

Youth Exclusion in the Middle East: Towards New Knowledge and Solutions

**Dubai Forum
February 23-24, 2007**

On February 23 and 24, 2007, the Middle East Youth Initiative hosted a forum in Dubai with policy makers, academics and development practitioners to discuss the development of a research agenda aimed at promoting the inclusion of young people in economic and social life. This forum – *Youth Exclusion in the Middle East: Towards New Knowledge and Solutions* – launched a process for creating a new regional agenda to develop more effective policies and programs targeted at creating pathways to economic and social inclusion for young people.

As part of this forum, country papers from Egypt, Iran, Morocco and Syria were presented on issues of youth transitions along with thematic papers on marriage and exclusion. Forum participants discussed existing knowledge gaps in research and policy relating to two main youth transitions: transition from education employment and transition from single life to family formation.

The forum concluded with a commitment to further policy relevant research that will examine pathways to youth inclusion and a vision for a new social contract in the region. To compliment this academic work, a network of regional academics, policy makers, youth civil society organizations, development practitioners and donors is being organized to serve as advisors to the research and actors for change in the way youth issues are examined and addressed in the region.

The country research papers will be available in mid-2007 and will be followed by a more expansive overview of regional youth issues in a 2008 publication. An online network of Middle East Youth Initiative stakeholders is currently being organized, along with an online forum to enable further discussion and debate of relevant issues.

The Middle East Youth Initiative is sponsored and organized by the Wolfensohn Center for Development and the Dubai School of Government.