in the framework of regional or local job promotion initiatives or in the framework of adaptation to changes in the situation of the labor market. The target population of this contract consists of all job seekers.
- Civil service program aimed at first job seeker degree-holders able to enroll as volunteers and part time in the framework of training session in general interest projects designed to acquire professional competencies.

Heretofore, young people appeared to have little trust in official programs or formal channels and tended to give preference to other vehicles for finding work. According to a 2010⁹⁴ survey one half of interviews with working and unemployed people reportedly in search of a job, however, only 21% were registered in employment agencies and 15% used announcements published in the media. The means the most frequently used method was to ask for help from parents and friends (62%) and direct contact with potential employers (53%).

3.3.2 Higher access to advanced education but poorly adapted university and training possibilities

Given the inability of both formal and informal enterprises to provide enough employment for youths arriving every year on the labor market, analysts underscore the need to foster the enterprising spirit and providing young people, especially the neediest, the resources for setting up their own activity.

Heretofore, the possibilities for the young to create their own business remains much below all expectations even if governments are beginning to initiate systems targeting enterprise creation and facilitation of access to micro credits for young people.

In [Algeria](#), according to governmental sources, support for the development of enterprises, and the fostering of entrepreneurship constitutes one of the pillars of the youth employment policy along with the promotion of salaried jobs. Two systems have been created:

- The National Agency for support to youth employment (ANSEJ) for entrepreneurs aged 19 to 35 (40 for the manager when the project generates at least three jobs). From 1999 to 2007, this system has provided support to approximately 80 000 projects and generated 220 000 jobs;
- A microcredit system managed by the National Agency for the management of micro credits (ANGEM) for fostering self-employment and the development of small size trades. Upwards of 142 000 loans were granted by this Agency from 2005 to 2009.

A third system of support to entrepreneurship exists but is not available to the young. Managed by the National Fund for unemployment insurance (CNAC), it targets only the unemployed aged 35 to 50 seeking the creation of a micro enterprise. From 1999 to 2007, it lent support to some 7 600 projects and created 21 000 jobs.

⁹⁴ Senim Ben Abdallah, National survey on unschooled youth aged 15 to 24 and risky behavior, Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS – Tunis section, ONFP, GFATM, UNFPA, UNAIDS, 2009.

One of the impediments encountered with these mechanisms is the low level of technical assistance offered to micro entrepreneurs; the micro finance sector currently being far from reaching its development potential in the country

«I would like to create my own activity. I am ready to run the risk. I am gifted in computer science. I plan to move in this direction.»

Chaker, age 25, student, Algeria (Algiers)

«Credits are granted to people who already have money. I am desperate. There are countless hurdles. For small loan, it's possible. But for large sums, it's not so easy.»

Slim, age 24, student, Algeria (Oran)

«They want to find out if you are solvent or not. They are not interested in your idea of a project.»

Ali, age 21, student, Algeria (Algiers)

In Morocco young people appear to show more interest than in other of the region's countries⁹⁵ for free-lance work and enterprise creation⁹⁶. However they complain about the difficulties of financing, in their eyes, often an insurmountable hurdle, even for the purchase of a plot of land.

According to a study conducted in 2007⁹⁷ the majority of women owning their own businesses had to self-finance their project or count on help from family members. The young also complain about the lack of information on the means of financing and support for incubation, management and assistance for carrying out their projects.

To respond to these concerns in 2007 via ANAPEC the State set up the Moukawaliti program offering a loan of 250 000 DH (about 22 000 Euros) to young enterprise creators proposing a viable project and help before and after creation with support from a consultancy firm. This system attracted 35 000 young people between 2007 and 2011, ten percent of which were selected and helped. Other types of support to young entrepreneurs was developed in the framework of national or regional development and international cooperation agencies.

However, the number of beneficiaries of this assistance to enterprise creation remains modest. As a result micro credits increasingly appear to be an alternative fostering youth initiatives, in particular the neediest. The National Microcredit Federation has an ambitious plan to help reduce youth inactivity with the aim of reach five million beneficiaries by 2012.

In Morocco the micro finance sector has seen considerable development since the late 1990s along with spectacular growth between 2004 and 2007 placing the country among the most dynamic in this sphere. According to the estimates of the Bank of Morocco in late 2009, 12 microcredit associations were able to help 925 000 needy persons including 64% females, in developing income generating activities. However, given the rapid expansion in the number of customers and volume of activities a crisis occurred in 2007 marked by the high level of unpaid debts. This crisis made necessary restructuring of Moroccan microcredit institutions still to be completed.

95 The Silatech Index:Voices of Young Arabs, Silatech-Gallup, April 2011.

96 Promoting participation and opportunities for youth, World Bank, Preliminary results, 2011.

97 Morocco Gender and Employment Study, World Bank, 2007.

In the framework of the national human development initiative (INDH) launched in 2005 many income generating activities were also lent support in rural communes and the neediest town districts in view of stimulating local development and job creation, in particular for young people and women. More than 3 300 projects one third of which for women were co-financed at 66% by INDH between 2005 and 2010, to the tune of one billion dirhams. However an assessment showed the low level of sustainability of these projects⁹⁸.

In Mauritania the promotion of microfinance and micro enterprises constitutes a fundamental element of the poverty alleviation policy⁹⁹. Strategies in both these areas, i.e. the national Microfinance/SNMF Strategy and the National micro and small enterprise/SNMPE Strategy were developed from 2003 to 2008.

However these assessments showed that none were implemented due to the lack of follow-up structures and funding issues. For that reason this did not allow improvement in the living conditions of the most vulnerable young people. As for SNMPE, very little was accomplished¹⁰⁰. The micro finance sector has seen extensive development since 2010 but without any direct link to SNMF. The State has provided micro finance institution (IMF) credit line for financing micro and small size enterprises.

The number of micro finance clients was estimated to be 364 304 in 2010 vs. 113 000 in 2002. The participation of women is in the region of 70% and rural participants increasingly show interest (3.2 times as many customers in 2010 vs. 2002). However few micro finance institutions are viable. There have been instances of poor management. The principal network (PROCAPEC), consisting of 51 CAPECs present throughout the country, halted all credits in 2007 before a shaky resumption. It is attempting to restore the confidence of its 163 000 members and to rectify its teetering financial position while 46 CAPECs out of 51 are insolvent. Moreover, the IMFs set up by the government with support from international cooperation organizations (UNICEF, FIDA, OXFAM) counted 150 000 customers but remain fragile because their resources are basically consist of subsidies.

«We may have small projects in mind but cannot bring them into fruition. Even to sell doughnuts we need a little bit of something to start operating ...»

Kadiaba, age 22, in secretarial training, Mauritania (Sebkha-Nouakchott)

Given the significance of the stakes at hand and in spite of the weak results obtained in the past, both strategies were updated in August 2011 for 2012-2016. The effective implementation thereof is thought to represent a crucial trump card for the future of Mauritanian youth, particularly the poorest.

Several non-governmental organizations have taken the measure of these stakes and support the initiation of income-generating and informal micro enterprise activities in rural and urban areas. For example, the national "Secours Net" association supports professional integration by youth self-employment in the working class neighborhoods of Sebkha (Nouakchott) and extension of new information and communications technologies via the installation of «cases multimedia/multimedia booths». It works in collaboration with a project headed by the World Vision nongovernmental

98 Country common balance sheet, Morocco, United Nations, 2010.

99 Strategic framework against poverty (CSLP) – 2011-2015.

100 Evaluation of the implementation of national micro, small enterprise and micro finance strategies 2003-2008 and Diagnostic of the micro finance sectors, Republic of Mauritania -UNCDF, August 2011.

agency with the aim of transmitting initiative culture and management capacities to the young unemployed and to provide coaching to accompany their quest for financing.

In [Tunisia](#), the young wanting to create their own business or initiate a small project have access to different systems and bodies likely to approve, including the Training Session for initiation and adaptation to business creation, the Funds for integration and professional adaptation (FIAP), the National Employment Funds 21/21, the Tunisian Bank for Solidarity (BTS), and the Bank for financing small and medium size enterprises exist designed to accelerate the pace of enterprise creation and encouragement of degree-holder young people in developing personal initiatives. Similarly, assistance to developers was strengthened throughout the many phases of the project development cycle.

This refers to several type of training: training on the original methods of the active search for new ideas for entrepreneurship (MORAINE) designed to develop creative and entrepreneurial abilities, Enterprise creation and training of entrepreneurs (CEFE) based on learning by action Create your enterprise (CREE) with the aim of fitting out project developers in marketing and management; complimentary management training, Enterprise Creator training, Let's guarantee together the future of your activity (GERME) with the aim of strengthening the management and competitiveness of businesses, complimentary technical training enabling improvement of the competencies of the trainee in ensuring good start up conditions and providing support to development.

Training for initiation and adaptation for business creation (SIACE) is also offered to young people enrolled in employment and self-employment agencies or in «enterprise space» wanting to set themselves up as free-lancers. In addition, the Program for assistance to small size enterprise developers was set up to help identify the project idea, devise a feasibility study and business plan, strengthening management and adaptation abilities in the technical areas requisite for project creation and other types of assistance. An «Assistance before and after installation» action is also accessible to developers experiencing difficulties in setting themselves up after obtaining the tentative approval for financing of a project or wanting to develop an activity.

These instruments have not sufficed to diminish youth unemployment while currently enterprise creation appears to be an increasingly risky proposition due the economic problems hitting the country since January 14, 2011.

3.3.3 The informal sector, the primary employer of youth

The high rates of unemployment, especially among educated youth are partially explainable by the power of family structures allowing them to take the time to look for stable employment commensurate with their abilities. This phenomenon exists across all relatively well off classes of the population while elsewhere needy young people have to resign themselves to accepting low quality jobs.

For these young folks forced to support themselves and their families, the informal sector often constitutes the sole solution. Generally, those doing so are poorly or not at all educated but it appears that an increasing number of degree-holders are also obliged to act similarly.

In spite of its extent and the capital role it plays in the survival of numerous families, the informal sector remains largely undocumented. According to estimates it represents nearly one job out of two in North Africa¹⁰¹ in sectors other than agriculture. Highly heterogeneous, it includes

¹⁰¹ The Young: an under estimated trump card: - Toward a new agenda for the Middle East and North Africa, World Bank, 2007.

productive activities entailing the possibility of technical improvement and survival activities sometimes dangerous and degrading. In all events, it is characterized by the absence of regulation, insecurity, and harsh working conditions at times bordering on exploitation.

According to the ILO the proportion of the poor in developing countries is higher among young rather than adult workers. In North Africa like in other countries, work in the informal sector is one of the roots of social exclusion and the poverty of active young people. In addition, while the border between legal and illegal activities is often unclear, smuggling and other forms of traffic is increasing in the region, and the informal sector possibly giving rise to criminal behavior among adolescents and youth in some cases leading them into delinquency.

In Algeria the informal sector remains little studied in spite of its significance and growth. According to certain estimates it represents between 37% and 40% of the national economy. Due to the notable changes taking place in the world of work and the increasingly precariousness of juvenile conditions, the young abound in the informal sector:

In Morocco according to the most recent data 88% of young people work without a contract¹⁰². The informal sector is considered the largest supplier of jobs, particularly among the least educated. Indeed, 46% of young people working informally have never been to school and 70% are without any particular qualification. However, the most recent study by the World Bank revealed that the informal sector also employs 30% of higher education degree-holders¹⁰³. The majority of workers in this sector are males but some females also try their luck, more often than not working as poorly paid and insecure domestic help.

«You can do pirating, fix up digital stuff and cell phones. If you have no work you can go to a big plot of barren land and gather iron for resale. But it's hard because you can get caught by the police. I also worked as a mason to install ceramic tiles at a worksite where they paid me 60 DH per day. But there's lots of risk involved with this sort of work.»

Mohamed, age 22, out of work, Morocco (Salé)

A better than nothing solution for educated young people, and godsend for those without even a minimal education enabling them to find an honest to goodness job, the informal sector brings extremely frustrating working conditions to all. According to the qualitative data gathered on young women in Morocco's Oriental region known for its high rate of unemployment¹⁰⁴ and conservative attitude, in spite of it all they try to eek out a living in the informal sector. However, the majority give up to avoid eventual exploitation. They complain about 10-hour days or more, the irregularity or very low pay and sexual harassment.

In Mauritania, according to estimates, the informal economy employs 75% to 80% of working people but produced only 38% of national wealth in 2007¹⁰⁵. It absorbs the majority of unemployed young people.

Even if a viable micro enterprise system is emerging in the craftsmanship, fishing and animal breeding sectors, most young people operating on the informal market, particularly adolescents,

¹⁰² Promoting youth participation and opportunities. World Bank, Preliminary results, 2011.

¹⁰³ Idem.

¹⁰⁴ 18% in 2010 vs. 9% at the national level according to official data.

¹⁰⁵ Sophie Boukhari, Analysis of the situation of women and children in the Oriental region, UNICEF, 2008.

engage in survival activities exposing them to substantial danger such as violence and poor treatment, accidents and health risks, etc. The said activities range from street selling to bissap, water and other products as well as construction work, guardianship, door-to-door selling, garbage collection and all sorts of other traffic.

In Tunisia, akin to other North African countries, many young folks manage to survive on small incomes and work in difficult conditions often in the informal sector. They begin their professional life with jobs hardly on par with their qualifications. In this context, they are led to «try out» several types of employment, at times extremely precarious, in the informal sector. This situation of waiting and experimentation, in certain instances can result in anxiety and frustration.

According to a recent study on youth not attending school¹⁰⁶, the majority of people interviewed had jobs (51%) with a monthly wage of no more than 200 Tunisian Dinars because of their insufficient professional qualifications and the tendency to revert to exploitation by employers. More generally, Tunisian young people enter the labor market via part-time or insecure jobs: fixed-term contracts, job-training contracts, temporary work or internships generating greatly underpaid employment. For them the transition to professional stability can last for several years considerably postponing to a later date entry into adulthood.

«I tried several small jobs during which I was subject to exploitation. My family held because I couldn't really earn my livings with the wages I was earning ...»

Anis, age 25, unemployed, Tunisia (Sfax)

3.3.4 Inoccupation, social networks and lack of adapted leisure-time activities

In North Africa, like elsewhere, adolescents and young people like to go out and chat with friends (or girl/boyfriends), go to cafés, watch television, use Internet or play cards, laugh, read and look for new experiences. They want to consume music and images, develop their bodies, the competitive spirit and create new forms and ideas. Major determinants for the harmonious development and beneficial leisure occupy pride of place in their daily lives.

Given the high proportion of inactive young this often becomes disproportionate. In this context, leisure appears to be all the more important compared to other regions of the world. Here again, a qualitative approach to the issue is necessary because it is so true the existence of leisure is no guarantor of its pertinence and effectiveness in terms of the blossoming of adolescents and young people.

In most of the countries of the region, apart from Mauritania where initiatives along these lines are still at an embryonic stage, quantitatively available cultural and sports activities have seen considerable development over the past few decades. However, they seem for the most part poorly adapted to demand. Besides, access by youth to the media, to new information and communications technologies and the entertainment industry has exploded in homes fostering passive consumption of cultural and recreational products often of questionable quality. Altogether, leisure-time activities in Arab Maghreb Union countries do not sufficiently foster creativity and youth participation, intellectual development and mental and physical health.

¹⁰⁶ Senim Ben Abdallah, National survey on the young aged 15 to 24 not in school attendant and with risky behavior; ATL STD/AIDS – Tunis section., ONFP, GFATM, UNFPA, UNAIDS, 2010.

Available studies and data tend to indicate that time spent with friends remains the main distraction for approximately nine young people out of ten. More often than not they hang out with chums in the street or café (Internet or not) to chat or play (cards or in game rooms), practice sports but rarely devote time to any creative activity.

In North Africa, social life processes have seen deep-seated transformation over the past century under the influence of diverse factors such as the redefinition of individual belonging to traditional social structures like the wider family, youth trajectories and urbanization. While continuing to place importance on the family unit, today youth much more than their elders entertain social networks outside the family. Freely chosen, relations of friendship are sometimes knit in the framework of the neighborhood or city district as well as at school, the university, associative activities, the army or work.

Like everywhere else, young people feel the need to belong to groups. This belonging plays a strong role in the construction of an identity and leads to the adoption of a series of characteristics particular to the relevant group. It provides the individual with an opportunity to define him/herself as a person and to build self-image via relations with others. As it is pointed out by certain researchers, “the relations entered into between the adolescent and his/her peers, beyond the obvious sociological implications, play a foremost role in the on-going psychological process»¹⁰⁷.

«Friendship is essential to life. Without friends there is no life. I look for friends who are like me, who have the same tastes, the same ambitions and the same hopes as mine. In the presence of friends I have a good time and can talk about my problems. We talk about unemployment, the family, etc. I myself listen to my friends and offer them advice.»

Slim, age 24, unemployed, Algeria (Oran)

«I don't have many friends but they are always there to listen. They share more things than you can with the family. We are united among friends because we share the same difficulties, the same drudgery.»

Sara, student, age 22, Algeria (Algiers)

«My friend is something sacred, he is closer than a brother, I can tell him anything

Nabil, age 15, high school student, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

«Friendship is very important as it allows me to be surrounded by company. I live through the experiences of my friends.»

Karima, age 20, in training, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

«With the family you have to watch carefully what you say but with friends you are free. One can talk about anything, about girls, about whatever is in your head. We sing, dance, go to the beach and chase girls;»

Amin, age 20, in vocational training, Morocco (Salé)

¹⁰⁷ Jalil Bennani, Alain Braconnier, Les temps des ados, Casablanca, Editions Le Fennec, 2002.

The social networks of North African young people have become more open to the outside world and are increasingly developing on the basis of common affinities, particularly in terms of tastes, lifestyle, free-time activities and general concerns. This gives to the young person a feeling of security, protection from isolation and more than anything else, allows the affirmation of personality by differentiation from the parents.

Among friends North African young people feel free to speak of anything, give each other advice and help mutually. Many address their peers to obtain answers to their questions, in particular regarding sexual and reproductive health. Often this occurs without any concern about the reliability of the information obtained. For example In Morocco friends constitute the leading source of information regarding puberty, just before teachers¹⁰⁸. In Tunisia 95% of boys and 82% of girls feel that a young person speaks more freely of sexuality with friends of the same gender¹⁰⁹.

The gang phenomenon is developing especially among adolescents. Often the gang consists of members of the same gender; usually males. Thanks to the group spirit and dynamic young people mutually influence each other and engage in interchange about their experiences. This situation leads to the creation of sub-culture often incomprehensible to adults but which helps the young to move forward and tackle their difficulties by belonging to networks.

Due to the social control exercised more strongly over females than males, in conservative circle female sociability outside the family appears to be less developed than among boys. This situation can negatively affect the trajectories of young girls who are more isolated and less well equipped than boys to confront the hardships of daily life, cutting loose from the family and gaining empowerment. Generally, the social life of women appears to be poorer than that of men even if this reality varies with age, level of education, socio-cultural category and activity¹¹⁰.

In North Africa the traditional separation between the world of women and men still exists in conservative milieus hostile to mixing of the genders and puts brakes on the development of links of friendship between girls and boys. Applied no matter what, the control exercised by parents on the mixed sociability of their children is generally coupled with a sort of self-control.¹¹¹ For example, in Tunisia 42% of young girls and 36% of young boys not in school attendance declare having friendships with others of identical gender¹¹². In Mauritania, according to qualitative data gathered in the field, friendship between girls and boys is difficult to show publically among young Moors heavily influenced by Arab culture, but on the other hand often develops among young negro-Mauritanians.

A new phenomenon in North Africa, true friendships are increasingly occurring by virtual links to such a degree that some young people reply to questions asked about friendship by spontaneously and speaking first about their «Facebook friends». According to qualitative data North African young people like to give more precedence to virtual friendships with young folks of Western countries as well as with people members of their own cultural world, i.e. the Arabs in general or negro-Mauritanian in the countries of West Africa.

108 Connaissances, attitudes and pratiques des youth concernant les IST et le AIDS, Ministry of Health/GTZ, 2007.

109 Nabila Hamza, Adnène Chaabouni, «Les pratiques sexuelles des youth, représentations and sources d'information dans un contexte de AIDS», in Les mutations sociodémographes de la famille Tunisienne, Tunis, ONFR, 2006.

110 Henda Gafsi, Women and the city, Tunis, CREDIF, 2000.

111 Dorra Mahfoudh-Draoui, Imed Melliti, On the difficulty of growing up, For a sociology of adolescence in Tunisia, Tunis CPU, 2006.

112 Senim Ben Abdallah, National survey on youth age 15 to 24 not attending schools and risk-prone types of behavior, Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS – Tunis section, ONFR, GFATM, UNFPA, UNAIDS, 2009.

Virtual relations with young foreigners enable them to partially satisfy their curiosity about others. In a context where only a small minority of the privileged can travel, this makes it possible have a window opened to the world and engender greater affinities. When Facebook friendships develop, young people wind up exchanging advice, confiding in one another and chatting about everything as if they were talking to real physical friends. Access to the virtual world enables young females, to get around the prohibition of male/female mixing when imposed by their milieu, by instituting relations without “danger” with boys.

«I have friends in Italy, France the U.S. and we do lots of chatting. At the beginning of the relationship when we don't know each other well we talk about cultural differences and life in our countries. But afterwards we become friends just like the others and can talk to them about anything.»

Nouzha, age 21, high school student, Morocco (Salé)

«We have friends we don't even know, girls and boys living in Europe, America, the Senegal, just about everywhere in the world. We engage in the exchange of ideas, discover different ways of living. Even if we never budge from here, it's possible to find out a bit what it's like over there, no need to travel.»

Kadiaba, age 22, in secretarial training, Mauritania (Sebkha-Nouakchott)

Youngsters in North Africa have not escaped the Internet revolution which is hoarding an increasingly large share of their free time. Over the past decade Internet use concerning, above all, the young generations has moved strongly ahead in all Arab Maghreb Union countries but remains relatively low in Algeria and Libya and only marginal in Mauritania. In that country many rural youths and people in working class urban districts of the capital have never heard of Facebook or Twitter, as opposed to their counterparts in other North African countries.

While Internet use has literally exploded over the past ten years in Morocco and Tunisia - principally due to incentive-building government policies (extension of networks and lower costs) and the proliferation of internet cafés – using chat rooms, downloading music and images and on-line gaming have become the major pastimes of adolescents and young people.

In Morocco where nearly 30% of young people have computers¹¹³ this activity ranks second after outings or hanging out with physical friends. It is more prevalent in urban than in rural areas even if the «Genie» program in public schools on information and communications technology and other initiatives in youth centers and young ladies' residences are beginning to open the doors of cyberspace to the young in rural areas. In Tunisia access to information and communications technology is rapidly gathering speed but remains very limited in certain overly marginalized regions¹¹⁴.

Even though there are no analyses available on access by young North Africans to dangerous or illegal sites, in particular pornography and extremist sites, some indices and information published in the regional media lead one to believe that they do have access thereto. This situation is all the more worrisome given that education about new technologies by the young and adolescents and their parents is not developed enough in North Africa.

¹¹³ Book of Youth, Ministry of Youth and Sports with support from UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, 2011.

¹¹⁴ Adolescents and youth in Tunisia: Data and challenges, United Nations, 2007.

Table 3.20. : Number of Internet users per 100 inhabitants in 2000 and 2010

Country	2000	2010
Algeria	0,5	12,5
Libya	0,2	14
Morocco	0,7	49
Mauritania	0,2	3
Tunisia	2,8	37

Source: International Telecommunications Union

Outside relations of friendship and Internet, one of the principal activities of North African youth is watching television. Accessible in urban and rural areas, television has seen a new upsurge over the past decade with the advent of satellite channels. This activity predominates among the young in the countryside where leisure are more difficult to find, and among girls less free in their movements than boys.

For example in Tunisia television is omnipresent. Over half of the country's youth watches TV at least three hours a day and more than a fourth over five hours per day¹¹⁵. It is the pastime par excellence. However watching TV can become detrimental when the content is of poor quality or serves as a vehicle for extremist and xenophobic ideas or anti-female propaganda. In Morocco television constitutes the main distraction of young girls in rural areas¹¹⁶. It also predominates among young Moorish girls who enjoy a bit of limited freedom and who, once married off, share the greater part of their free time with friends and television.

Available surveys also underline the high demand for sports among the young. Many practice a sport at school but deem the infrastructures and equipment accessible to the greater number as lacking and little diversified. Those who can afford it go to private clubs. Throughout the region girls are less involved than boys in sports activities the situation being extreme in Mauritania where the practice of physical activity is socially discouraged for young women.

Further, reading is less popular among young North Africans and often limited to reading the sports and social headlines, the horoscope and high circulation spot news. Few ever attend a live show or creative activities. However, the low quality of youth leisure time activities does not result from a genuine choice on their part but rather, due to the limited possibilities offered. According to a recent publication, Moroccan youth (age 12 to 18) would like to play or make music rather than read quality books¹¹⁷.

In spite of the development of youth and cultural centers, public offerings in leisure-time activities remain under exploited in the region. This is particularly true in rural areas and some other regions and deemed to be inadequate. In Tunisia data tell us about the low degree of attractiveness of Youth and cultural centers for adolescents and young people. The second consultation on youth showed that only 2% of the young consider them to be their preferred venues for spending free time. The "upgrading" program for youth centers does not appear to have changed much in the attractiveness of these spaces where the activities programming is lacking with regard to participation¹¹⁸. In Morocco where there is one Youth center for 23 000 young people and where

115 Adolescents and youth in Tunisia: Data and challenges, United Nations, 2007.

116 Book of Youth, Ministry of Youth and Sports with support from UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, 2011.

117 Attitude of youth in Morocco with regard to migration, between modernity and tradition, Entraide nationale/IOM/Italian Cooperation, 2010.

118 Adolescents and youth in Tunisia: Data and challenges, United Nations, 2007.

the offer is concentrated on urban centers the attractiveness of these infrastructures is also limited, above all due to distance and content deemed of little interest¹¹⁹. A vast infrastructure upgrading program by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the development of proximity socio-sports centers has been launched to strengthen the possibilities of high quality free time for adolescents and young folks.

3.4. Main risks and factors of vulnerability

Generally understood as synonymous with vigor and good health, adolescence and youth can encompass circumstances engendering risk-prone behavior. This refers to “extremist conduct” at times falling outside behavior deemed «acceptable» by society placing the instigators and/or other parties in physical or psychological danger.

The young are exposed to relatively serious risks depending on their social origin, family environment and other factors possibly leading to serious types of violence, exploitation or marginalization. Therefore they need protection and sundry types of assistance adapted to each situation.

3.4.1 Drugs, tobacco addiction, unprotected sex, the rise of risk-prone behavior

Adolescence is a period of challenging received norms and values often leading to risk-prone behavior¹²⁰ such as tobacco addiction, alcohol, drugs taking, unprotected sexual relations and the emergence of psychological problems. In the Maghreb, the inactivity and frustrations linked to the dysfunctions of the educational and training system, unemployment and lack of leisure do much to aggravate this type of crisis.

As in other regions of the world, adolescence can be lived in solitude, leaving youngsters to withdraw into themselves while entertaining feelings of fear and anguish. Living in an atmosphere of permanent frustration or conflict with those closest to one can engender what is often called “risk-prone behavior” such as nutritional problems (bulimia, anorexia), addiction, self-mutilation, violence with regard to others, and attempted suicide. The path is still long for adolescence to be lived by individuals and society as a constructive process while recent research in psychology has pointed to the constructive aspects fostering self-empowerment in the process of physical, intellectual and relational maturing¹²¹.

More or less extensive depending on the country, available data appear to indicate the rise of risk-prone behavior in this region. This is amplified by the fact that youth lasts longer as adolescence occurs earlier (given better food) and because marriageable age comes considerably later.

Over this long period stretching over 10 to 15 years, many youths experiment with sexual relations outside marriage. Combined with taboos and the lack of information surrounding sexuality, such practices expose the young to STD and AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and risk of abortion. Even if increasingly rare in North Africa, adolescent pregnancies remain a non-negligible source of health problems for mothers and children, particularly in Mauritania and to a lesser degree Morocco.

¹¹⁹ Promoting participation and opportunities addressing youth, World Bank, Preliminary results, World Bank, 2011.

¹²⁰ Risk-prone behavior related to conduct hampering the evolution and development of the potentialities of the young person, male or female, their resources and ability to successfully integrate society. Cf. World Bank, Support for youth exposed to risks, Washington, World Bank, 2008 (in Arabic).

¹²¹ H. Ridiguez-Tome H., S. Jakson, F. Bariaud. (under supervision of), Current vision of adolescence, Paris, PUF, 1997.

Table 3.21. : Early pregnancies in the five Arab Maghreb Union countries

	Algeria	Libya	Morocco	Mauritania	Tunisia
Births per 1 000 women aged 15 to 19	7	3	19	90	7

Source: State of the world population 2010, FNUAP

The data on young North Africans, HIV and AIDS show a minimal proportion of infected youth but also a low level of knowledge on the ways of transmission and prevention. According to a 2007 study¹²², minimum prevalence does not mean lower risk of the epidemic. Actually, the total number of deaths attributed to AIDS multiplied by six in the MENA region since the early 1990s and half the new HIV infections affect the 15 to 24 year old age bracket.

Table 3.22. :The young, HIV and Aids in North Africa

	Prevalence of HIV in 15 to 24 year olds (% in 2009)		% of youth with extensive knowledge about HIV (2005-2009)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Algeria	0.1	<0.1	na	13
Libya	na	na	na	na
Morocco	0.1	0.1	na	na
Mauritania	0.4	0.3	14	5
Tunisia	<0.1	<0.1	NA	NA

Source: Children and Aids, Fifth balance sheet of the situation, UNICEF, 2010.

In all Arab Maghreb Union countries, knowledge about the behaviour, attitudes and practices of the young is of prime importance to understand the risks to which they are exposed. The study of phenomena such as the consumption of drugs, tobacco and alcohol by young people or sexual and reproductive health practices can bring a tentative response and guide action making it possible to better protect the young. On the health front, certain practices prohibited by social or religious taboos heretofore have limited the taking of prevention measures hindering the adoption of secure practices among young people. For example refusing to speak openly about youth sexuality in some instances can compromise the health capital of the young.

In [Algeria](#), the AIDS epidemic is little active to concentrated due to low prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the general population, estimated at less than 1%, and the rate of HIV sero-prevalence relatively high in certain populations engaging in risky behavior: more than 5% in certain monitored sites¹²³. According to the UNGASS report of 2010, 0.1% of the population aged 15 to 24 is HIV infected¹²⁴.

With regard to awareness building among adolescents and schooled youth on sexual and reproductive health, programs in junior and high schools emphasize reproduction, STD, HIV and AIDS in the framework of the teaching of natural and life sciences. These topics are approached in the first middle year (when the students are about 12 years of age) from the standpoint of prevention measures related to STD, AIDS and rules of hygiene¹²⁵. According to a 2007 survey

¹²² De Jong and al., *Youth's Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Middle East and North Africa*, Population Reference Bureau, 2007.

¹²³ Analysis of the response of the educational sector with regard to the fight against HIV/AIDS in Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia, ISESCO-UNESCO, 2010.

¹²⁴ UNGASS Report Algeria, UNAIDS, 2010.

¹²⁵ Discrimination against people living with AIDS in Algeria, UN/AIDS, Aids Algeria, UNESCO, 2010.

on the knowledge by students about prevention of HIV and AIDS,¹²⁶ all had heard about AIDS and were aware of the risks in case of negligence. The level of knowledge about the ways of transmitting HIV and AID appears to be high among secondary level than middle level pupils. Even though the majority mentions the limitation of sexual relations to just one faithful non infected partner and the condom as one the best means of protection, middle school pupils continue to have a false picture of the vehicles of transmission.

In student environments, according to some sources¹²⁷, condoms are known as means of prevention by nearly nine students out of ten and three out of four know that condoms can be used only once. Furthermore, more than one third of students know about STD: 16% mention AIDS, 10% syphilis and 3% the herpes virus. However, only one student out of five is aware of his/her serological status. Young men are more likely to have sexual relations than young women and the age of the first sexual relation for both genders is approximately 17 years \pm 3: only one third of students have already used a condom for the first sexual encounter.

According to a different survey¹²⁸, another situation is more worrisome: a high proportion of students from 19 to 24 years of age declare never having used a condom during sexual relations. A majority of males declare not knowing that the condom is to be used only once and that it represents secure protection against HIV. Most of the interviewees declare never having had a screening test.

«There is not much communication within the family. I talk to my mother but never about sexuality with a family member.»

Olfa, age 20, student, Algeria (Algiers)

«Friendship is very important for a young person, we are of the same age, have the same concerns and preoccupations, we discuss everything, including love and sex.»

Warda, age 24, sales assistant, Algeria

In [Algeria](#) drug consumption, particularly in the school and university environment gave rise to a controversy in the press between certain associations concerned about the spread of the phenomenon based on their own inquests and the official channels in charge of the issue which rejects the premise and cites its own figures.

According to court figures, the young are major consumers. In 2006, people aged from 18 to 24 brought before a judge represented 40% of cannabis and psychotropic substance users¹²⁹.

A survey conducted by UN/AIDS showed that 9% of students (mostly males) said they took drugs, among which one third of the hard variety. Only one half of drug consumers declared using a single time instrument. In addition, three fourth of students using reusable syringes declared making exchanges regardless of the place and gender¹³⁰.

¹²⁶ Survey governed by the circular 1048/SG/MEN of 11 November 2007, in Discrimination toward people living with HIV in Algeria, UNAIDS, Aids Algeria, UNESCO, 2010.

¹²⁷ Study on knowledge, attitudes and behavior of university youth regarding HIV/AIDS infection: proximity evaluation, Aids Algeria, UN/AIDS, 2010.

¹²⁸ Support for access to information on STD/HIV/AIDS and the promotion of voluntary and free testing among university youth, Aids Algeria, 2010.

¹²⁹ Algerians youth in a few figures, General Commissariat for planning and outlook, Division for evaluation of social policies. Directorate of studies and analyses of the evaluation of pertinent social indicators, 2009.

¹³⁰ Study on knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of university youth on HIV/AIDS infection, proximity evaluation, Aids Algeria, UNAIDS, 2010.

Data from the national Bureau for the fight against drugs and drug taking are much less worrisome. According to this institution the national rate of drug consumption prevalence amounts to 1.2% (1.7% males and 0.7% females). It is slightly higher among the young with a rate of 1.5% among those aged 20 to 39 vs. 1.1% 40 years of age and above, 0.9% among the 16 to 19 year olds and 0.1% among the 12 to 15 year olds. Drug consumption remains dominated by cannabis and psychotropic substances the latter being sold in pharmacies, while opium, cocaine and heroine report very low levels of consumption¹³¹.

In addition tobacco addiction is widespread among young men: 8% of boys from 10 to 19 smoke tobacco on a regular basis and this proportion rises dangerously to 43% among the young 20 to 24. Nearly two thirds of young people began smoking between 15 and 19 years of age the average for the first cigarette being 16.4 years¹³². About 40% of adolescents and young people from 10 to 24 smoke to imitate their friends, 30% smoke just to «try it out» or by curiosity, and 11% because of family problems¹³³.

With regard to suicide in Algeria, data is extremely scarce. As is reported by a recent article¹³⁴, this phenomenon exists and is all the more worrisome that it is not normal in a society marked by Islam. It might be explainable by the moral weariness of youth hit by unemployment and the feeling of humiliation due to increasingly widening social inequality. The author of the article speaks of a «two speed society» marked by the «ostentatious wealth of one category of citizen from petroleum and business activities and the growing poverty of the majority of which the young are the principal victims».

In Morocco, nearly one half of young people feel they are in good health but one third deem that their health is only mediocre or bad (the others express no opinion)¹³⁵. In spite of the substantial progress made over the past few decades, young people have relatively restricted access to health care, particularly in rural areas and among the neediest families. Given their low rate of integration into the official labor market, very few have benefited from compulsory health care instituted in 2006.

Apart from these general considerations, Moroccan youths claim to be highly concerned about the rise of risky types of behavior observed in their environment. According to a survey by the State Secretariat for Youth conducted in 2001, the principal health problems identified by young people themselves are pursuant to tobacco addiction, alcohol and drugs, above all stemming from psychological problems and depression.

«The third big problem of young people after studies and work is drugs, violence, delinquency, and under cover migration. Young people thrown off keel refuse society because it leaves no room for them; they can't find any way of joining in. They start to look for something that underscores their personality. For some it's hip hop, Facebook, rejection of religion, for others its drugs, violence, fanaticism ...»

Youssef, age 20, in technician training, Morocco (Salé)

131 Saïd Merad, «Algeria: Strategies in the fight against drugs and addiction», in Les circuits de l'Eco, economic and social weekly, 3 July 2011, <http://www.lce-Algiersie.com/actualite/2-Algiersie/102-Algiersie-strategies-de-lutte-contre-la-drogue-et-la-toxicomanie.html>

132 Algerians youth in a few figures, General Commissariat for planning and outlook, Division for evaluation of social policies, Directorate of studies and analyses the evolution of pertinent social policies, 2009.

133 PAFAM, 2002.

134 Hocine Meraihi, «Is there a youth policy in Algeria?», in Revue Sciences humaines n°32, December 2009, Vol., <http://revue.umc.edu.dz/index.php/component/attachments/download/294>

135 Results of the diagnostic, development of an integrated national strategy for youth by 2020, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010.

According to the data gathered by the Ministry of Health in 2003¹³⁶, 90% of drug takers are under 25 years of age. The majority (70%) started to take drugs between 15 and 18 but some (street and working kids) began to sniff glue or thinner as early as 8 years old. The most used drugs are cannabis and its derivatives (19% of young people claim so¹³⁷), alcohol, and hard drugs (psychotropic substances or so-called «karkoubi», cocaine, and heroine) which are little used but steadily gaining ground. Three percent of young people were taking such substances in 2010¹³⁸. However, drug taking remains a social phenomenon largely concealed in Morocco¹³⁹.

Tobacco addiction is fairly widespread among the young who appear to be unaware of the dangers inherent thereto. According to a survey conducted in school milieus on population of average age of eighteen, 21% of the young and 95% smokers were young males. This situation appears to worsen over time because according to 2010 data¹⁴⁰, 16% of youngsters 13 to 15 years of age smoke and the average age of smoking the first cigarette among adolescents is only 11.

As for sexuality, the most recent data (2007)¹⁴¹ show that two thirds of young people (15 to 24) declare having had love relationships and 43% sexual relationships with or without vaginal penetration. The age at the time of the first sexual experience is about sixteen and a half for males and eighteen for females. Risky behavior is frequent as is illustrated by the high prevalence of STDs.

In addition, in spite of increasing use of contraception and condoms, 1% of young people have to cope with an unwanted pregnancy¹⁴². Given the social and legislative environment this type of accident is the cause of family disputes putting into danger the life and mental health of women. The penalization of abortion and stigmas endured by single mothers lead to undercover abortions causing the death of many young girls¹⁴³ and situations of distress going as far as suicide and the abandonment of children, in particular in the neediest circles.

Two thirds of male youths in 2007 declare having had at least one relation with a professional sex worker but only one third (1 out of 5 in rural areas) systematically used a condom¹⁴⁴. Altogether nearly one out of two sexually active young persons had never used a condom. According to a recent survey by the *l'Economiste*¹⁴⁵ the situation has clearly improved over the past four years, with youngsters being increasingly better informed on AIDS (but much less so on STDs) and henceforth massively using condoms.

«Tous les jeunes font l'amour. Chez nous, c'est très fréquent et ça commence tôt. On le fait avec protection ou sans protection. Les préservatifs ne coûtent pas cher : on en a trois pour 100 ouguiyas [environ 30 centimes d'euro]. Mais ils traînent sous le soleil dans les marchés et perdent leur qualité. En plus, il y a des filles qui n'aiment pas ça. Dans la brousse, c'est pire : les gens ne connaissent pas les risques et n'utilisent pas le préservatif.»

Mokhtar, 25 ans, diplômé chômeur, Mauritanie (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)

136 Ministry of Health, Population Directorate, Reflection Days with youths for an integrated health and education strategy.

137 Results of the diagnostic, development of an integrated national strategy for youth by 2020, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010.

138 Idem.

139 Analysis of the situation of children in Morocco, UNICEF, 2007.

140 Source: Youth Health Program of the Ministry of Health.

141 Knowledge, attitudes and practices of youth with regard to STD and AIDS, Ministry of Health /GTZ, 2007.

142 Knowledge, attitudes and practices of youth with regard to STD and AIDS, Ministry of Health /GTZ, 2007.

143 13% of maternal mortality in Morocco is attributable to undercover abortions, according to the Moroccan Association for the fight against clandestine abortion (AMLAC) which advocates the legalization of abortion.

144 Idem.

145 Youth in 2011, documents of L'Economiste.

Health specialists underline that youth remains a category highly exposed to the risk of transmission of HIV and AIDS due to commercial sex and use of injectable drugs. Seroprevalence among the young is estimated at 0.1% but the data is not consolidated due to the scarcity of information on minors¹⁴⁶. Existing documentation shows that the age bracket of 15 to 24 represents 11% of persons living with HIV and AIDS and that young females are affected twice as much as young males.¹⁴⁷ In 2007 only 54% of young people know that the risk of infection could be reduced by using a condom at the time of each sexual act¹⁴⁸ and fewer than 5% had already taken a screening test. As for STDs, they are widely unknown to young people¹⁴⁹: 14% know about syphilis, 12% about male outflow, 7% about female outflow and 4 % about hepatitis.

Since 2007 major efforts have been deployed by the Ministry of Health and its partners to reinforce the steps for prevention targeting adolescents and young people. Multiple initiatives have been undertaken by many ministerial departments, the media and some one hundred local and development NGOs¹⁵⁰. Religious leaders (including 7 000 imams and 5 000 preachers) have been trained to disseminate the most pertinent messages concerning prevention. However, endeavors aiming at vulnerable populations are deemed to be too limited, in particular addressing children and young street kids, victims of delinquency and sexual exploitation, male and female sex workers, male gays and consumers of injectable drugs. Similarly, psychological and social assistance addressing people living with HIV remains insufficient¹⁵¹.

More generally, it wasn't until 2004 that the Ministry of Health granted greater attention to the health of adolescents and young people. Further to a wide consultation with youth, the multi-sector Youth for Youth program was initiated with support from FNUAP implicating the Health, Education and Youth Ministry. This led to the creation of Youth Health Spaces by the Ministry of Health in major cities only. In 2011, the country has 25 with the aim of contributing to the psychosocial of the young of 12 to 24 years of age including sexual and reproductive health via clinics, listening centers, guidance and information entirely accessible and well adapted.

The National Ministry of Education in schools has established health clubs run by peer educators and introduced lessons on reproductive health in educational programs. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has trained Youth Center moderators and female residences devoted to the health of adolescents along with a minimum package of activities (library, information desk, computer space) in some of these schools.

However, the resources mobilized remain insufficient in order to ensure the reproductive rights of young people. Inter-ministerial coordination is shaky while the Youth Health Spaces are not well known and do not sufficiently answer the demands of the young with regard to care, listening and health education¹⁵². As a matter of fact the sale of tobacco to minors is not prohibited and the capacities for detoxification are sub-standard (only three centers in the entire country one of which charges a fee).

146 In Morocco, screening of young people under 18 years of age is prohibited in the absence of parental authorization. To make up for the lack of data, a study has just been launched to determine the situation relevant to the behavior of children and young people living in insecure conditions and the development a strategy for the prevention and fight against this disease among the concerned population.

147 «Epidemiological situation and trends concerning HIV/AIDS in Morocco», Directorate of epidemiology and the fight against disease, Ministry of Health/National Program for the fight against STD/AIDS, May 2011.

148 Knowledge, attitudes and practices of young people with regard to STDs and AIDS, Ministry of Health /GTZ, 2007.

149 National survey with multiple indicators and the health of young people, 2006-2007, Principal preliminary results, Ministry of Health, MICS, UNICEF-UNFPA.

150 «Note for Minister», AIDS/Action (Sidaction) 2010, Moroccan Association for the fight against AIDS, 2010.

151 Implementation of the Declaration of commitment on HIV/AIDS, national report 2010, Ministry of Health, 2010.

152 Evaluation of Youth health spaces, Ministry of Health, 2010.

Suicide among youths remains a taboo subject in Morocco. For lack of statistics and studies on this matter it is impossible to know how many of such suicides or suicide attempts actually occur. Globally the right to psychological and mental health of young people today still remains ignored by the public authorities. The number of specialized professional such as child psychiatrists, psychologists and advisors, is not adapted to the needs of adolescents and young people. By way of example, the country counts some 350 psychiatrists concentrated in the largest cities for more than 32 million inhabitants.

In Mauritania youth health is little documented. According to the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) conducted in 2007, young Mauritanian females continue the risky behavior of their elders with regard to reproductive health. Even if they use more frequently prenatal consultation and assisted childbirth than the oldest women, they know about and use contraceptive methods. This is somewhat disquieting while contraception among adolescents makes it possible to fight against early pregnancies in a context where early marriage, although in decline, still represents a harsh reality: in 2007 13% of women aged 15 to 24 had been married before 15 years of age¹⁵³ and one fourth of young girls 15 to 19 years of age were already married. In addition, 35% of young women aged 20 to 24 had been married before the age of 18.

The persistence of female genital mutilation (FGM) represents another serious risk for young women¹⁵⁴. While more than 70% of Mauritanian women are excised (68% of 15 to 24 year olds)¹⁵⁵, young women opposed to this practice remain in the minority: less than 40% of the 15 to 24 year olds say they are against FGM, i.e. the same proportion as among the oldest generations.

With regard to HIV and AIDS, Seroprevalence is higher than in other North African countries settling at 0.6% at the national level. According to official data the young are less exposed to this disease than their elders and young women are more affected than young men. The age bracket of 15 to 19 is the least well informed about the means of transmission and prevention of the disease¹⁵⁶. More than one Mauritanian out of 10 of this age has never heard about HIV and AIDS and nearly one out of three is unfamiliar with any method of prevention. Knowledge about STDs is even less prevalent among the young, while the United Nations system partners report alarming levels of incidence.

«All young people make love. In our country it's frequent and begins early. It occurs with or without protection. Condoms are not expensive. You can get three for 100 Ouguiyas [about 30 Euro centimes]. But they get toted around in the sun and on markets and lose their quality. In addition, some women don't like it. In the brush it's even worse: people don't know about the risks and don't use condoms.»

*Mokhtar, age 25, degree-holder unemployed,
Mauritania (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)*

Tobacco use represents the principal risk of non transmissible disease for young Mauritians¹⁵⁷. On average 18% of young people from 15 to 24 are daily smokers and this proportion is of one

¹⁵³ But 28% of women aged 45 to 49 had married before the age of 15 (MICS 2007).

¹⁵⁴ Female circumcision is always traumatizing with immediate complications such as unbearable pain, state of shock, retention of urine, ulceration of the genitals and lesions of the adjacent tissues. Other complications are septicemia, sterility, stoppage of the progress of work and even death.

¹⁵⁵ Survey per multiple cluster indicators, UNICEF Mauritania, 2007.

¹⁵⁶ Survey per multiple cluster indicators, UNICEF Mauritania, 2007.

¹⁵⁷ STEPS survey, Islamic Republic of Mauritania/Ministry of Health-WHO, 2007.

third among males (vs. 5% among females). Young males starting smoking at an increasingly young age the age for smoking the first cigarette was 22 among the 55 to 64 year olds, vs. the age of 15 for the current generation.

Health care professionals are also concerned about the rise in drug consumption¹⁵⁸, while Mauritania has become a place of transit for trafficking. They also speak of nutritional problems. While the neediest young people suffer from nutritional deficiency, 19% of young women under 24 years of age are overweight and 14% suffer from obesity. The problem of overweight, among others, is linked to the persistence of the forced feeding of girls¹⁵⁹ and social norms non conducive of thinness or the practice of sports by women.

Generally investments in health by the state, in particular for adolescents and young people, are far from matching the needs while the share of health in the national budget hovers between 4% and 11% depending on the year¹⁶⁰.

To honor its commitment as a CRC and CEDAW conventions State Party, Mauritania initiated certain reforms conducive to the rights of adolescents and women via the enactment in 2001 of a new family code establishing the age of marriage at 18 for both genders. But this code has not been implemented and early and forced marriages still occur according to traditional practices. FGMs are not discouraged by law.

Without doubt it is in the field of HIV prevention that there has been the greatest number of initiatives over the past few years: many prevention campaigns have been successfully conducted in schools and above all at the community level via a huge network of youth associations and awareness-building among religious leaders. These initiatives have been supported by international cooperation partners. They have targeted the capacities of civil society and peer educator training. The SOS educator peers association was noted for its remarkable work among needy young people marginalized and particularly threatened by disease, i.e.: professional sex workers, male-to-male relationships, and consumers of injectable drugs.

In Tunisia three fourths of young people consider themselves in good health¹⁶¹. However, according to the national survey on the health of adolescents attending school¹⁶², the majority of students (57%) say they are living their adolescence with lots of difficulty. These problems are expressed more by females (62%) than by males (52%). Bodily transformations are or have been the cause of disquiet for 42% of interviewees: 53% among females and 30% among males. Girls appear to be more in want than boys in confronting bodily transformations. They are also more often affected by symptoms of depressions: one third suffer therefrom vs. 18% among boys.

A study conducted among students¹⁶³ showed that this population tends to experience psychological difficulties: 13% of the interviewees claim experiencing continuous psychological distress and 49% occasionally. Only one third of students deem themselves to be in good mental health. There again young females are more affected than males.

¹⁵⁸ No quantitative data are available on this subject.

¹⁵⁹ The most recent data on this matter (EDS 2000) show that 11% of females from 15 to 19 had been force fed (28% of Moors).

¹⁶⁰ National health development plan 2012-2020, Ministry of Health, 2011.

¹⁶¹ Third National Consultation on the young, ONJ, 2005; National survey on young people aged 15 to 19, H. Skhiri, H. Ben Romdhane, National public health Institute, UNICEF, 2005.

¹⁶² National Survey on the health of adolescents in school, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

¹⁶³ M. Belajouza and M.N Romdhane. Students, their studies and lives, University Publications Center, 1999, in Adolescents and youth, data and challenges, Tunis, United Nations, 2007.

The difficulties experienced by adolescents and young people, regarding bodily changes and management of sentiment and emotions, in some instances give rise to extreme reactions: adolescents and young people express their emotions by cutting, burning or harming themselves in one way or another. Cuts are the most usual form of self mutilation among today's adolescents and young people.

In Tunisia, this phenomenon is little or even not at all apprehended which does not mean it is only marginal. By way of indication, in the framework of the National Survey on risk-prone behavior of non school attending young people in Tunisia¹⁶⁴, more than 7% of the interviewees admit to having practiced self mutilation over the past 12 months with a gap between girls (9%) and boys (6%). Violence practiced against their own bodies appears to result from problems or crises in connection with not being listened to and lack of support.

According to study on suicide based on a sampling of 80 pupils and students aged 13 to 23 over several years (from 2004-2005 to 2006-2007)¹⁶⁵, suicide and attempted suicide are frequent among Tunisian young people and adolescents. Suicidal behavior is not necessarily hereditary or due to mental disability because it occurs as the result of social, schooling, family and personal factors. Out of the 80 individual studies, nine committed suicide and 28%, for the most part females, tried to do it in groups of 2 to 7 people. Altogether, five times more girls than boys tried to take their own lives.

¹⁶⁴ Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on risk-prone behavior among non school attending young people in Tunisia, ATL - STD/AIDS, Tunis, 2010.

¹⁶⁵ Survey on suicide among young people and adolescents in Tunisia, Tunis, 2007, UNICEF.

Table 3.23. : Data of survey on youth suicide in Tunisia

Genre	Age	Gouvernorate	Date TS	Method	Place	Cause
M	17	Kebili	13/04/2005	Hanging	na	na
F	18	Gafsa	06/04/2005	Medecins	na	na
M	18	Sidi Bouzid	03/01/2006	Hanging	Home	Family conflict
M	20	Sfax	29/04/2006	Jumping out the window	School	Family conflict
F	19	Nabeul	04/04/2006	Insecticide	Home	Forced engagement
M	16	Nabeul	16/04/2006	Hanging	Home	Na
F	17	Sousse	na	Organophosphates	na	na
M	16	Sidi Bouzid	12/11/2006	Hanging	Home	Family conflict
F	16	Ben Arous	16/02/2007	Hanging	Home	Family conflict

Source: Survey on suicide among young people and adolescents in Tunisia, Tunisia, 2007, UNICEF

According to an older survey conducted among 450 students and presented in 1998¹⁶⁶, 3.7% of students had attempted suicide at least once with a repeat rate of 53%. Attempted suicide was more prevalent among females (15 females vs. 2 males). The most fragile persons were students dissatisfied with being directed to undesired sectors or having sustained failures. Socio-economic insecurity also turned out to be a risk factor: Needy students and those with stipends had the greatest tendency to commit suicide in comparison to the others.

Compared to previous generations the sexual behavior of the young in Tunisia is probably the factor having seen the biggest change¹⁶⁷. For many single young people both male and female abstinence has become an improbable option due to the degree of heterosexual and homosexual sexual freedom¹⁶⁸.

While pre-marital sex marks the experience of the majority of young adolescents and young youngsters express the need to talk about it. According to the PAPFAM survey conducted in 2001, the majority of females (55%) and males (67%) claim attaching great importance thereto.¹⁶⁹ Sexual contacts sometimes begin at an early age among adolescents and young people¹⁷⁰ and comprise certain risks such and STD, unwanted pregnancies and abortion.

Adolescents in school say the average age of the first sexual encounter is 16.4 years of age for females and 17.4 for males¹⁷¹ and more than three fourths deem that young people of their own age have already has sexual relations.

According to the National Survey on risk-prone behavior among unschooled young people¹⁷², 36% of the interviewees claimed having had sexual relations: the proportion is higher in urban areas (43%) than in rural areas (27%) and in the age bracket of 20 to 24 (42%) than in the bracket of 15 to

166 K Merniche., W. Melki, G. Khiari, N. Barkallah, M. Hamrouni, Z. El-Hechmi, Attempted suicide in student environments. Survey among 450 students, Fifth conference on School and University Health, Tunisia, 1998.

167 Adolescents and youth, data and challenges, Tunisia, United Nations, 2007.

168 National survey on the health of school attending adolescents, Tunisia, DMSU, 2004.

169 Principal results of the PAPFAM survey, Tunisia, ONFP (in Arabic, undated).

170 «In the entire world, young people reach puberty earlier and marry later: Sexual encounters before marriage appear to be on the rise». NU, World report on youth 2005, New York, NU, 2005.

171 National Survey on the health of in school adolescents, Tunisia, DMSU, 2004.

172 Senim Ben Abdallah, National survey on risk-prone behavior among non school attending youth in Tunisia, ATL - STD/AIDS, Tunisia, 2010.

19 (24%). Males recognize more easily having had sexual relationships than females (14%). According to the same source, the average age of the first sexual encounter among sexually active non-school attending young people is 17.3 years. One out of ten had the first sexual relation before the age of 15. Regarding condoms, 70% of the sexually active interviewees had never used one while the data collected show that 61% of non-school attending young people deem that the condom constitutes a method that can protect against sexually transmissible infections¹⁷³.

By way of comparison, according to the National Survey on the Health of School Attending Adolescents, only one adolescent out of ten thinks that sexually active youths always use a condom (or other method of contraception for girls) and 22% deem that sexually active females use no means of contraception¹⁷⁴.

Knowledge by young people of STDs remains insufficient. In the school environment only 4% of young people can give the name of one or two STDs other than AIDS which is cited by all students (even if their knowledge about protective measures remains fragmentary)¹⁷⁵. Among non-school attending adolescents and young people, 14% of the interviewees claim not knowing about HIV and the diseases linked thereto and fewer than 2% claim to having taken a screening test.¹⁷⁶

«To talk about sexuality is still taboo in our society. Nothing is barely ever said about it in my family. In school this subject is dealt with in a superficial way»

Jamila, age 22, student, Tunisia (Tunis)

Both surveys published in 2005 on drugs consumption among adolescents and young people¹⁷⁷ showed that 10% to 13% of young people were taking drugs. The survey on high school students in Medina showed that males (23%) were much more affected than females (3%), and that drugs takers came from families at both ends of the social ladder, either well off or with no income. According to the national survey on risk-prone behavior among non-school attending young people¹⁷⁸, the most used drugs by this category of vulnerable young people are, in the following order, hashish, pills (psychotropic substances) glue or wax, ecstasy and in smaller numbers heroine and cocaine.

According to the national survey conducted in 2005 among young people aged 15 to 19¹⁷⁹ 8% consumed alcohol (15% males and 0.3% females). Among school attending adolescents¹⁸⁰, one individual out of five had consumed alcohol at least once, with males in the lead over females. More than three fourths of male consumers had been drunk at least once (vs. 22% females) and 42% several times (vs. 9% females). Among non-school attending young people, 21% of the interviewees claimed having consumed alcohol one third of whom every day. This phenomenon concerns ten times more males (41%) than females (4%)¹⁸¹.

173 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on risk-prone behavior among non-school attending youth in Tunisia, ATL - STST/AIDS, Tunis, 2010.

174 National Survey on the health of school attending adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

175 Adolescents and youth, data and challenges, Tunis, United Nations, 2007.

176 Senim Ben Abdallah, National survey on risk-prone behavior among non-school attending youth in Tunisia, ATL - STD/AIDS, Tunis, 2010.

177 Radhia Amrani, Sarra Errais, «Risk factor in drug consumption in school environments in Tunisia» (national survey on 12 to 24 year olds), Family and Population, n°4-5, December 2005, ONFP and INSP, Survey on risk-prone behavior, 2005 (survey conducted on interviewees 15 to 24 years of ages), in Adolescents and Youth, Data and Challenges, Tunis, United Nations, 2007.

178 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on risk-prone behavior among non-school attending youth in Tunisia, ATL - STD/AIDS, Tunis, 2010.

179 Adolescents and Youth, Data and challenges, United Nations, 2007.

180 National Survey on the health of school attending adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004, p. 123.

181 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on risk-prone behavior among non school attending youth in Tunisia, ATL - STD/AIDS, Tunis, 2010.

The survey conducted by the National Youth Observatory on delinquency¹⁸² showed that among the majority of males, alcohol consumption occurs during enjoyable moment with friends whereas among females it is more greatly associated with sexual activity, or even prostitution. According to the youths interviewed, alcohol consumption fosters risk-prone conduct.

With regard to tobacco addiction, 36% of school attending adolescents have smoked at least once. Like among adults, this form of addiction attracts males more than females: many more of the former have tasted cigarettes (56%) than the latter (18%). The average age of smoking the first cigarette is 13 among males and 13 among females, and more than one adolescent out of 10 (12%) smoked at the time of the survey¹⁸³. Among adolescents and non-school attending youths 35% claim they smoke cigarettes (55% males, 8% females). The average age for smoking the first cigarette is approximately 15¹⁸⁴.

3.4.2 Temptation and risks of migration

Young people represent a large share of migrants throughout the world. They also represent a high proportion of migrants returning home. Nearly one third of the migratory flow coming from developing countries is composed of adolescents and young people 12 to 24 years of age and half from 12 to 29 years of age¹⁸⁵.

Galloping demographics of young people in Arab Maghreb Union countries along with other factors internal (political crisis, unemployment and exclusion of youth to the south of the Mediterranean) and external (financial crisis, rising joblessness and xenophobia in countries to the North) has made control of the migratory flow one of the key features in relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

In North Africa, migration is an old phenomenon that for a long time enabled generations of needy youth (especially from rural areas) and a share of degree-holders to escape from poverty and inactivity. With the exception of Libya, a country of immigration until the recent overthrow of the regime, Arab Maghreb Union countries have seen their young leave for Europe, North America and other Arab countries.

Today while Europe which is the main destination of Arab Maghreb Union migrants is closing its borders, the greater share of demand for legal migration of the young remains unsatisfied. To realize their project of departure youths increasingly turn to illegal migration at the risk of losing their money and lives¹⁸⁶, of becoming victims of human trafficking or of being recruited by trafficker networks. As is pointed out by international organizations, minors travelling alone and victims of trafficking constitute a category of young migrants particularly vulnerable migrants requiring special protection.

However, neither the reject of Europe, nor the well known risks of travel appear to hamper the attraction of elsewhere among young North Africans. This desire to leave the county, very much present in their discourse is probably the expression of thwarted identity, the need to escape from multidimensional insecurity, regain control of their destiny and invent a future for themselves. The desire for emigration is compounded by identification with young folks who have achieved "social

¹⁸² Adel Ben Nacer, Waidi Ben Ahmed, Senim Ben Abdallah, New behavioral phenomena among young people, Tunis, ONJ, 2006.

¹⁸³ National survey on the health of school attending adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004, p. 120.

¹⁸⁴ Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on risk-prone behavior of unschooled young people in Tunisia, ATL - STD/AIDS, Tunis, 2010.

¹⁸⁵ World report on youth 2007, United Nations.

¹⁸⁶ By way of example, according to the Human Rights Association of Andalusia nearly 1 200 people lost their lives further attempted illegal migration coming from the shores of Morocco in 2006.

success" abroad, sometimes very quickly, and the appetite for travel and discovery. The image of the country of arrival is often idealized and does not reflect the difficulties inherent to emigration.

In Algeria, according to a 2002 survey 2002, nearly 37% of young people aged 15 to 29 (44% young males and 29% young females) intend to emigrate in order to find work, receive training and achieve a better living standard. It constitutes a real social phenomenon shared by the young of urban as well as rural areas.¹⁸⁷.

«Here, there is no future. Just emptiness. Emigration is the solution. In Europe I can eek out a space for myself. I have potential. I would love to make my dreams come true.»

Slim, age 24, student, Algeria (Oran)

«There is a very serious problem of employment in Algeria. That is why young people opt for clandestine emigration along with all the risks entailed».

Omar, age 24, student, Algeria (Oran)

«I live without a future. Degrees are worth nothing. I can't find anything I want to do. All doors are shut. To make my dreams come true, the only thing to do is leave».

Meher, age 21, student, Algeria (Oran)

In Morocco leaving the country is a promising project in the imagination of many youths. Today, nearly three and a half million Moroccans live abroad and via foreign remittances contribute to almost 10% of GDP thereby providing a livelihood to many needy families. The return to Morocco for vacation has become a symbol of success and modernity in the eyes of many young people even if behind the apparent material comfort the life led abroad often means substantial sacrifices and frustrations.

According to the most recent study, the attitude of Moroccan young people on migration¹⁸⁸, 44% of the 12 to 18 year olds speak of the strong will to emigrate¹⁸⁹— more prevalent among working age youth than school attending adolescents. The study adds that this will to emigrate expressed by young people is most probably underestimated. Indeed, it crops up more frequently when the question is asked more indirectly («To what point are your male and female companions tempted to emigrate?»), young people deem that 59% of their friends are strongly motivated to leave. The preferred destinations are in this order: France, Italy, the United States and Spain.

Young people are, however, aware of the increasingly insurmountable hurdles keeping them from achieving their dreams. Only 33% of the young think it very likely that they will really emigrate. This trust in the achievement of their project for departure is more widespread among males than females and increases with age.

While the quest of previous generations was geared to the satisfaction of material needs that of today's youth appears to be more complex. For them migration is not just a way to earn more but perhaps more than anything else an occasion to achieve one's dreams by acquiring better education and training, the freedom to travel but without rejecting their original culture¹⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁷ EUROMED, Survey on youth policies in Mediterranean partner countries, Compilation of studies summaries, Marly le Roi, INJEP, (undated).

¹⁸⁸ Attitude of young people in Morocco with regard to migration: between modernity and tradition, Entraide Nationale - IOM, December 2010.

¹⁸⁹ For 19% of the remaining young people, this desire is only average and for 37%, it is low.

¹⁹⁰ According to the study already cited, most young people think that emigration presents no danger to their cultural identity.

«The people who go over there return with an automobile and family. Here in Morocco we have no future. We let God guide us.»

«In Europe you can have a comfortable life, new experiences and greater opportunity.»

«Over there the unemployed receive subsidies.»

Words quoted from Moroccan young people aged 19 to 22 years old

In addition, the propensity to emigrate does not necessarily mean that the young people implicated are excluded and vulnerable in their own country as those who say they are ready to act in this direction are also the educated and those satisfied with their life in Morocco and the unschooled, needy and frustrated.

This last category of young people is undoubtedly the most highly exposed to the risks of clandestine migration as is shown by the data on children and adolescents in movement in the Kingdom¹⁹¹ According to a 2008 study¹⁹², these young people know about the risk of *hrig*¹⁹³ not that this would stop them. They speak about the risk of dying during the voyage, of being «caught» by the police and «finding themselves alone» in a foreign land and psychologically insecure», of being kept from entry, of living «over there» in insecurity and «without being able to work or move about freely».

Sources on human trafficking in Morocco are scarce but a recent qualitative study¹⁹⁴ showed that young females, males and unaccompanied minors looking for illegal immigration, sometimes in the hands of trafficker networks bent on exploiting them principally in countries of the Gulf, the Middle East and Europe. This refers to young males exploited for work and young women exploited for sex and domestic help in the countries of arrival. In the case of unaccompanied minors recruited by drug trafficker network is also discussed.

In Mauritania the subject of migration is very little documented. The country is above all perceived by researchers as a space for transit where candidates for getting to Europe and originating from the Sahel sub-region as well as East and Central Africa.

However, according to the most recent estimates¹⁹⁵, 250 000 Mauritians live abroad, i.e. the equivalent of 8% of the population residing in the country. The majority of these emigrants (about environ 60%) would like to live in West African countries, others in the Gulf and only a minority in Europe, primarily in France. North America and China appear to be becoming new destination favored by young generations. The reasons pushing Mauritians to set themselves up abroad are linked to poverty, jobs, cultural and religious affinities (with other African countries and the Gulf States) or exile for political motives.

The qualitative data gathered in the field confirm that some young people consider emigration as a possible option to flee from rising unemployment, the high cost of living and rekindled inter-community tensions. They seem to strongly prefer legal migration and rule out clandestine passage

191 New face of migration. Unaccompanied minors. Transnational analysis of the migratory phenomenon of Moroccan minors to Spain, UNICEF, 2005.

192 Sophie Boukhari, Analysis of the situation of women and children in the Oriental region, UNICEF, 2008.

193 From the Arabic « to burn »: clandestine passage consisting of « burning » frontiers.

194 Transnational human trafficking, Situation and analysis of responses in Morocco, Morocco-IOM, 2009.

195 Migration of Mauritians and recent trends, CARIM, 2009.

by the sea deemed too dangerous. The condition of illegal migration and the risks that certain Mauritanian youth decide but nevertheless ready to endure are not documented.

In Tunisia 41% of young people hoped to emigrate in 2000; males more (53%) than females (30%).¹⁹⁶ According to the National Survey on the health of school attending adolescents, 34% wanted to emigrate after high school. Here again there are more males wanting to leave than females (44% vs. 25%)¹⁹⁷. A survey on non-school attending young people, 26% wanted to go abroad (38% males and 11% females)¹⁹⁸. They purport to be on the lookout for better employment possibilities and openness to other cultures. According to other sources, the young speak of «an insecure future» in their country¹⁹⁹ warranting their desire for departure. The desire for migration of young people is deemed to be all the more disquieting considering that the most often cited motivation is the lack of a future in Tunisia owing to the problems of access to employment, decent living standards and citizenship.

The harqane, in some districts is a major topic of discussion among the young exchanging the names of experienced traffickers, the cost crossing, the times of year and the places of departure, the venue and perfect time, what to do in case of action taken by home or European coast guards, the rules to respect upon arrival, etc. About 7% of non-school attending young people state having tried clandestine emigration, 9% males and 5% females²⁰⁰.

Some young people multiply unfruitful attempts and continue to remain faithful customers of traffickers who get rich at their expense. According to Fawzi Mellah, who speaks about his experience with clandestine emigration in a novel, the candidates for departure must be in good health, know how to swim, dispose of an amount of money in hard currency, speak or try to speak several languages and be careful of the greed of traffickers who don't hesitate at the slightest suggestion of danger; to get rid of their human cargo in the middle of the sea.²⁰¹ In 2011, several attempts at clandestine crossing from the Tunisian and Libyan coasts turned into a catastrophe while the number of drownings continues to rise²⁰², often in the most utter indifference.

3.4.3 The most vulnerable young people: between poverty, marginalization and violence

Poverty, lack of schooling, early working age, violence of all kinds, and family break ups and conflicts are among the principal factors of vulnerability of young people often marking them from childhood. The lack of well-being, risk-prone behavior and bad frequentation that can occur during adolescence can lead the young to become victims of serious mistreatment and infractions of their rights or turn the young themselves in to perpetrators of violence and other reprehensible actions.

The most vulnerable categories of young people, among others, are non-school attending adolescents and street kids, victims of exploitation, adolescents and youths at odds with the law, key population

196 Second Youth Consultation, 2000-2001, Synthesis of results of the questionnaire, Tunis, Ministry of Youth, Children and Sports.

197 National Survey on the health of school attending adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

198 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on young people 15 to 24 years of age non school attending and risk-prone behavior; Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS – Tunis section, ONFP, GFATM, UNFPA, UN/UAIDS, 2010.

199 Adolescents and youth, Data and challenges, United Nations, 2007.

200 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on young people aged 15 to 24 not attending school and risk-prone behavior; Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS – Tunis section, ONFP, GFATM, UNFPA, UN/AIDS, 2009.

201 Fawzi Mellah, *Clandestine in the Mediterranean*, Paris, Tunis, Le Cherche-Midi, Cérès.

202 «The revolution of 14 January and extraordinary movement of pride in the Tunisian people can be summarized in two words: dignity and freedom. These are very strong sentiments replacing fear and the absence of future projects in a political and economic system formerly kept under wraps by the powers in place and to the benefit of only a few. For a few thousand young people, this upheaval meant the possibility of achieving a dream theretofore impossible: to leave and test your chances to the opposite side of the Mediterranean». CIMADE, Anti-racist group for assistance and the defense of foreigners and migrants, Mission Report, Challenges at the borders of Tunisia, 2011.

for response to HIV and AIDS, the disabled, single mothers and females victims of gender-based violence. These adolescents and young people need specific and sometimes heavy support and assistance, in particular when they live in a disturbed family environment, in fragile socio-economic conditions and socio-cultural context conducive to discrimination.

The literature and data of the study on services addressing the most vulnerable sheds light on the lack of adapted responses and coordination between the various social players, the low level of implication of adolescents and the young in the development, implementation and assessment of policies and programs, the low level of consideration of the diversity of youth groups with regard to intervention and the insufficiency of data pursuant to the most vulnerable and marginalized adolescents and young people²⁰³.

However, during the last decade civil society played a pioneering role for these populations, contributing to break the wall of silence surrounding the status of the most marginalized young males and females. Several associations with support from national and international partners initiated initiatives designed to get out of extreme insecurity and thwart the most serious threats confronting them. Backed by universal human rights the said actions should be strengthened, institutionalized and established as standardized high quality social services to guarantee equal opportunities and adherence to the most elementary human rights.

Unguided Youth

Given their tendency to adopt risk-prone types of behavior, it seems necessary to pay particular attention to non-school attending and school leaving young people or those who have completed their studies but are not eligible to school and university health services. Access to educational structure appears to be of prime importance as it enables the individual to benefit from a minimum of supervisions, acquire certain life competencies, development capacities and facilitate integration into society. When school does not fulfill its function of supervision, left out individual are exposed to exclusions, especially if other factors come into play such as insecurity and family break up. For example street kids are almost always unschooled or school leavers and the majority illiterate.

Street Adolescents and young people

Over the past few years the phenomenon of street kids and young people has become increasingly observable and recognized. Among the causes identified concerning this phenomenon, one can cite the divorce between kids and young people with the institutional system (schools, youth centers, clubs and associations); the development child labor in large cities and the specific realities such as young «talibated» children in Mauritania; the rising demand for participation of street kids and young people and adolescents.

Excluded among the excluded, street kids and adolescents often join gangs perceived and form of social organization capable to protect themselves against fear, the dangers surrounding them and poverty. Most of these adolescents and young people suffer from serious health problems including malnutrition, STD prevalence including HIV and AIDS, early pregnancies and lack of access to health services. They are openly exposed to drugs and sexual exploitation. In the limit

²⁰³ Arab League, Concerns of Arab youth, Annual Report 2005, Situation of research on Arab youth, Cairo, Arab League., 2005 (in Arabic): this report emphasizes the need to produce data including highly specific and sensitive data and statistics on a regular basis in all specific and sensitive spheres such as sexual behavior, AIDS, attitudes with regard to partaking in public and political life.

of its capacities civil society is developing certain limited initiatives addressing the most vulnerable street kids and adolescents. However, the phenomenon appears to be growing and causes the indignation of other youth who lament about the inability of States to exit their most fragile citizens from extreme insecurity.

Youth victims of exploitation at work

A low level of education, the absence of professional qualifications, family breakdowns, poverty and the sequels of slavery in the case of Mauritania, contribute to the economic exploitation of youth in North Africa. Exploitation often begins at childhood sometimes at a very early age. Many adolescents practice marginal activities in the street or in poorly adapted premises very often under circumstances where neither the most elementary rules nor fair remuneration are respected. This is the case of adolescents working in craftsmanship or the informal sector where they are exposed to multiple risks.

The category of children and adolescents exploited as «little maids», often in the secret of employer families, is the subject of attention by human rights organizations. In North Africa domestic girls are in their tens of thousands, particularly in Mauritania and Morocco. More often than not they are the victims of many forms of violence such as bodily punishment, rape, and sexual harassment, accusations of theft and refusal of payment. Very poorly documented, the situation of sexually exploited youth deserves special attention.

Adolescents and youth at odds with the law

Antisocial of youth behavior concerns males basically. Among delinquents signs of depression are observed more frequently than among other young people: lack of self-esteem, sadness, anxiety, feelings of loneliness, and loss of motivation. Many studies in countries to the North and South shed light on the role played by the family as the “cradle” of aggressive or criminal acts. The compounding of several factors contributes to their development such as poverty, joblessness, violence, conflicts between parents, divorce and remarriage, in the family environment. “Antisocial” adolescents and young people often come from families where discipline is harsh and incoherent or, on the contrary doesn't exist, especially if the father has deceased.

Further, in certain cases, the young person's slide into delinquency can be abetted by belonging to a gang which creates a feeling of invulnerability sometimes giving rise to irrational and transgressive decisions. The situation becomes critical when the young person is subjected to a leader who imposes his law and the adoption of criminal behavior: Drugs consumption is often linked to crimes committed by young persons. “Deviant” peers provide not only occasions for crime but also material support, the models of attitudes to follow and the support required for the expression of criminal behavior.

To be noted is that in North Africa, the handling of adolescents at odds with the law rarely answers to international standards which recommend the development of alternatives to detention along with reintegration schemes. This situation often leads to repeated misdemeanors among delinquent youths.

There is no help for the desperately unemployed. A young person without work has to steal to get money. Some practice prostitution to do so.»

Slim, age 24, student, Algeria

Key populations

The term «key populations» refers to groups which, while being important in the dynamics of HIV transmission in a given context, are just as crucial in an effective response to the spread of AIDS²⁰⁴. Key populations include male and female sex workers and injectable drugs users.

In spite of the efforts deployed, several forms of stigmatization and discrimination linked to HIV and AIDS continue to hinder the implementation and efficiency of the measures undertaken for the fight against this illness. The response to AIDS would be more effective by providing better assistance to key populations and reducing the stigmatization and discrimination endured by its victims. Avoidance of discussion about prostitution and drugs taking reinforces the vulnerability of these populations with low visibility and which are underanalyzed.

The issue is all the more important given that data is scarce regarding prostitution among adolescents and young people (whether permanent or occasional) and several voices are being heard pointing out the rise in this phenomenon. The principal instigators behind the entry of young people into prostitution are older individuals in need of money and especially for girls, divorce and family rejection.

Disabled young people

The situation of disabled youth in the Maghreb occurs in a context little conducive to development of autonomy and self-confidence. Most feel that the beliefs and representations of their surroundings constitute hurdle to integration. Actually they suffer from exclusion and marginalization. In particular the schooling of disabled children and adolescents is below average (three times lower in Morocco, for example, according to the most recent National Survey of 2005). In addition, disabled youths are confronted with the difficulty of finding work either because of their condition or because they are up against discrimination. The difficulty of access to services (urban space and transport not corresponding to the needs of the physically disabled) accentuates their vulnerability.

Due to this lack of autonomy, the failure to exercise their citizenship rights and the demeaning attitudes in their regard, disabled young people encounter difficulties in realizing the expectations and defending their rights. They often withdraw inside themselves and in the institutions created to provide assistance. The active participation of disabled youth is hard to implement, especially in fragile and insecure socio-economic contexts. However, these young people cannot be kept apart from the definition of actions undertaken in their regard.

Single mothers

In North Africa rejection by the family, insecurity and exclusion are frequent among single mothers and their children. The feeling of depletion and despair marks their situation to such an extent that the media sometimes report cases of suicide. Most single mothers live in absolute insecurity and feel there are no solutions other than prostitution in order to survive and educate their children.

²⁰⁴ The terms « risk » or « high risk groups » are not pertinent as they imply that the risk is contained within the said groups while in reality all social groups are interconnected. Also they can erroneously provoke a feeling of security to people who do not identify with the members of these groups. Generally, it is not belonging to a group that constitutes increased risk of infection it is, rather, the type of behavior.

Data on single mothers are piecemeal and the number of cases widely underestimated by official statistics given that this phenomenon is politicized and largely kept under wraps by the region's societies and States. However, a survey conducted in Morocco in 2010 by the INSAD Association lifted the veil on the true situation and the terrible conditions of single mothers. Firstly it states that every day, 83 mothers give birth to a child outside marriage in the Kingdom. The estimated 27 000 single mothers mentioned are young or very young: 61% under age 26 and 32% between ages 15 and 20. Discriminated against and marginalized they are prey to evil intentioned networks and individuals.

In the countries of North Africa, the law continues to incriminate women for sexual relations outside marriage including in the event of rape or abuse of confidence (promise of marriage), thereby contributing to the increase in number of clandestine abortions and maternal death, as well as the abandonment of children conceived «illegitimately». For a few years human rights defense associations have been trying to make heard issues concerning the rights of single mothers and their children but the majority remain condemned to live in the most severe vulnerability.

Young girls and women victims of violence

In the patriarchal societies of North Africa, gender based violence (GBV) is still widespread and socially accepted. Even though increasing in amount, data on GBVs are highly unsatisfactory and prevalence surveys are rarely available. The most recent one published in Morocco in 2011 by the High Economic Planning Commissariat states that young urban women constitute the principal victims of GBV. Young married women aged 18 to 24 are the most highly exposed to physical violence and the situation worsens if the young woman is married without her consent. As for pupils and students, they form part of the categories the most highly exposed to sexual violence especially in public places and educational and training entities.

In Algeria where the family code is not compliant with women's rights as universally recognized, human rights defense associations shed light on the low level of mobilization of the authorities aiming to assist female victims of sexual abuse and aggression inflicted by their spouses. According to a survey conducted in 2006 by the National Statistics Bureau about two thirds of women including the young deem conjugal violence as warranted, thereby indicating the widespread nature of this phenomenon. According to human rights defense organizations aggressed and beaten women generally prefer to refrain of declaring anything out of fear of being thrown out or subjection to even more serious revenge. In the case of Mauritania, feminine genital mutilation and early or forced marriage constitute additional forms of gender based violence widely practiced and accepted while women's conditions, especially the young, remain insecure in the extreme.

3.5. Participation of youth

As is pointed out by many publications access by youth to full and complete citizenship is a preliminary condition indispensable to integration in North African societies. Everywhere, either pacifically or violently, young people either in reality or virtually are asking to be seen, recognized and empowered in order to fully participate in the public and economic life of the region's countries.

Globalization and the increasingly wide access to information and new communications technology has given the youth North Africa the possibility of finding out about the news the official media do not disseminate other than on their own country, to communicate, organize and put to the public arena. While no one can ignore them any longer, both their families and institutions are called upon to break with their previous practices. Indeed, heretofore young people had few rights and were not able to participate in decisions in their regard. Like in the rest of the Arab world they appeared to be poorly equipped to take on their role in the management of affairs in their respective countries.

3.5.1 Dependence and low level participation in family decisions

In the Maghreb, the family maintains the majority of its functions in spite of the redefinition of its structures, roles, arrangements, negotiations and compromises increasing entry into family and gender social relations in the private arena. Even though the young are living these transformations they continue to attach worth to married life, parenthood, siblings, consanguinity, and generational relationships.

The family plays an important role in the process of access by youth to adulthood. A report on the Arab adolescent emphasizes the importance of this institution in the lives of youths.²⁰⁵ «For the individual the family is the essential framework for learning about life. It is in the family that one has one's first experience in the construction of one's identity»²⁰⁶. In an environment of turbulence, punctuated by disturbing events and in an increasingly less secure economic environment the family serves as a refuge.

Even though the nuclear family has become the predominant structure in their eyes, North African young people remain attached to broader family values. For most of them, the family constitutes an ultimate value and secure space. The difficulties confronting young people in grappling with life legitimizes the support given by their families, and their acceptance thereof. «When the educational system goes through a severe crisis, when the world of work closes, and when social mobility is blocked, the family, even when relatively marginalized, regains its position as a vehicle of integration»²⁰⁷. Family inter-generational solidarity might therefore reduce the growing inequality between young people and their elders.

The young count all the more on family solidarity due to their mistrust of «modern» institutions. They have more confidence in their families than in trade unions or political parties, youth organizations or even school and the university.²⁰⁸

For example in Tunisia the three national consultations on youth of 1996, 2000 and 2005 showed that the family was perceived by the young as a «secure» value. It is considered to be the primary group of belonging by more than nine young people out of ten and three fourths say they feel good therein²⁰⁹.

205 Arab women's center for training and research, The Arab adolescent, reality and outlook, Tunis, CAWTAR, 2003, (in Arabic).

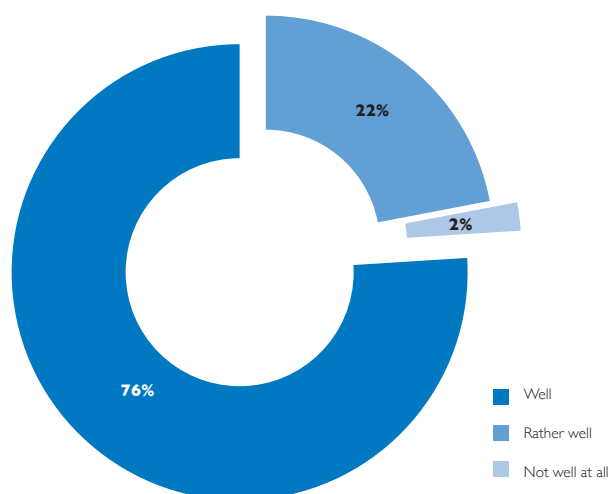
206 BEN SALEM Lilia, Families and social change in Tunisia, Tunis, CPU, 2009.

207 BENNANI-CHRAIBI Mounia, Subjected and rebels, Morocco's youth, Casablanca, Editions Le Fennec, 1995.

208 LABIB T., BEN SALEM L., MAMLOUK Z., ZAIM H., Tunisian Youth, Interpretations and Recommendations based on the National Survey on Youth of 1996, Tunis, 1998 (unpublished).

209 LABIB T., BEN SALEM L., MAMLOUK Z., ZAIM H., Tunisian Youth, Interpretations and Recommendations based on the National Survey on Youth of 1996, Tunis, 1998 (unpublished).

Sentiment de bien être des jeunes (15-25 ans) au sein de la famille



Source: National Youth Observatory.

Acceptance by the young of dependency with regard to their parents leads to compromise and limits conflicts in a context that still attaches importance to respect of elders. In spite of the rise of individualism the majority of young people adhere to the instructions of the family group. Far from rebelling they manage to assert themselves by adopting negotiations or bypassing strategies. Not many Tunisians enter into open conflict with their parents²¹⁰. Similarly in Morocco where the majority of young people classify their education as «traditional», in other words based on absolute and unconditional respect of their elders (parents, older brothers), and undisputed obedience without discussion remains the norm²¹¹. «We have to obey because we live with them» quips a young Moroccan.

Actually, young people supported by their family are exposed to increased dependency²¹². In the framework of family self-help they lose in terms of power what they gain materially. The absence of material reciprocity allows parents to exert power over their children or even control a part of their destiny²¹³ thereby maintaining them in the status of a child.

Generally, young people dependent on their family really want to partake in family activities and if possible make a financial contribution. According to a survey conducted in Morocco in 2007²¹⁴, more than eight young persons out of ten say they voluntarily partake in daily tasks (housekeeping, repair work, shopping, helping the younger members with their homework). The current sexual division of labor is widely prevalent among young girls active twice as much as boys and in ensuring almost all household tasks.

This participation in the family institution is apprehended by the young as a type of solidarity and means of strengthening self-confidence by not being just source of expense. However, this does not lend them the power to partake in decisions concerning the group or even their personal situation.

210 Ministry of Youth, Children and Sports, Second national consultation on Youth 2000-2001, Principal results of the questionnaire, Tunis, MJES, p. 15 (in Arabic).

211 The Book of Youth, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2011.

212 BENNANI-CHRAIBI Mounia, Subjected and rebel, Young people in Morocco, Casablanca, Editions Le Fennec, 1995, p. 175.

213 DECHAUX Jean-Hugues, «Does interchange in relationships increase inequality?», Sociétés contemporaines, 17, 1994, p. 88-89.

214 Research-action on analysis of the situation pursuant to the participation of adolescents and young people in the mechanisms of participation, FNUAP/UNICEF, 2007.

«For years I have been asking my parents to change high school. I am going to a school just half an hour from home but there is another one near, to which my mates go. My parents refuse because they think that if I go where my friends go I won't do anything. Just the opposite is true, as I live far away they won't be able to watch what I am doing, I could jump school and do whatever I want.

Hassan, age 17, high school student, Morocco (Salé)

«One day my father said, if don't pray like you should, you wouldn't eat longer at my table. He treated me like a devil. So now I pray as I should.

Youssef, age 21, student, Morocco (Salé)

«Near puberty you have to cover your head and obey dress codes: one shouldn't wear trousers or skirts that are too short.

Demba, age 23, unemployed, Mauritania (Sebkha-Nouakchott)

«At our home it's the parents who make the decisions and inform their children accordingly. In certain cases you have the possibility of discussion. Educated parents understand their children better at home when they respect custom, it's like military authority. On the other hand you can never talk about marriage; you have to accept your family's decision.»

Aminettou, age 28, divorced, inactive, Mauritania (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)

Qualitative data collected in the file show that the majority of young people submit to the instructions of their parents regarding the dress code, times to go out and sometimes even what kind of company kept, leisure or religious practice. Some of the interviewees in this study expressed excessive frustration with regard to dictatorial paternal decisions concerning schooling or opposing professional guidance.

In urban and educated families young people appear, however, to sport a greater capacity for dialogue and negotiation than in rural and poor environments. The capacity for negotiation in parental decisions often goes through the mother who subsequently intercedes among the family males (father, uncles, and brothers). In addition, girls are subject to stricter parental control than boys concerning who you frequent, going out and dress codes.

Further, even though young people everywhere reject arranged marriage it remains the norm for a minority and in Mauritania the majority of girls. While engagements more often than not obey lineage strategies, women are rarely consulted on the choice of spouse. According to data published in 2000, more than two thirds of Mauritanian females whether married, widows or divorced had been married to husbands with more or less direct lineage relationships²¹⁵.

3.5.2 Lack of dialogue and participation in educational institutions

The history of the Maghreb shows that for over several decades educational institutions have played an important role in the awakening of young people with regard to public policy and the

215 Renewing national policy on the family, State Secretariat for women condition, 2006.

formation of political classes. For example, for a long time the university was a place of debate, protest and confrontation between competing societal projects.

Today the level of youth education keeps on rising but this dynamic appears to have deserted the school bench and faculties. Even though education, citizenship and human rights have been introduced into school curricula²¹⁶ in central North African countries educational institutions do not appear to effectively prepare adolescents and young people to become active citizens.

Available literature such as testimony by students shows that today the school is not playing its role of initiation for young people to the exchange of ideas and decision-making and that it does sufficiently involve them in the management of school and university life. In countries where human rights and universal values form a part of school text books, young people learn about them, however, for lack of practice, they fail to understand their concrete implications or advantages. Learning about citizenship, when it exists, remains theoretical and abstract, as if disconnected from reality.

According to a report on Arab adolescents, educators in the region do not show enough interest in the quality of relations between students and teachers or administration.²¹⁷ Schools and universities don't reserve any space for dialogue in the management of conflicts within the school and do not institute mechanisms for effective and operational participation making it possible for them to contribute to school management.

«At the university they treat us like kids. The teachers don't listen to us and don't respect our opinions. There is no involvement of students in decisions regarding studies».

Hakima, 23 ans, student, Algeria (Algiers)

In Morocco, child rights have been introduced into school programs starting elementary school. They contribute to the development of human rights culture among adolescents. However, the reality experienced at school is often out of kilter with the knowledge transmitted. For example, children underscore that teachers teaching them about protection rights have no qualms about applying corporal punishment in class²¹⁸.

Genuine efforts have been made since the adoption of the National Education and Training Charter of 2000 for institutionalization of the participative mechanisms in schools²¹⁹: school clubs, management counseling, class delegates, cooperatives, sports teams, theatrical troops, and «listening» units, etc.

In 2007 more than one half of adolescents at least knew about these mechanisms²²⁰. More often than not they speak of school clubs run by teachers outside regular school hours. These clubs are much appreciated by students and are organized around different topics: science and techniques, health, the environment, human rights and citizenship, etc. However, although almost generally existing on paper in all junior and high schools very few are actually active, hold regular activities or are sufficiently fitted out to create a true group work dynamic or the establishment of a

²¹⁶ Apart from Libya, the study was unable to gather qualitative information on the educational system in this country.

²¹⁷ Arab Women's Center for Training and Research, The Arab adolescent, Reality and outlook, Tunis, CAWTAR, 2003 (in Arabic).

²¹⁸

²¹⁹ School of respect: reform, participation and innovation in the Moroccan educational system, UNICEF, 2010.

²²⁰ Research-action on analysis of the situation regarding the participation of adolescents and young people in the different participation mechanisms, joint Youth for Youth program UNICEF-UNFPA, 2007

joint project. Generally they are not well equipped and remain, dependent on the decisions and restricted availability of the teachers providing direction on a voluntary basis.

As for the representation of students in the school management units (management councils, class councils), young people are not very aware of this: in 2007 only one student out of eight knew about it while student representatives are supposed to be elected by their peers. When the said mechanisms actually exist they are perceived to be only formal and without any true impact on the participation of students in the actual management of the school.

Specific mechanisms having the aim of protection of the most vulnerable categories of youth were set up in certain of the Kingdom's academies via «listening» and “watch” units against school dropping out. Here again, progress remains to be made so as to become efficient.

Generally, the existing participative mechanisms are deemed by the students themselves to be selective or even elitist. Instead of encouraging integration and participation of students in difficulty, on the contrary they chose to deal with the only the best and most disciplined²²¹. New efforts have currently been put in place to strengthen the equity and efficiency of these mechanisms in the framework of the emergency education plan 2009-2012.

In Mauritania the survey deals with the participation of adolescents and young people in educational institutions. According to available data , text books do not speak about citizenship education and only a few symbolic experiments were initiated to associate students in school management, in particular though the nomination class delegates. Nor are there any school cooperatives on human rights or citizenship at the secondary level²²².

In Tunisia relations with administration and teachers rank first among the difficulties evoked by adolescents in their daily lives. Nearly one fourth of young people complain about the lack of dialogue within school units. The situation is deemed to be more worrisome by males (39%) than by females (13%)²²³.

221 Research-action on the analysis of the situation regarding the participation of adolescents and young people in the different participation mechanisms, joint Youth for Youth program -UNFPA, 2007.

222 Analysis of the situation of children and women in Mauritania, UNICEF, 2010.

223 National Survey on the health of school attending adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

Table 3.24. : Difficulties expressed by adolescents in Tunisia (%), 2004

Difficulties	Male	Female	Total
Problems in relations with school administration and teachers	39,3	12,9	24,5
Emotional problems	11,8	23,0	18,1
Other (divers)	14,0	18,6	16,6
Family problems	3,5	16,5	10,8
Individual health problems	4,4	9,0	6,9
Living conditions	5,6	7,5	6,6
Material conditions of education	9,1	4,1	6,3
Demand for specific assistance and support	9,4	3,2	5,9
exams anxiety	2,9	5,3	4,2

Source: School and University Medical Directorate

3.5.3 Rejection of traditional political game and new forms of commitment

In the collective imagination, the investment of the young in the public sphere often generates fear because they are often at the pinnacle of activism and at the core of revolution. In countries to the North and South, youth means protest, criticism of institutions and refusal to compromise even if some groups are actually more conservative.

The issue of participation and citizenship of young people is attracting growing interest in contemporary societies. The promoters of good governance insist on the need to implicate youth groups and associations in decision-making and strive to develop empowerment. However, today's youth appears to be going through a citizenship crisis²²⁴ while rejecting implication in political life.

Youth participation in politics

Young people were at the forefront of the public stage during the Arab spring.»²²⁵. Through their commitment and organizational skills many manifested their rejection of dictatorship and corruption while expressing their desire for democracy and social justice.

For a long time accused of passivity and political neutrality, the youth of Tunisia and Libya emerged as the drivers of revolution giving them their icons. In Morocco the youth of the February 20 movement, via their demands and demonstrations, restarted the political reform process and led to the adoption of a new Constitution. In Mauritania the youth of February 25, although in a minority, had their voice heard in favor of democratization and equal opportunity for all citizens of the country.

«This year, I fully implicated myself in several demonstrations and sit-ins. Because of it I didn't get my baccalaureate. This time I want to do it. I think I've done enough. Now I don't care about the politicians governing us. I think that from now on they will be afraid. People can always go back down into the street. . . If something bad happens, I'll get back on the wagon . . .».

Mourad, age 18, student, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

²²⁴ Pierre Brechon, «Less politicized but higher protests», in Olivier Galland and Bernard Roudet, Values of the young, Trends in France over the past 20 years, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001.

²²⁵ This refers to the popular uprisings in several countries of the MENA region including Tunisia and Libya in the Maghreb.

«As for me, I have a disability, I joined the revolution via Facebook and that allowed me to keep in touch with others, even the world. I share videos. I think that my contribution to the revolution was only very modest but I am proud to have done so».

Neila (mobility impaired), age 25, specialized trainer, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

«I was active in favor of the revolution even before January 14, because I felt frustrated. We didn't even have enough to eat while others were stealing and getting rich».

Nabil, age 15, student, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

«Our movement didn't obtain all it was asking for but it did help to change things. We broke the taboo of constitutional reform and the fear of demonstrating for political reasons and that we were capable of doing so peacefully. We influenced social movements by strengthening the culture of demand. We even broke the taboo of the sacredness of the monarchy. Now everyone is talking about the legitimacy of the Makhzen, even in the most isolated of hamlets.»

Youth in February 20th movement, Morocco (Rabat)

«Thanks to our movement, Haratines and Negro-Mauritanians demonstrated together against exclusion. Here, older people don't have any societal project and the politicians only have self-interest. But lots of young people have understood that the future of our country will occur with the help of everyone without exclusion.»

Activist in Coordination of February 25

The current events have allowed a clear-cut denial to the usual accusation of political neutrality of the Arab world's youth. However, what could be more political than dealing with democracy, equality and respect of freedom? What the young really want in reality is not "political" but "Politics" as it exists in their countries via parties, parliaments, elections and Heads of State surrounded by over powerful elites without any democratic legitimacy²²⁶.

While their status is increasingly insecure, they have the impression of not counting for the political class basically consisting of people of advanced age whereas the region's population is young. They are almost unanimous in condemning the monopolization of positions by elderly persons and the lack of initiatives aimed at renewing the political class.

«The young Algerian can create. He has ideas and is innovative. But his potential is not exploited. Those in charge are old and incapable of understanding the young».

Kaouthar, age 22, administrative assistant, Algeria (Algiers)

«At the administrative level it's the old who have all the positions, those in charge are incapable of thinking about the place of young people. They are irresponsible and completely out of touch with the contribution of technology... They've had lots of luck in their life».

Sara, age 22, student, Algeria (Algiers)

226 Arab Women's Center for Training and Research, the Arab adolescent, Reality and outlook, Tunis, CAWTAR, 2003, p. 33 (in Arabic).

«Youth constitutes the energy of a society. But good use of this force is overlooked. Considering the average of the people in charge one is struck by how high it is. A country cannot be governed solely by elderly people».

Chaker, age 25, student, Algeria (Algiers)

In Tunisia 6.5% of young people declared belonging to a political party in 2005²²⁷ in full knowledge that at that time the Democratic Constitutional Assembly (RCD -currently dissolved) was a single party completely dominating the political stage. However, it was the same youths who were demanding consolidation of democratic practice (64%) and greater freedoms (60%). The most recent quantitative analysis suggests that Tunisian young people are leery of the political game in the framework of the on-going democratization. They are registered on the electoral lists in much fewer numbers than before the election of October 23, 2011 for members of the constituent Assembly.

«I am pessimistic about the future of Tunisia because of the silent majority. Young people did not sign up very much for election of the Constituent Assembly. We do not trust the transitional government or the political parties. Political parties want to grab power. They only make promises. Young people are left out. And yet they were in the front line during the revolution. Some even gave their lives for Tunisia».

Nabila, age 21, student, Tunisia (Nabeul)

«I ask myself why young people did not massively register for the Constituent Assembly elections ... Maybe because before that time they never knew what real elections were like. For 23 years elections were never put forward».

Tarek, age 22, student, Tunisia (Nabeul)

«I hope political parties are credible. But I don't trust them. I have my doubts».

Hichem, age 22, student, Tunisia (Nabeul)

In Morocco the political participation of youth has recently been the topic of many studies²²⁸, over half say they have never voted. In addition, they have a negative vision of politicians. In this field their culture is very limited: only a minority of young people can mention the names of more than three parties and the majority doesn't know about the role of Parliament and government. They deem that political parties are obsolete, disconnected from reality and run by persons who are too old and unstoppable. According to them these bodies are overrun with serving their own "clients" and cooptation, leaving no room for the upcoming generations.

Moroccan youth does not understand the «complicated» language of politicians, particularly when they speak in the media, and feel they are mostly inspired by personal interest. Local elected officials are particularly criticized and equated with incompetency, abuse of power and baseless promises.

«I started at the age of 20 with a friend I met in an association who invited me to meetings of party x. I took out a party membership card and kept it for three years. We met once per month at the local section of Salé and were able to attend the national

227 Third consultation on youth, 2005, Tunis, ONJ, 2006.

228 Book of the Young, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Rabat, 2011; Morocco's youth, lifestyles, values and hopes, summary of the outcome on the qualitative study conducted in 2010 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Research -action on analysis of the situation of participation by adolescents and youth in the different participation mechanisms. Joint Youth for Youth program UNICEF-UNFPA, 2007.

congress. But the older folks wouldn't let you work; they don't open any doors so you can become an executive of the party. You have to stay with the young, it's the end of the path and there is no exit.

Adil, age 25, Sociology student, Morocco (Salé)

«The young are not interested in politics because it doesn't change anything in their lives».

Saber, age 18, student, Algeria (Oran)

«I'm 20 years old. I lived under a regime that made lots of promises. It was all lies. Today it's important to vote. Associative life has to be developed. In developed countries civil society plays a very important role. It is necessary to engender awareness by youth».

Amira, age 20, student, Tunisia (Nabeul)

In Mauritania the young are little represented in political parties. They are leery of the political world and show no inclination to commit to any structured formation or movement whatsoever.

To them, politics represents a resource rather than a commitment, influence to find a job or procuring a favor for the family, the luck of knowing someone, a financial windfall or the ability to sell one's vote at the highest price during the elections or if one gets hired to campaign in different parts of town.

The young people interviewed, even when they show interest in politics and discussion of ideas, are unanimous about the fact that politicians don't represent them.

The disenchantment and unhappiness of Mauritania's youth, unlike in other Arab countries, has not resulted in the outbreak of mass protest in spite of the February 25 movement.

«In politics money is the only issue. One votes for the one who pays the most.»

Mokhtar, age 25, graduate, unemployed, Mauritania (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)

«I like politics and discussing things like that. But here in Mauritania politicians are not patriotic. The only thing they are interested in is their wallet. They have no regard for the population.»

Demba, 23, unemployed, Mauritania (Sebkha-Nouakchott)

According to an Arab League report, young people are well neigh or completely absent from elected councils of Arab countries²²⁹. This crisis in the representation of youth is seemingly explainable by a the great number of young people turning towards the consolidation of personal networks, such as family, the city district, groups of friends and social networks where they think they are better recognized and secure.

Recent news has amply demonstrated that the youth of the MENA region, particularly in North Africa, tend to overinvest in social networking as a means of political activism, to such a degree that these networks today appear to constitute one of the spaces for expression and political participation of the young.

²²⁹ Arab League, Concerns of Arab youth, Annual Report 2005, Cairo, Arab League, 2005.

Table 3.25. : Facebook rate of penetration, April 2011.

Country	Algeria	Libya	Morocco	Mauritania	Tunisia
%	5	4	10	2	22

Source: Arab Social Media Report, 2011.

As is stated in a recent report²³⁰, the number of Facebook users²³¹ dramatically rose in the majority of Arab states in the first months of 2011, more particularly in the countries where protest movements broke out. Social networks have also played a key role in the mobilization of protesters. From January to April the number of «facebookers» climbed to 536 000 people in Tunisia (5% of global total), 590 000 in Morocco (2.2%) and 561 000 in Algeria (1.6%).

Participation of youth in associative life

Young people appear to be more attracted to citizenship and volunteer action than by activities in political organizations. Very aware of the issue of social justice which appears to be one of their principal demands, they are increasingly present in local and district associations. However, the rate of participation in associative activities remains low, generally less than 10%²³².

In Algeria adherence by young people to associative structures appears timid even though the movement has seen robust development over the past decade. The youth association sector is not particularly well structured. It lacks support resources and is striving to create new links with the States and associative networks abroad. Since the dramatic events of the 1990s, many associations try to help traumatized and saddened young people and adolescents without always having available the tools and resources necessary permitting efficient psychological aid. In addition, networks of youth associations are beginning to get organized at the local and regional level in order to set up concrete and income-generating projects.

In Morocco the development of civil society and the participative approach to governance have been actively fostered by the monarchy, particularly since the launch in 2005 of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) presented as a project of the reign. This initiative has the aim of fighting against poverty and exclusion through the multiplication of proximity projects in the most underprivileged areas. It is partially conducted via development of the associative environment which remains understood and interpreted as a relay to the exercise of power²³³, especially in areas where governmental action is the lowest.

INDH has fostered the emergence of thousands of NGOs and reinforced certain already existing associative networks. Even if these structures often encounter internal operational problems, lack independence and have a limited impact due to the lack of sufficient resources, they have resulted in a certain dynamic and enabled thousands of young people of both genders, often unemployed or inactive, to approach citizen action in various spheres: water management in rural areas, education, training and literacy, creation of income-generating activities, child protection, fight against violence to women, etc.

230 "Civil Movements: The impact of Facebook and Twitter", Arab Social Media Report, Dubai School of Government, 2011.

231 In the MENA regions, on average 70% of Facebook users are young people under 30 years of age and only 30% are women.

232 In developed countries the rate of youth participation in associations is generally much higher: It is around (for ages 18 to 29) 91% in Sweden, 44% in Italy and 37% in France, cf. Valérie Bequet, «Youth Participation, A Look at six countries, Agora, Débat/Jeunesse, 42, 2007.

233 Béatrice Hibou, «February 20th movement, the Makhzen and anti-politics», Sciences Po-CERI/CNRS, 2011.

In addition to organizations officially recognized by the State a great number of NGOs and local associations play an important role among young people, more often than not proposing activities fostering participation and free expression. These associations led by and for young people have been growing in «sensitive» districts further to the Casablanca terrorist attacks in 2003²³⁴. A few experiments also try to support the building of networks and youth representation bodies. A children's Parliament (age 10-18) was set up in 2000, an experiment has been tried out for one year in five communes for the creation of communal Councils of children and youth with support from UNICEF and UNFPA, and bilateral cooperation projects (Canada, United States) supporting networking and youth participation. Non-profit organizations count on a vast network of volunteers trained internally or young stakeholders for the most part paid for very low indemnities. The professionalization of this unpaid or very low paid personnel, apart from the fact that it constitutes one the key stakes for the efficiency of the actions undertaken, could greatly help strengthening of the social capital and citizenship commitment among the young

As was shown by a 2007 survey²³⁵, Morocco's young are much more cognizant of associations than of political parties or institutions and view their actions as rather positive. However, only 8% (especially boys) are members as the most recent data show²³⁶.

In Mauritania a change also took place to foster youth associations further to the transition process begun in 2005 and the 2008 government overthrow. A children's Parliament was set up in 2006. In addition, the initiative of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, with support from the United Nations system, in the same year created a wide-ranging national Youth Network (RENA) to produce a joint platform of youth priorities and coordination of activities (see further: Chapter on good practices).

In Tunisia the third national consultation on youth in 2005 showed low level membership by youth in civil society organizations (associations and syndicates) amounting to only 9%²³⁷. This outcome corroborates the National Survey data on the health of school attending adolescents²³⁸. According to another study solely regarding non-school attending young people, only 4% claimed belonging to a civil society organization²³⁹ which probably shows that vulnerability reduces youth participation and integration. Tunisian boys say they are more implicated in civil society than girls and that the rate of participation declines with age²⁴⁰. In spite of their low level of associative commitments, in 2005 more than half of young people were for the development of volunteer work (55%).

234 Study on the youth policies of Mediterranean partner countries, Compilation of study syntheses, Marly le Roi, EUROMED, INJEP, 2008.

235 Research-action on the analysis of the situation of participation of adolescents and young people in different participation mechanisms, Joint Youth program, UNICEF-UNFPA, 2007.

236 The Book of Youth, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Rabat, 2011.

237 UNJ, Third consultation on youth, 2005, Tunis, ONJ, 2006.

238 National Survey on the health of school attending adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

239 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on non-school attending youth aged 15 to 24 and risk-prone behavior, Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS – Tunis section, ONFP, GFATM, UNFPA, UN/AIDS, 2010.

240 National Survey on the health of school attending young people, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

Table 3.26.: Rate of Youth Participation in Tunisia (%)

Structure	Percentage
Municipal Council	0.5
Political party	6.5
National organization	0.8
Other types of association	1.4
Labor union	0.6
Private club	1.7
Youth Association	2.0
Cultural Association	1.2
Sports Association	3.0
School Club	2.0
University Club	1.4
Other	0.3

Source: National Youth Observatory.

In the region, associations could represent an alternative to political and religious activism. Many supervised young people are encouraged to partake in events, in particular with regard to solidarity with the Palestinian people. In Morocco, the most radical force of opposition to the authorities is an association (Al Adl Wal Ihsane). Of an Islamist bent, it is comprised by a series of local district networks covering the entire country and including numerous young activists.

In North Africa like everywhere else in the world, youth vulnerability and being ill at ease with identity could wind up in high mobilization of extremist movements. The proposal of collective life and the achievement of a joint project attract certain young people who are either fragile, marginalized or traversed by violent internal conflicts. Therefore, fundamentalist movements and the mysterious charitable associations surrounding them could attract lots of young people especially considering that they more often than not operate among the underprivileged.

These young people constitute pools of considerable dissatisfaction and frustration. Placed under the influence of charismatic leaders they can turn to violence in the struggle against their compatriots, leaders and government considered to be bad Muslims, infidels or apostates. As we are regularly reminded in the news, the danger of terrorism persists in North Africa and the region is not sheltered from the risk of political instability linked to fundamentalism. In this context the issue of the connection between politics and religion is on the agenda and the debate is recurrent in society including among the young. The recent experience of Tunisia and Libya, after the demise of totalitarian regimes, bears witness to the difficulties in setting up civil States where separation of religion and politics guaranteeing freedom can be accepted.

Given the current situation a major effort for communications, mobilization and supervision with the aim of fostering youth participation in politics and citizen action appears to be necessary and urgent to consolidate the on-going democratic processes and transform the energy of protest into a constructive force. If not, young people could trigger new episodes of instability, or even become more radical leading to violence.

3.6 International relations and conditions of transition to adulthood

3.6.1 Spaces for dialogue, taboos and inter-generational relationships

The notion of «respect» of elders in North African societies appears to reside in silence and absence of dialogue. Only a few rare topics of conversation are tolerated between parents and children, for example, school, sports or religion.

On the other hand, many topics of interest to young people remain taboo or forbidden in the family context such as love, “girl chasing”, sexuality or even politics. The attitude of parents with regard to touchy subjects consists of denying their very existence as if silence could get rid of the «evil». However, the absence of dialogue or continuous hesitation more often than not are often perceived by the young as being indicative of indifference or even abandonment²⁴¹.

Many young people attempt to develop behavioral duplication: respecting and/or feigning to respect the prohibited and to discreetly engage in so-called immoral, «illicit» or «shameful» behavior. For many youths, keeping silent, avoiding to say what one thinks, or not revealing anything intimate, appears to be unavoidable to keep from shocking one’s entourage and accepting the consequences.

«No dialogue exists within the family, and even if it does you never really talk about everything».

Olfa, age 20, student, Algeria (Oran)

«There is no communication within the family in North African countries. I don’t look my father in the eyes when he speaks. That would be unacceptable. Parents don’t listen to their children. If one of my parents gives me an order, I do it. I am convinced that the lack of communication produces nothing positive, only negative».

Omar, age 24, student, Algeria (Oran)

«I am normal with my family. I have no problem with my parents. I talk to them about my life by about 70%. I don’t talk to them about my love or sexual relations. I would be too ashamed. I can’t talk about that with them».

Mehdi, age 18, student, Algeria (Oran)

«In Moroccan culture, there are a lot of red lines. Lots of subjects are taboo with parents, like sexuality. I can’t talk to my dad about what I do with my girlfriends or even tell him that I have one».

Youssef, age 21, student, Morocco (Salé)

«Well, at home we talk about everything, except love. We talk about politics and about costs at home. I would want to talk about love with my mother but I know she would never accept.».

Karima, age 20, in training, Tunisia (L’Ariana)

²⁴¹ Jalil Bennani, Alain Braconnier, The time of adolescents, Casablanca, Editions Le Fennec, 2002.

In Tunisia the National Survey on the health of school attending adolescents showed that 63% of the parents interviewed say they had prepared their children for the changes that occur at puberty. For 73% of parents, the bodily change of the child occurred normally²⁴². However, most adolescents interviewed in the framework of the survey (57%) say they had a hard time of it during adolescence. The said feeling of being ill at ease was spoken about more by girls (61%) than by boys (51%)²⁴³. Adolescents and their parents do not experience in the same way the disquiet generated by the bodily changes connected with puberty. This gap in perception shows that parents are not always aware of the suffering or the apprehension of their children with regard to their bodies and may sometimes prove unapproachable at the moments of solitude or anguish felt by their teenagers. The lack of knowledge about puberty, in extreme instances, can become a source of disturbance in the behavior of a young person.

«There are always conflicts with parents. They don't accept me as I am; They find me mannered and that hurts. I suffer because of it; I can't speak with them. I would like it so much if they could understand me. I would like to be able to say: «accept me as I am «. In my family love does exist but not like I would want it. When I go out I have to lie; The lack of communication creates lies.»

Saber, age 18, student, Algeria (Oran)

In Morocco, according to a 2007 survey already cited only one young person out of six say their parents are a source of information concerning puberty²⁴⁴.

In all North African countries the issue of sexuality remains taboo. In general the North African family fails to manage the creation of dialogue around love and the sex life of their children. Even though some well off urban parents are beginning to talk about sexuality with their teenagers to warn them against the risks (STD-AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, etc.), the majority continues to maintain total silence on this subject. This problem can cause a lack of transparency and trust on the part of children who feel forced to lie so as to extract themselves from family control over sexuality.

In Tunisia, according to the PAPFAM survey, male interviewees who speak freely of sexuality with members of their family represent only 1.5% for the father, 3.7% for the mother, 1.2% for the brothers and sisters and 8.5% for just brothers²⁴⁵. With regard to young girls, the mother and sisters are considered a source of information on sexual health and reproduction only at 8.9% and 6.4%, respectively²⁴⁶. The National Survey on unschooled young people and risk-prone behavior in Tunisia showed that the young who dare speak about sexuality in their family constitute only very small minority: 0.6% admit to evoking the issue with their father and 5.1% with their mother²⁴⁷.

The problems of inter-generational communication vary according to gender. Fathers experience more difficulty than mothers in communicating with their children. For example In Tunisia the mother appears to be better disposed and open to dialogue (68%). She is followed by the father (47%), the brothers and sisters (42%), male or female cousins (41%), uncles and aunts and

242 National Survey on the health of schooled adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

243 Idem.

244 Knowledge, attitudes and practices of young people with regard to STDs and AIDS, Ministry of Health-GTZ, 2007.

245 Nabila Hamza, Adnene Chaabouni, «Sexual practices of the young, representation and sources of information in a context of AIDS» under the direction of Nabila Hamza, in Socio-demographic change in the Tunisian family, Tunis, ONFP, 2006.

246 Nabila Hamza, Adnene Chaabouni, «Sexual practices of the young, representation and sources of information in a context of AIDS, under the direction of Nabila Hamza, in Socio-demographic change in the Tunisian family, Tunis, ONFP, 2006.

247 Senim Ben Abdallah, National Survey on young non-school attending people aged 15 to 24 and risk-prone behavior, Tunis, ATL STD/AIDS –Tunis section, ONFP, GFATM, UNFPA, UN/AIDS, 2010.

grandparents (28%). However, 16% of adolescents declare being unable to talk to any member of their family²⁴⁸.

«In my family communication is better with my mother. I had a very strict education especially on the part of my father. I don't have much contact with my father. Too bad that in my family there is not much affection. My father never tells me he loves me even though I know he does»

Sara, age 22, student, Algeria (Algiers)

«In our family our father is very inaccessible. His son can make tea for him but the relationship stops there. If we need to talk about our problems, we talk to mom or our big sister and she is the one who speaks to our father.»

Mohamed, age 24, worker in informal sector,
Mauritania (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)

«I can talk about anything to my mother, even of love life problems because she is always at home, not like dad. My mother protects me, I feel close to her. For my father I have respect but it's not possible to talk about everything with him.»

Mourad, age 18, high school student, Tunisia (L'Ariana)

In a context still marked by gender inequality and hesitation with regard to the emancipation of women, both male and female adolescents continue to build their identities by following an intrinsically gender-based socialization process. Indeed, the mechanisms of socialization put in place within the family do not always address boys and girls in the same way. Often they pay more attention to the latter who are subject to oversight and reinforced "protection". In this direction it appears that girls experience more difficulty in distancing themselves from their family leaving little leeway for emancipation.

«In Algeria only the eldest in the family is recognized. Education is not the same for boys and girls. I enjoy much less freedom than my brothers.»

Olfa, age 20, student, Algeria (Algiers)

3.6.2 Desire to start a family and later marriage age

In the Maghreb marriage remains a major event. Access to married life continues to be perceived as a type of social success for the young person as well as for his/her family. It is the only lifestyle possible for an adult in a society that rejects any other form of conjugality.

Marriage maintains its role of rite of passage and allows the group to accept the young married person into the adult world. In the Arab/Muslim context, marriage remains a condition necessary for life as a couple and children. Marriage is the only legitimate social, obligatory, religious and legal foundation upon which a family can be started.

²⁴⁸ National Survey on the health of schooled adolescents, Tunis, DMSU, 2004.

Adhering to the dominant social norms and values, not many young people flock to informal unions. However, the issue of conjugality without marriage, long time taboo, is beginning to be approached in the press particularly in Morocco. Since the Moudawana family code «accepts the registration of children in the civil status upon simple declaration of the paternity of the father; de facto relations seem to have made advances», states a recent press survey²⁴⁹. This type of behavior, however, remains very much in the minority and restricted to a few large urban centers like Casablanca and Marrakech.

In the North African context, people remaining single late in life and divorce are subject to marginality and remain under great pressure. Prolonged belatedness in marriage, for whatever reason, systematically becomes a family problem and in certain instances leads to «marriage psychosis»²⁵⁰. Social norms give the right to parents, relatives whether close or distant, friends and neighbors to push single people to marry by providing several forms of help. Marrying off their children, for the parents becomes a top concern.

Yesterday like today, getting married and starting a family remains one of the principal aspirations of young people in the Maghreb. However, contrary to their parents, many have to put off their project until later. Marriage at a later age is found in all countries of the region, explainable not only by the longer time spent in school and vocational training, the time required for finding a job, and the insecure conditions of the young²⁵¹, but also by the break with traditional lifestyles and the rise in individualism. While they are all for the nuclear family, to them it appears impossible to marry before emancipation from family tutelage. Therefore, to have a decent paying job and own place to live appears to be an absolute necessity especially in cities.

In addition, the young try to negotiate the choice of a spouse even if more often than not marriages are the result of compromises between the choice of the young person and that of the parents²⁵². Female emancipation, although incomplete, largely contributes to this situation. Young women often speak of their desire to work to become independent and reject the traditional model which, among others, imposes co-residence with the mother-in-law or wider family.

The case of Morocco clearly illustrates this issue. The average age of the first marriage advanced from 24 for males and 17 for females in 1960 to 31 for males and 27 for females in 2010.

Table 3.27. :Trend in average age of first marriage in Morocco (1960-2010)

Year	Together		Urban		Rural	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1960	24.0	17.5	24.4	17.5	23.8	17.2
1971	25.5	19.6	26.5	20.9	24.8	18.7
1982	27.1	22.2	28.5	23.8	24.8	20.8
1994	30.0	25.8	31.2	26.9	28.3	24.2
2004	31,2	26,3	32,2	27,1	29,5	25,5
2010	31,4	26,6	32,5	27,4	30,0	25,6

Source: High Commissariat for economic planning.

249 The young of 2011: Their taboo, anger, and hopes. Document of L'Economiste, 2011.

250 Mostapha Boutefnouchet, «Causes behind the crisis of marriage in Algeria», CAWATAR, I, 1996.

251 Lilia Ben Salem, Families and social change in Tunisia, Tunis, CPU, 2009.

252 Lilia Ben Salem, Thérèse Locoh, «Transformation in marriage and the family», in Population and development in Tunisia, The metamorphosis, Tunis, Cérés Editions, 2001.

According to the qualitative data collected by the Ministry of Youth and Sports²⁵³, the age desired by the young for marriage is younger than the actual age which shows that they are forced to wait for several more years for this high point in their lives to occur. The desired age for marriage among Moroccan young people is between 22 and 27 for females and 28 and 30 for males.

However, the study also underlines that the majority of young Moroccans do not plan on following the family model handed down by previous generations. They massively disapprove arranged marriages and most envisage a relationship based on equality and dialogue. Most young women look to their future life as a couple as people exercising a professional and financially independent activity. These findings are more highly applicable in urban than in rural areas where girls often don't have any other outlook than that of wife and mother.

«For me the number one problem to solve is to be properly educated so as to find a job. I'll think about the rest afterwards. With regard to marriage I wish to choose a nice and responsible man and above all do not want to live with his mother. I will ask for my family's opinion but the actual choice will be mine.»

Latifa, age 23, student, Morocco (Salé)

«For me the most important thing is to get a degree and to work. Marriage will come afterwards. Today one can only count on one's self.»

Najela, age 23, student, Tunisia (Nabeul)

«My last project is to get married! You can't even think about that when you have no work. I don't want to follow the example of my parents. They married very young, had lots of children and now are without anything.»

Amadou, age 22, unemployed, Mauritania (Dar Naïm-Nouakchott)

In Mauritania arranged marriages are still the norm but seem to be put increasingly into question. According to EDSM 2000-01²⁵⁴ females marry very young, often to older men : nearly one fourth (24%) of women are already married between 15 and 19 years of age and over one half (51%) between 20 and 24. But it still remains that the age of the first marriage is changing. It went from 16 for females of previous generations (40-44) to 19 for the age bracket of 25 to 29. Males with an average age of 27 years for the first marriage marry much later.

Qualitative data show that the young wish to break with the traditional model of marriage which is too early and alienating. Young girls and women, especially urban areas reject marriages forcing them to interrupt their studies and drop a professional activity. Increasingly they refuse the devouring influence of families on their married life and marital violence which tends to increase the number of divorces.

253 The Young in Morocco, lifestyles, opinions, values and aspirations, summary of the outcome of a qualitative study conducted in 2010 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

254 National statistics Bureau (ONS) and ORC Macro, Survey: demographics and health in Mauritania 2000-2001, 2001.

«Youth is a beautiful age. You can do everything, make new discoveries, and learn. But for me it wasn't like that. When they marry you off you can't study or work any more. They tell you that you can't become a minister or president so the best for you is to start a family. My husband took me into the bush and he wanted me to stay there. So I refused and he divorced me.»

Khadijetou, age 28, married at 18 and divorced at 23, two children, Mauritania (Dar Naim-Nouakchott)

«Nowadays there are lots of divorces due to the family-in-law. You have to give a lot to those people. If you don't buy enough meters of wax you might get insulted, they tell you that you are a bad girl. On the other hand, your husband tells you that you can't go study any more. Men have no respect for women. Marriage is negative by 80%.»

Kadiaba, age 22, in secretarial training, Mauritania (Sebkh-Nouakchott)

In Tunisia like in the other countries of North Africa, the age of the first marriage continues to rise. In 2009, it was 28 for females and 34 for males. Available data show that the age difference between spouses has considerably fallen over the early decades of independence and over the past 10 years has stabilized at around five years.

Table 3.28. :Trend in average age of first marriage in Tunisia (1956-2009)

Date	Females	Males
1956	19.5	26.3
1966	20.9	27.0
1975	21.6	27.1
1984	23.4	28.8
1994	24.5	29.4
2000	25.7	30.8
2006	27.1	33.1
2007	27.6	33.7
2008	27.8	33.7
2009	28.0	33.8

Source: National Statistics Institute.

In Algeria the trend in the decline of the average age of the first marriage observed continues in conjunction with the most recent census taking. For men it moved from 28 in 1987 to 31 in 1998, reaching 33 in 2008. The same trend is observed for women where the average age of the first marriage has grown by more than 5 years over the space of 20 years in 1987 jumping from 24 to 29 in 2008.

Table 3.29. :Trend in average age of first marriage in Algeria (1987-2008)

Gender	1987	1998	2008
Male	27.7	31.3	33.0
Female	23.7	27.6	29.3

Source: National statistic Bureau.

«After completing my studies I worked. For marriage there is nothing particularly interesting in view. I still live with my parents. I don't go out. There is nothing to do. All week I work and spend the weekend at home. There is no place to meet someone.»

Warda, age 24, administrative assistant, Algeria (Algiers)

«Today it's really hard to get married. There is no work and no housing. We have parents who still live with their own parents.»

Ali, age 21, student, Algeria (Algiers)

In the collective imagination of North Africa, the arrival of the first child is tantamount to the consecration of the union much more exposed to breakdown in case of inability by the couple to produce a baby. While sterility is often experienced as intolerable, there are very few childless couples.

Among young people the thought of not having any children is almost inconceivable. For males handing down their name to their children occupies an important place in the accomplishment of their marriage. The arrival of the first child allows the young to definitively achieve the status of adulthood and take on the responsibility of becoming parents.

3.7 Youth policies in the maghreb

In the Maghreb adolescents and young people for decades have suffered from limited economic and social integration and in recent times their situation has become increasingly insecure. In spite of this only recently have they been included in on the agenda of development priorities.

Now emerging from the shadows, the young are being perceived as a major trump card in the economic and political future of the region's countries. While the States to the West of the Maghreb, particularly Morocco, have become aware of the need to renew the approach to the issue of youth, the others seems to be little committed to this dynamic.

3.7.1 Multisectoral youth policies: belated awakening and mobilization of States

For decades the young have remained a dead end in governmental policies of the Maghreb. In spite of their demographic weight and potential, the incredible rate of joblessness among youths, the rise of risk-prone behavior and violence, as well as the frequent and hyper publicized recourse to illegal migration, neither government nor international organizations have deemed it fit to redirect in priority their resources to the achievement of the rights and response to their expectations of the young. Also to be noted in this respect is that none of the eight Millennium Development Goals are specifically aimed at young people and that cooperation programs target this age bracket are only recent and few between.

We had to wait until the late 2000s for some governments to evaluate the disarray of the young and the potential threat it represents to the stability of the countries of North Africa. The Arab spring managed to convince them thereof and the implementation of «multisectoral» or «integrated» policies is becoming one of the strategic priorities in governance and social policies in the region.

For a long while, youth policies in North Africa were content to define some limited objectives, in particular linked to sports and leisure, while the departments in charge of these matters were provided with very insufficient resources. The complex nature connected to the development of youth policies, the prevalence of sectoral approaches and the weakness of inter-ministerial coordination hamper the emergence of integrated, participative and inclusive policies necessary to guarantee the effectiveness of any actions in this arena.

In Morocco the birth of a globalized vision of the multi-dimensional issue of youth as of 2008 led to the launch of an integrated and participative youth strategy. This matter overseen by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MJS) hitherto limited in its traditional role of proposing sports activities and youth centers was supported by various stakeholders dealing with youth. Some international agencies like UNFPA and UNICEF, partners in the joint «Youth in action» program based on the participative approach, and UNDP played an important role in terms of advocacy and technical support.

The process of strategy development the objective of which is to devise a integrated programming and participative framework for all sectoral endeavors aimed at youth is today considered as good practice with regard to the development of policies (see further the chapter on good practices). With this approach, the young are no longer considered as a “sector” but rather a population requiring concerted and coordinated mobilization of a wide range of stakeholders: state institutions, civil society organizations beginning with youth groups, as well as associations and private sector partners.

On the basis of the outcomes of the various phases, work was spread out over two years culminating in the Youth Conference in May 2011. The integrated national strategy Chababna was finetuned and presented to the public in September 2011. It is organized around five focuses²⁵⁵, consisting of 25 measures and 50 actions:

- Reorganized governance geared to youth: create a legislative framework aiming to better direct the actions of the various ministries and stakeholders, ensure greater representation of the young and women in the management bodies of the relevant organizations;
- Upgrade and create adapted infrastructures including the offer of integrated services to young people in various spheres: school attendance, training and personal development, employment, entrepreneurship, leisure-time, culture, tourism, health, religion, citizenship, environment, political values, inter-generational dialogue, and daily life.
- Professionalize the stakeholders in the area of youth and restructuring the content of training programs;

²⁵⁵ «Integrated national strategy on Youth», PPT presentation, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, September 2011.

- Developing partnerships with the consultative youth and associative action council, local authorities and youth federations, and the launch of a Youth card for priority access to services at reduced prices;
- Increase financial resources and diversify the methods of financing.

If the process of development of this strategy is today deemed good practice (see further), still it is not an end in itself. According to the opinions of the participating parties, three major challenges remain to be confronted. The first one will be to keep in place long term the participative dynamic to strengthen access to decision-making and empowerment of youth including its most vulnerable members. The second challenge deals with steering of the strategy which, due to its intersectoral nature, makes it necessary to accelerate reform of governance particularly in the area of decentralization, de-concentration, and convergence of State services. Considerable financing and investment as well as budgets sensitive to youth are also needed to achieve the expected outcomes.

In Mauritania the government also adopted a national policy on youth, leisure and sports in 2011 devised according to a participative approach. A youth consultation process was initiated as of 2005 but it was interrupted further to the political changes taking place in the country in 2008. It was resumed in December of the same year with the organization of a youth forum in Nouakchott by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. This forum gathered together 700 young people from all regions of the country to devise aspects of the strategic policy.

Published in July 2011 the national policy on youth, leisure-time and sports is built around strategic points in the three aforementioned spheres:

- In the field of youth: the participation of youth in development, the promotion of cultural, sports and socio-educational activities, promotion of the enterprise spirit and social integration of youth, the development of protection and delinquency prevention mechanisms and the culture of peace;
- In the field of leisure time and leisure: the definition of a legal framework regulating the sector, the training of managerial staff, the diversification and promotion of offerings in the field of leisure-time, the creation of adapted and fully fitted out infrastructures;
- With regard to sports: the overhaul of the existing legislative and regulatory texts, the revaluation of EPS in schools and at the university, the building of sports infrastructures in all Wilayas and the reinforcement of administrative and associative structures.

The steering of this policy is entrusted to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports with support by an inter-ministerial committee chaired by the secretary general of the President. The cost of implementation for five years is estimated at 50 billion Ouguiyas (approximately 176 million USD) and the greater amount of funds should be mobilized from international bodies. In July 2011 the government also approved the decision to devote 1% of the country's customs revenues to funding of youth associations implicated in the implementation of national policy.

The youth organization and partners in development appreciate the participative approach presiding over the devising of the policy. However, they underline the extreme paucity of the capacities of the Ministry placed in charge of the matter, one of the poorest of the government. They recall that in the past the posted priority on youth, led to national strategies that never

resulted in any really concrete actions. The partners insist on the need to create mechanisms for intersectoral coordination that at the moment do not exist.

In the other countries of North Africa, the political oversight of this multi-dimensional issue appears to be lukewarm.

Algeria, according to the people in charge, does not currently have an integrated strategy aimed at the young population. The public authorities and their partners conduct several endeavors geared to the young but these initiatives to date have been deployed in dispersed order without any coordination. While the government grants growing interest to the issue, consultations have been held to devise an intersectoral youth strategy by 2014, according to the information available.

In Tunisia efforts were engaged to strengthen the collection of data and knowledge on youth. The national youth observatory was behind several research projects and activities on different categories of youth. Among others, it has a degree of expertise with regard to the use, production and presentation of strategic data on youth. The organization of several national consultations on youth bears witness to this institution's intention to consolidate the efforts of the public authorities geared to identifying the expectations of the young.

In 2009 Tunisia developed a national strategy on youth 2009-2014. This strategy had the aim of strengthening assistance to youth groups and the efficiency of the actions deployed by governmental and non-governmental organizations. It concerned several priorities such as the implication of youth in development, information and communications technologies, health and risk-prone behavior and participation. However, the text was not validated.

3.7.2 A few examples of good practices

ALGERIA: peer education, the backbone of the reaction to HIV and AIDS among the young

Over the past few years the response to AIDS has become globalized thanks to the concerted efforts of many governmental, non governmental, national and international stakeholders. In Algeria since the announcement the first case of HIV infection in 1985 to the end of 2009, five thousand two hundred and nine (5 209) cases were recorded. The epidemic of HIV infection is currently stable and little active but entails a risk of concentration.

Algeria which joined all international commitments for the fight against AIDS, initiated a multisectoral policy for the struggle against STDs and AIDS in place for over 20 years. This struggle constitutes one of the priorities in the area of public health characterized by a commitment on the part of the public authorities and active participation of governmental sectors and civil society, in particular for people living with HIV.

In Algeria Intervention by the players in the response to AIDS, particularly non governmental agencies, resides in peer education. It aims at facilitating through training and recruitment of peer educators, acceptability and the dissemination of information among individuals reticent to look for or receive any, and among health care professionals operating in specialized services, for whatever reason: lack of time, refusal to go to hospital services, marginalization, etc.

The concept of peer education was developed to enable youth to learn from youth. The interest of this approach resides in placing the interaction among individuals with similar experience; the same generation, same language, or even the same group because it is recognized that the young

prefer to interchange among their counterparts. In this direction, they would feel more at ease by learning through other young people sharing the same life experience and facing identical health problems including in the area of sexuality.

The implication of civil society in the response to HIV and AIDS is henceforth indispensable: the commitment of associations enables them to fully play their role of alerting and overseeing while serving as an interface between the public authorities and vulnerable populations. Many associations in Algeria like Aids Algeria, Aniss, APCS, Forum and Solidarity Aids contribute to getting to grips with the HIV prevalence. They have developed proximity actions aimed at people living in abject insecurity, especially sex workers and gays.

The interventions of educator peers are backed by the distribution of folders, brochures and condoms and the people made aware are directed to drop into centers to help in obtaining specific information on the prevention of STDs and AIDS and conventional prevention services.

MOROCCO: A model in the participative development of youth strategies

The devising of the national integrated youth strategy Chababna, adopted in September 2011 (see above) was carried out in accordance with a participative process today recognized in the region as good governance practice. This process was begun by the constitution of a work group composed of thirty governmental departments to conduct in-depth research on youth and the priority expectations thereof.

A critical review of existing programs and endeavors geared to Moroccan youth was carried out and a benchmarking exercise was conducted to identify good practices in other countries. In a second stage forums were organized in all regions of the country to start a dialogue with young people and gather their opinions and ideas.

The regional forums joined together more than 4 000 adolescents and young people of both genders aged 8 to 24. At the same time, the Ministry of Youth and Sports conducted a wide-ranging study²⁵⁶ on the lifestyles, opinions, values and aspirations of youth based on the gender approach including some vulnerable categories such as non school attending and rural youth.

These initiatives taken over more than two years led to the holding of the first national youth conference of 23 and 24 May 2011 at Bouznika²⁵⁷. With the Arab spring as a backdrop and the youth protest movement of February 20, this tumultuous conference was to set the first outline of the integrated national strategy on youth on the basis of participative workshops.

Altogether over 800 young people were in attendance and 50 representatives were elected in charge of negotiating their positions with some twenty ministers and high level officials. According to MJS, 60% of young representatives hailed from the associative movement, 20% from political parties and 20% from educational institutions. Women represented 57% of the total.

According to the testimonies, this conference occurred in a taut atmosphere when the young adopted a confrontational attitude attacking members of the government and exerting in this way a huge amount of pressure. In spite of verbal excesses bearing witness to the exasperation of the

²⁵⁶ Youth in Morocco, lifestyles, opinions, values and aspirations, Synthesis of Outcomes, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Rabat, 2010.

²⁵⁷ Seaside city between Casablanca and Rabat.

young with the energy particular to them, the dialogue was maintained and came to an end only in the middle of night of May 24th. This conference contributed to the creation of a genuine space for debate and participation of the young while soaking up a modicum of their anger²⁵⁸.

Maintaining the holding of this conference, in spite of the political risks it entailed, it also bore witness to the priority granted by the Moroccan Government to the youth sector. This priority brought to the highest level was confirmed in July 2011 with the adoption of Morocco's new constitution which planned on the creation of a consultative council on youth and associative action asked to actively participate in the implementation and oversight of the strategy.

MAURITANIA: strengthening of youth associations for inter-community dialogue and participation in development

Over the past few years, a substantial effort of mobilization of youth associations and structures has been accomplished by the public authorities and their partners, in particular in the framework of cooperation with the United Nations system. Since 2009, it has benefited from backing from the Program for conflict prevention and reinforcement of national unity funded by the MDG Fund.

As of the 1980s, the progressive withdrawal of the State made possible the emergence of a series of associations for males and females striving to escape from the inactivity engendered by the lack of jobs and absence of leisure activities. Often as harbingers of promising initiatives, these young people needed to be trained, equipped and organized to genuinely participate in the development of their community.

Starting from the basis and decentralized level, the first youth network emerged at Boghé in the Brakna region. A lengthy effort of awareness-building, training and monitoring of young people was backed by several international cooperation organizations leading to the creation of a vast network of youth organizations. Created in 2006, the National Youth Association Network (RENAJ) today joins together 13 regional networks, themselves consisting of 53 departmental networks. Altogether 567 associations are affiliated thereto and represent all the country's communities.

The member associations benefited, among others, from training in the field of computer science, personal development, leadership, management and advocacy. Some 300 peer educators were trained in prevention of HIV and AIDS and prevention campaigns were organized in cooperation with governmental authorities. Even if some tension resumed in 2011, the network still contributes to strengthening the inter-community dialogue through the organization of festivals, citizenship caravans and general interest activities. For example, the Nouakchott network participated in campaigns for the prevention of malaria and managed to clean out nearly 200 schools in the city.

In the future youth organizations could support the establishment of a new initiative aiming at the creation of a national civil service for strengthening citizen participation of the young and national cohesion. They should also be associated to the implementation of youth policy adopted in July 2011. Attached to its independence the RENAJ demands the right to full and outright participation of the young in the management of their political and social environment and proposes itself as an interlocutor to the public authorities rather than acting as just a sub-contractor.

Upon completion of a wide process of consultation, the network devised an action plan in order to implement activities in clearly identified priority fields to (i) foster the promotion of youth,

258 Kisanet Tezere and Sophie Boukhari, Assessment of UNICEF Adolescents program: agents of positive change – Case study Morocco, Provisional Report, Kartini International, 2011.

integration into working life and participation in development; (ii) reinforcing the capacities of the young and (iii) developing awareness-building activities, in particular with regard to health, HIV, AIDS and STDs and the environment. It also wants to break its isolation and create links with youth organizations of other Arab Maghreb Union countries.

TUNISIA: sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people as a national priority

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is increasingly held to be a priority domain in countries to the North and to the South, calling for action by the public and private sectors. Indeed, SRH affects the moves of women and men from conception to birth and old age. It has to do with the right to life and health and allows prevention and the treatment of illnesses.

In the 1960s Tunisia initiated a birth control policy. In 1964 a public body, the National family planning population Bureau (ONPFP) was set up to implement the national family planning program put forth as a national priority.

As of August 1984 this Bureau enlarged its mandate by becoming the National family and population Bureau (ONFP). One of its accomplishments is to have integrated adolescents and young people into the beneficiary public of its program. A program for support to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for adolescents and young people was devised and ONFP initiated a strategy focusing on a few principal factors including the organization of dedicated services, partnership and mobilization of young people or the integration of sex education in the educational system and training of the required staff.

The ONFP continued the development of its strategy by setting up consultation spaces adapted and reserved to the young. Some ten "youth friendly spaces" exist today in ten sanitary delegations and more are in the process of establishment. They offer adolescents and single young people aged 15 to 29 a series of services regarding information, education and advice, the risks of unprotected sex, STD prevention, unwanted pregnancies, places for consultation in the event of difficulty, and the rights regarding SRH, etc.

These spaces also offer medical, psychological and social services adapted to youth: availability, free, rapid and confidential. Medical services are provided by medical and semi-medical staff and if needs be, the young person is sent to a specialist. They include the treatment of illnesses affecting the genitals and in particular STDs, problems of puberty and the menstrual cycle as well as ultrasound, blood samples, urine and hormonal tests and pre-marriage examination.

In addition, the ONFP has set up «listening» and counseling units for adolescents and young people of both genders at the regional delegation level. The principal objective is to make accountable young people with regard to sexual and reproductive behavior via (ii) offering young people precise and pertinent information to help them adopt healthy sexual and reproductive behavior; (iii) inform young people of the various dangers and risks negatively impacting sexual and reproductive behavior to which they can be exposed; (iv) help adolescents overcome the difficulties resulting from the changes taking place at this juncture in their lives and, if necessary, intervention in the family and school framework to alleviate difficulties and avoid the negative (complex) or social effects (delinquency) and (v) provide guidance to the young about the competent structures as per needs.

3.7.3 Toward greater efficiency of youth oriented policies

In the current North African context, the devising and implementation of new youth oriented policies better coordinated and equitable appears to be a fundamental requirement. As is suggested, the strategic orientations presented here below must reside in a precise analysis of the situation, on sustainable participation of young people and sufficiently energetic political will making it possible to reform the methods of governance and mobilization of considerable resources, in particular for the most vulnerable adolescents and young people.

Intersectoral integration and coordination at the service of better assistance to young people

With regard to development, partnerships now constitute a dimension crucial to the identification, implementation and assessment of policies and programs. In the treatment of issues pertaining to human development and assistance to social groups such as the young, increasing coordination and collaboration between many stakeholders is crucial to better target intervention and optimize the use of resources.

The transversal and multi-dimensional nature of the youth issue also requires an integrated approach and solid coordination between the various youth stakeholders: governments, youth organizations and other civil society organisms, the private sector, as well as international partners. To be functional, the steering and coordination mechanisms of youth policies must be positioned high up within the State. From the operational standpoint, the development of multi-functional spaces and joint high quality service offerings for young people could prove both effective and profitable.

It would also be appropriate to develop a network of national and international partners involved in the implementation of youth endeavors so as to foster reflection on best practices and exchange of information and experience.

Sound database in support of policy devising and monitoring

Qualitative and quantitative data and statistical indicators are indispensable tools making it possible to acquire representations, practices and the strategies of social players in order to keep abreast of changes and the evolution of society. They must be systematically exploited to support the devising of policies and programs. Hence, the collection, analysis and dissemination of knowledge on the situation of adolescents and young people are essential for planning, follow-up and assessment of youth policies. The collection of data should allow a breakdown of information on adolescents and young people according to criteria such as gender, age bracket and degree of vulnerability.

The countries of the Maghreb already produce to different degrees statistical information on youth in a variety of fields. However, the said data often remain sketchy and insufficiently updated. In addition, given the diversity of origin, they are scattered and more often than not underexploited. The construction and periodic updating (if possible annual) of solid databases on youth and the creation of mechanisms in charge of gathering, analyzing and the dissemination information appears to be indispensable to assist the devising of policies and ensure the follow-up and assessment of all actions undertaken.

Even though today we have information on the many aspects on the situation of young people covered by the national statistical apparatus, major sticking points must be dealt with in order to

understand, analyze and provide answers to issues requiring a more qualitative approach such as the multi-dimensional vulnerability of youth, participation, citizenship, decision-making, inter-generational relationships, types of risk-prone behavior, etc. New indicators on the «true well-being» of adolescents and young people should also be developed and updated. Similarly, all the indicators collected should be disaggregated according to gender, place of residence and regions to better grasp the discrepancies between young people and to define the priorities. Targeted studies on the most vulnerable and marginalized categories should also be carried out.

Young people as players and partners

For a long while young North Africans were considered as an object of intervention and homogenous group. The policies and programs regarding youth were more reflexive of the ideas and priorities of adults rather than those of the young themselves, often consulted only for form, if at all. This situation gave rise to divergence, bad feelings and more or less substantial conflicts in relationships between the generations. It did not allow appropriation of the existing services which remained underutilized, and considerably limited the efficiency of actions undertaken by the State and its partners.

Today the young can no longer be kept at bay from the actions and endeavors initiated in their behalf. Societal evolution makes it necessary to devise youth oriented policies with the youths themselves, in particular those living in situations of vulnerability and seldom affected by the strategies put into practice.

Participation of the young in the devising and implementation of policies and programs requires the strengthening of their capacities in the identification and formulation of priorities, advocacy and community development. Similarly, support for the creation of networks and active youth groups should be strengthened.

Institutionalization of the mechanisms targeting the integration of visions and needs of youth, in particular the most vulnerable, to national policies, could contribute to the longevity of the participative and inclusive approach designed for the attainment of the desired outcomes.

Territorial organization of actions in favor of the young

While the great strategic axes of youth policies can be defined at the national level, with the participation players and the young of all regions, the actions undertaken should be made operational according to a territorial approach. Given the diversity of profiles and the paths taken by the young and the specific realities of each region and territory, the interventions should be modulated and implemented in the framework of decentralized structures.

Strengthening of stakeholder capacities

To date, as we have seen, a variety of actions has been committed to the benefit of youth by governmental and non governmental actors. However, these initiatives were often implemented by untrained or inadequately trained stakeholders, insufficiently fitted out, with paltry or no remuneration and therefore relatively inefficient in spite of the will and sometimes unquestionable commitment. Adequate training and the professionalization of stakeholders in the field of youth

henceforth appears to be an imperative condition making it possible to enhance the impact of on-going and future policies.

Equity and equal opportunity as strategic priorities

With regard to development, experience and literature shows that inclusive approaches based on priority integration of women and other vulnerable categories would make it possible to speed up the pace of progress. For many years, the policies related to the integration of women the different spheres of society has given over to an approach founded on equality between males and females tending to position gender relationships at the center of all planning, actions or evaluations. Similarly, the approach based on equity starts to become indispensable leading to the devising of social development policies targeting the neediest and most highly marginalized populations.

In North Africa, substantial inroads have been made over the past few decades in the empowerment of women. However, given the socio-cultural context and the persistent impediments contained in some laws like in representation and social practices, women still have a long way to go before they reach equality and the elimination of a certain regression in rights. Likewise, even though financial poverty has substantially declined in the region, inequality and certain forms of exclusion still exist which the world crisis and other types of hindrance might accentuate over forthcoming years.

Given the aforementioned circumstances, all actions targeting adolescents and young people should take account of gender relationships and work to guarantee equality between males and females. They should also take account of the scope of the discrepancies and concentrate resources and interventions on the neediest and most highly marginalized adolescents and young people.

4. CONCLUSION and ORIENTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Listening to and understanding adolescents and young people in North Africa is not any easy task and requires a degree of political courage. How to efficiently approach the issue of youth without breaking certain social and ideological limitations imprisoning them in the anguish of life and exclusion?

Speaking about youth means the discovery of one's body, burgeoning sexuality, concealed transgression, amidst societies still predominated by countless taboos. To speak of youth means a thirst for social justice and freedom in States where governance problems are far from being resolved. To speak of youth means confronting the despair and humiliation of many young people, both male and female, who live in insecure and degrading conditions. It also means opening up and contributing to the debate without pretence on the failures of economic and employment policies, on the values and life competencies to be transmitted to pupils and students on the conditions of genuine equality between males and females.

In a nutshell, to speak of youth means opting to look to the future but changing lots of things as of now. The study entitled *Being young in the Maghreb* more than anything else is a participative diagnostic of the situation of the young and does not pretend to be a road map directed at governmental or non governmental actions for the region's decision-makers. However, given the principal conclusions of the study a few major working orientations come to the fore to improve the policies and programs in eight priority areas:

- i. **Participative devising of integrated youth policies;**
- ii. **Promotion of decent jobs and entrepreneurship;**
- iii. **Equitable and high quality education and training;**
- iv. **Citizen and family participation;**
- v. **Equitable access to adapted services regarding reproductive, sexual and mental health;**
- vi. **Equitable access to leisure time activities fostering development, creativity and health;**
- vii. **Reduction of social and gender inequalities and protection of vulnerable and marginalized categories;**
- viii. **The fight against social and cultural norms unfavorable to the rights of the young.**

I. Devise integrated youth policies and foresee sufficient human and financial resources permitting their implementation:

- Inter-sectoral coordination and partnerships between the relevant stakeholders, youth organizations and civil society, the private sector, and international partners;
- Participation of youth as full-fledged independent partners in the various stages of development of the policies, implementation, monitoring and assessment;
- Creation and updating of significant databases to support the development and monitoring of strategies for youth;
- Territorial organization in favor of the young;

- Strengthen the capacities of governmental and non governmental stakeholders;
- Active promotion of equal opportunity..

2. Foster decent jobs and entrepreneurship

- Place youth employment among top governmental priorities;
- Devise studies and prospective data on the needs of the economy and social sectors to guide the re-orientation of policies regarding the constitution and promotion of youth employment;
- Strengthen the quality and accessibility of intermediation services;
- Develop active labor market policies geared to little educated and needy youths, in particular via integrated technical training and in-service internship approaches to learning and life competencies;
- Support young micro entrepreneurs particularly with regard to commercial development and access to micro-credits and develop mentoring;
- Guarantee access to land by young farmers and breeders well trained and involved with sector modernization projects;
- Ensure adherence to the right to work, particularly in the private sector;
- Fight against exploitation and traffic in the informal sector;
- Invest in sustainable development.

3. Boost the internal and external efficiency and equity of educational and training systems:

- Generalize basic education by fighting against school dropouts and developing quality second chance schools guaranteeing literacy and reintegration of the recipients into the official education/training system:
- Foster demand in secondary education (junior and high school) for girls of rural and needy families;
- Continue reforms geared to the quality of education in all cycles, in particular through better education and management of teaching staff, pedagogical approaches and evaluation methods fostering the critical and analytical mind, creativity and practice of knowledge acquired, high priority granted to scientific and technical education, and more coherent language policies;
- Provide greater coherence between baccalaureate subjects, university offerings and review of orientation systems;
- Increase the adequacy between university training and vocational training and job market and business demand;
- Streamline and develop high quality technical training offerings;
- Develop sandwich training and learning;
- Fight against favoritism and corruption in educational and training institutions.

4. Encourage citizen participation of adolescents and young people, participation in educational institutions and access to decision making within the family:

- Support, fit out and integrate into networks of independent youth organizations;
- Associate youth organizations to the development and implementation of strategies and programs at the local, regional and national level;
- Increase youth representation in elected assemblies fostering openness and renewal of the political elite;
- Implement volunteer policies answering the aspirations of the young;
- Create and make operational representative participative mechanisms in education and leisure institutions;
- Build awareness of families and communities via schools and the media on the rights of adolescents and young people regarding freedom of expression and participation in decisions affecting them.

5. Develop equitable access to public services adapted to adolescents and young people, in particular with regard to reproductive, sexual and mental health:

- Eliminate legal and regulatory barriers to the access by adolescents to reproductive health care and create integrated health programs adapted to that age bracket;
- Develop at all levels sex education and family life education programs;
- Guarantee adolescents and young people universal access to information and contraception as well as prenatal and postnatal care regardless of marital status;
- Enact laws authorizing abortion unrestricted or further to a wide range of reasons;
- Protect adolescents against sexual violence and apply severe sanctions on the perpetrators;
- Strengthen the fight against early marriage;
- Foster access to specialized «listening», psychological and mental stress structures for adolescents and young people in the areas of: bulimia, depression, suicide attempts, and self-inflicted violence, etc.

6. Develop equitable access to leisure-time activities boosting the development and creativity of adolescents and young people:

- Link youth organizations to the devising of policies and the management of leisure-time or recreational spaces;
- Set up partnerships between departments looking after leisure-time activities, educational institutions, cultural and sports associations to widen access by adolescents and young people to life enriching activities;
- Develop high quality infrastructures and equipment accessible to all including rural and semi-urban residents;

- Diversify offerings in sports activities;
- Foster the practice of sports among females;
- Foster intellectual and cultural development of the young by supporting creative activities (plastic arts, music, dance, etc.), live performances and mind opening excursions and travel;
- Develop education about the media and new information and communications technology.

7. Foster the reduction of gender inequality and protection of the most vulnerable and marginalized youth:

- Create a un continuum of services and care between the child and youth protection policies;
- Grant special attention to the situation of adolescents aged 10 to 19 who are particularly fragile and vulnerable due to the physical and emotional changes they are experiencing and the vision the family and community sheds on them;
- Strengthen the gender approach in the devising of policies and programs geared to youth, budgets based on gender and the fight against discrimination, in particular with regard to access to education, employment and the political and good citizenship of females;
- Oversee the level of representation of all categories of youth per age, gender, place of residence, educational level, social situation, etc. in youth organizations and participative mechanisms;
- Ensure special protection for victims of human trafficking, minors at odds with the law, street kids, domestic help victims of exploitation, and all gender based violence committed against girls and women;
- Act the mass cultural level (foster debate over the media, advertising, etc.)

8. Struggle against social and cultural norms unfavorable to the rights of the young and adolescents:

- Encourage debate in the media and civil society on taboos (sexuality, abortion, drugs, suicide, etc.) hampering the implementation of appropriate policies and services in favor of youth, in particular in the area of access to reproductive rights and psychological and mental health and prevention of STDs, HIV and AIDS;
- Implementation of information campaigns on the disastrous consequences for future generations owing to: lack of schooling especially of girls, child and young adolescent labor; lack of dialogue between parents and children, violence with regard to children and women, discrimination against particularly vulnerable HIV and AIDS sufferers, and clandestine abortion.

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This document contains a synthesis of the outcome of research performed on the existence of youth rights among young people aged 15 to 24 in the five countries of the Arab Maghreb Union in the framework of the International Year of Youth 2010-2011. This study entitled "Being young in the Maghreb" was commissioned by the North Africa Bureau of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA/NA) in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union with support from UNICEF and UNESCO. It seeks to understand what North African youth are experiencing and what their hopes are, and what they could contribute to the development and construction of their respective societies.

This study represents the first initiative seeking to present a wide diagnostic of the situation of adolescents and young people in the Maghreb. Combining a quantitative and qualitative approach, it tackles the issues of education, employment, leisure, health, vulnerability and participation of the young, in addition to the question of inter-generational dialogue and youth policies implemented in the region. Conducted according to a participative approach, this study as based on the testimony of young folks themselves, expresses their indignation, their zest for life and hopes of being understood and listened to. In conclusion, it proposes a series of guidelines helping young people to expand their participation in development and procure better implementation of their rights.

