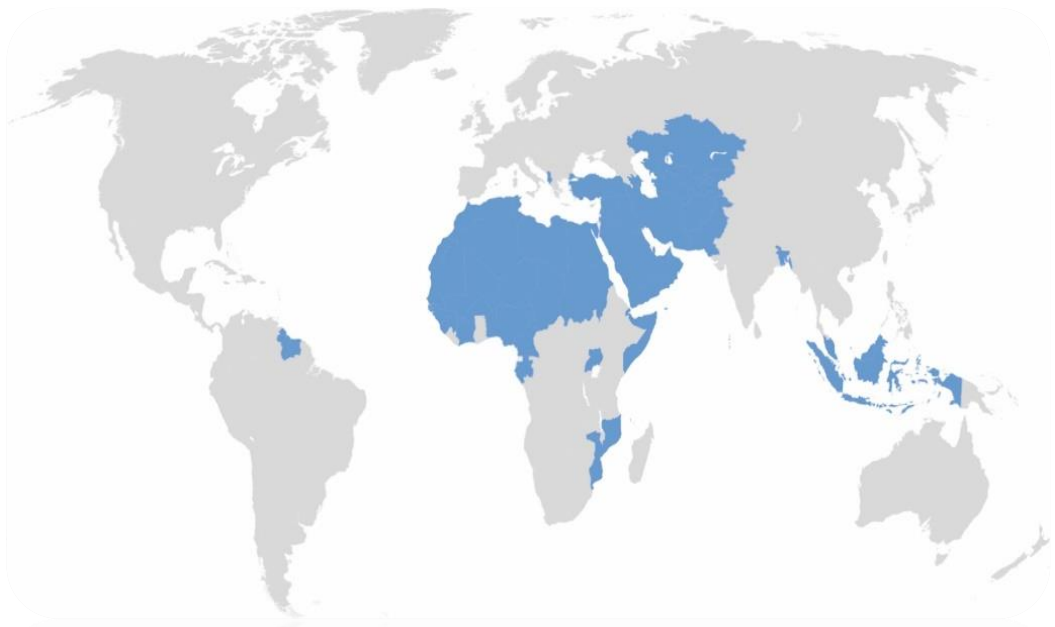


# STATE OF YOUTH IN THE OIC MEMBER STATES REPORT 2017



MANDATED BY THE 3<sup>RD</sup> ISLAMIC CONFERENCE  
OF YOUTH AND SPORTS MINISTERS





# STATE OF YOUTH IN OIC MEMBER STATES 2017



**ICYF-DC**  
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE YOUTH FORUM  
FOR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION  
منتدى شباب المؤتمر العالمى للتعاون والتعاون



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## **PREFACE**

While the member states of the OIC may face diverging challenges as they exert untold efforts towards development, growth and sustainability; a constant thread binds them all regardless of geographic or economic situation; namely that of youth. In almost every matter of significance affecting the effective function and development of nations, youth represent the common denominator through it all, as unapplied human and innovative capacity or alternatively, as powerful engines for growth, dynamism and civic engagement. To this end, enhancing the role and capacities of our youth becomes not only a matter of justice and good governance, but of strategic necessity to the future and prosperity of our nations.

This is especially so within the OIC region which benefits from one of the highest youth concentrations of the world, offering it unprecedented advantages in industry, innovation and growth; should their potentials be tapped into wisely. To this end, there is a need to assess the state of youth throughout OIC Member States, not simply to assess their situation but to identify means and pathways for synergy and effective intra-OIC cooperation on issues of youth, thereby providing momentum to serious investments in the generations of both the future and the present. While addressing the challenges they face, we must seek to equip our youth with toolkits of knowledge, understanding and opportunity in order to address not only the contentions of the present, but also the strategic questions of the future and prepare for them accordingly. In this spirit, the need to instil in our young generations the importance of Islamic solidarity, and familiarize them with the cultures of innovation, civic duty, cooperation and foresight is essential.

This report is therefore critical to understanding what is needed to cultivate and engage our youth today, by means of offering effective policy, insightful direction and making a case for youth political engagement, entrepreneurship and empowerment. In this regard, appreciation should be extended to the ICYF-DC for their initiative in producing this report. Moreover, I would like to express my thanks to SESRIC and ICYF-DC for their excellent output which is welcomed as the first report of its kind during Turkey's chairmanship as of the 3rd Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM). I believe that this report will serve as a milestone for OIC youth and beyond.

To this end, it is perhaps more imperative than ever that in such turbulent times we raise and guide our youth for a hopeful future better than the present we share, all the more rooted in values of untiring determination, unwavering dedication and steady social responsibility. Such a major endeavor will require the efforts and energies of all OIC member states and various stakeholders, made all the more critical by all that we stand to lose, and all the more necessary by all that we stand to gain. It is my belief that this report will serve well in directing our shared attentions, priorities and efforts; representing only the beginning of a major undertaking that can only end with the prosperity and advancement of our fellow member states and peoples.

**Dr. Osman Aşkın BAK**

**Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Turkey**

## **PREFACE**

Youth represent a remarkable demographic potential for the OIC Member States, offering great opportunity for their development and prosperity. Yet, youth also pose significant challenges. With the growing numbers of conflicts and economic difficulties, youth should represent a bold catalyst and a prime factor in strategically addressing challenges in different domains.

Addressing the needs of youth and studying the circumstances they confront is not only necessary, but is also of strategic importance to the future of the Islamic world. There is a need for a deep understanding of and reflection on the potential youth represent while working urgently on addressing the current challenges that they face.

It is essential to emphasize that empowering youth through inclusive decision-making platforms on the national and international levels will not only contribute to the realization of their potential, but will further reinforce bonds for collective action and the spirit of Islamic solidarity in different domains.

This important study prepared by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC) takes a constructive and a much-needed approach to addressing challenges facing youth in the OIC Member States.

The report makes a case backed by actionable policy insights for bridging market-skill divides, promoting youth entrepreneurship, as well as developing mechanisms for political and civic engagement. Moreover, it calls for attention to the effects of health, mental well-being and sociocultural changes on youth. Given the complexity that these challenges present, adaptive and multi-faceted action and policies are required.

The writing of this report also coincides with serious challenges posed by the rise of radicalization and violent extremism reaching out with unfortunate effectiveness to fragile youth segments capitalizing on the lack of education, joblessness, marginalization and disenfranchisement. This situation puts our Organization in the face of huge challenges that require tremendous joint efforts from all the stakeholders: Member States, the General Secretariat, and all the relevant institutions and other partners. The report identified further constructive steps forward. The OIC General Secretariat and relevant OIC institutions have deployed significant efforts, including the convening of three ministerial conferences in the field of youth. The OIC will continue to exert all possible effort towards addressing the challenges confronted by youth

I hope that this report will contribute to sensitizing decision-makers in Member States of the need to ensure that youth remain at the center of public policy agendas in order for us to achieve a vital positive transformation in our Member States and to fulfil the objectives of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action (OIC-2025).

**Dr. Yousef A. Al-OTHAIMEEN**  
**Secretary General**  
**Organization of Islamic Cooperation**

## PREFACE

Among the most important decisions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers* (ICYSM), held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 05-07 October 2016, was the mandate given to the Islamic Youth Conference Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), respectively Affiliated and Subsidiary Institutions to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to prepare the Report on ***“The State of Youth in the OIC Member States”***.

The need for a Report with a deep assessment of the situation of youth in the Muslim world stems from the fact that of around 1.75 billion youth (15-29 age group) throughout the world, nearly 500 million or 28.5% reside in OIC Member States. This is a significant figure, prompting the Report to take a holistic approach in analyzing the state of youth in the OIC Member States. New challenges and novel prospects arise for youth in the context of the rapid cultural change resulting from globalization, particularly, the spread of new global lifestyles. The ICYF-DC stands dedicated to serving the youth of the Ummah in implementing important initiatives based on the understanding that Muslim youth should embrace the roots of the rich legacy of Islamic tradition, while engaging with outstanding education programs to train them as successful world citizens that are optimistic, constructive and retain responsibility toward the Ummah and humanity at large.

The State of Youth in OIC Member States Report reflects existing social pressures and challenges that have significant implications for policy, economy, and society over the forthcoming years. One particular point of interest is the role of new information technologies and social media for youth engagement, participation and development. While more globally connected than ever before, youth in OIC Member States are still disadvantaged compared to other groups as a result of limited access to regional and global participation and opportunities ranging from technological innovation to educational access.

There are, of course, numerous opportunities for positive change that should be based on policymakers’ efforts to facilitate youth participation, in particular, encouraging youth volunteerism towards global, regional, and OIC-level issues and causes. New opportunities for youth to get involved in exchanges with their peers from other regions of the OIC and beyond should be generated. The historic decisions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ICYSM to set up a comprehensive *OIC Youth Strategy* and to adopt *The Joint Youth Action Plan (JYAP)*, establishing therefore a novice framework of the coordinated youth policy for the OIC Member States, are important roadmaps for achieving comprehensive development of Muslim youth. In this framework, the ICYF-DC, as the Secretariat of the ICYSM and JYAP’s implementing agency, is ready to serve as the key instrument that can



offer young citizens new opportunities to take part in shaping global and regional decision-making, public debate, and policy-making, especially regarding the discourse on Sustainable Development Goals, youth participation, peace, human rights, innovation and intercultural dialogue .

For such a positive transformation to happen, the Muslim world needs to prioritize informed youth policies aimed at positive engagement of youth. While appreciating the contribution of a number of Member States in preparation of this Report, we are looking forward for the immense efforts of ICYF-DC and SESRIC invested into the content of this Report, and particularly its policy recommendations, to provide the required information and guidelines necessary to ensure greater knowledge and appreciation of the issues at hand by concerned stakeholders, including national and international policymakers, youth-oriented civil society institutions and youth activists in the OIC Member States and beyond.

We expect this Report to serve as a valuable resource in highlighting what can be done for youth in the hope of a better, confident and more empowered Muslim world, ready to take on immediate and difficult long-term challenges and turn them into new opportunities for all.

**Ambassador Elshad ISKANDAROV**  
**President,**  
**Islamic Conference Youth Forum for**  
**Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)**

## PREFACE

By definition, sustainability is a long endeavor and therefore requires commitment not only by actors of the present, but also the upcoming generations. In other words, youth will assume responsibility for sustaining the national drive towards economic and social growth. In this light, a nation's youth policy constitutes a bridge that connects the present day to future; and speaks into and determines whether that nation is investing in its future.

By the turn of the new millennium, youth as a social category has evolved into an arena for public policy in OIC Member States, and this evolution has been a positive, encouraging development in the way of recognizing young people's potent agency in shaping the future of their societies. Nevertheless, until recently, youth have been perceived in many OIC Member States as a source of anxiety. The youth bulge, for instance, has been framed as a demographic time bomb, or, similarly, youth are seen as victims vulnerable to extremist political ideologies as well as deviant behavior, from criminal action to cultural decay to drug abuse. The Millennial Muslim youth, however, have presented an alternative picture.

It is true that the youth bulge is a demographic and human resources concern. However, it has been observed that youth are also engines of economic growth: young people have superior ability to formulate innovative and nimble responses to old problems and adapt new technologies. While it is also true that they are vulnerable to recruitment to abhorrent ideologies, they have also become potent agents at helping communities through voluntarism and social entrepreneurship in ways that are original, grounded, and effective. Youth may be more vulnerable to falling prey to deviant behavior, but are also in a unique position, to bring about social and cultural change, while, at the same time, preserving cherished religious and cultural values well into the future. No social segment other than youth holds this unique position to be both a reformer and a guardian of deeply rooted values. All these suggest that national youth policies should not limit framing youth under sources of anxieties. Rather, they should equally view young people as an opportunity and double efforts to harness their potential.

In fact, the "State of Youth in OIC Member States" report reflects this perspective with the aim of contributing to efforts of policy makers in OIC member States, towards utilizing the potential of the young people in their societies. In doing so, the report examines and evaluates the challenges faced by youth in various areas such as economy, policy, education, health and culture; suggesting actionable insights for policy makers. This report, which has been prepared by SESRIC in cooperation with ICYF-DC as mandated by the 3rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers, held in Istanbul in October 2016, underlines that performance and ability of youth to act

as agents of cultural and economic sustainability will largely depend on how well policymakers today can address ongoing and upcoming challenges.

In this context, an attempt has been made, for the first time, to develop a Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries to evaluate how well Member States are dealing with issues related to youth and what can and should be done. This is a practical tool that would promote OIC cooperation with its end goal being empowerment of youth in each Member State. As shown in the annex of the report, the Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries has been developed for a few pilot Member States who have responded to the questionnaire, which has been circulated to all Member States. With the support of Member States by providing necessary and needed data and information, we hope that we can complete the Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries for all the Member States in upcoming issues of this report.

**Ambassador Musa KULAKLIKAYA**  
**Director General,**  
**Statistical, Economic and Social Research and**  
**Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)**

## 1. Introduction

The present report examines the state of youth in OIC Member States. It starts by surveying key challenges and prospects to youth well-being in the following areas: 1) education and training; 2) employment and entrepreneurship; 3) health and mental health; 4) political and civil participation; and 5) cultural and value change.

To examine youth education outcomes, the report reviews such key indicators as youth literacy rates, high-school enrollment rates, and international student mobility.

In regards to employment, it studies employment and unemployment rates, and the transition to labor market while paying attention to gender disparity among youth.

In regards to entrepreneurship, on the other hand, the report identifies key bottlenecks across OIC Member States that prevent the flourishing of dynamic and stimulating ecosystems as well as youth engagement of entrepreneurial activity.

To develop a general understanding of youth's health status, the report looks at reproductive health, substance addiction, technological dependence, and mental health with an emphasis to youth mental health in conflict areas.

The report, covers such core political indicators as voting age, political literacy and education, youth social inclusion, youth and radicalism, conflict, and institutional reform to demonstrate political challenges facing youth.

Furthermore, the report discusses impacts of globalization on youth by examining youth value and attitude change, particularly regarding religion and family, and the intergenerational value gap,

Analyses and discussions in each are followed by proposed actionable insights and suggestions, based on quantitative data, qualitative case studies, and the most current social scientific and economic literature.

Finally, the report recognizes and capitalizes that in their efforts to improve youth development outcomes, policymakers are also met with policy difficulties. In other words, policymaking itself becomes a challenge that needs to be addressed. This need mandates a thorough review of existing youth policies frameworks: what has been done so far, what has worked and what has been missing. However, such a review proves to be difficult due to the lack of data on specific MS policy frameworks.

To fill in this gap, the report attempts to, for the first time, to **develop a youth policy score Indicator**: , *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries* — a prototype that is subject to change and improvement—that would map out both the general and key aspects of national youth policy frameworks.

Such an indicator will help MSs to develop a standardized and common language through which national experts, policymakers, and relevant OIC institutions can have a coherent conversation on youth policy and how to improve it. *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries* will be the first OIC-specific indicator and will enable a more systematic and effective intra-OIC cooperation. Having an OIC-specific indicator will also provide an indigenous, unbiased, and objective assessment tool, rather than relying on open source indicators that tend to either fall short in taking specific cultural contexts into account or have normative biases.

## 2. Key Challenges of Youth in the OIC Member States: Economic, Political, Cultural and Health Indicators

This section highlights the key challenges and prospects of youth in OIC Member States in the following areas: 1) education and training, 2) employment and entrepreneurship, 3) cultural and value change, 4) political and civil participation, and 5) health and mental health.

After providing an overall view of the state of youth and identifying common challenges that hamper youth well-being, the report develops actionable insight and policy recommendations for each dimension. The report utilizes quantitative data, qualitative case studies, and the most current social scientific and economic literature.

### 2.1 Education and Training

Education is one of the most important national investments to be made in youth. As youth are ultimately set to determine the future of a society, education has a key role in determining a path for development of a society. It is widely accepted that investment in education and quality research at various national institutions are vital for youth development and integration, which will in turn play a large role in achieving higher economic growth and reducing poverty and inequality. Societies with well-educated youth also tend to remain peaceful and stable. Education moreover helps youth escape from poverty traps while enhancing their standard of living.

Both the quality and length of education matter for youth development. Yet, in many parts of the world, including many OIC Member States, children and youth leave school without fully acquiring necessary knowledge and skills they need to lead productive, healthy lives and attain sustainable livelihoods. Poor quality education is jeopardizing the future of millions of children and youth across the OIC region.

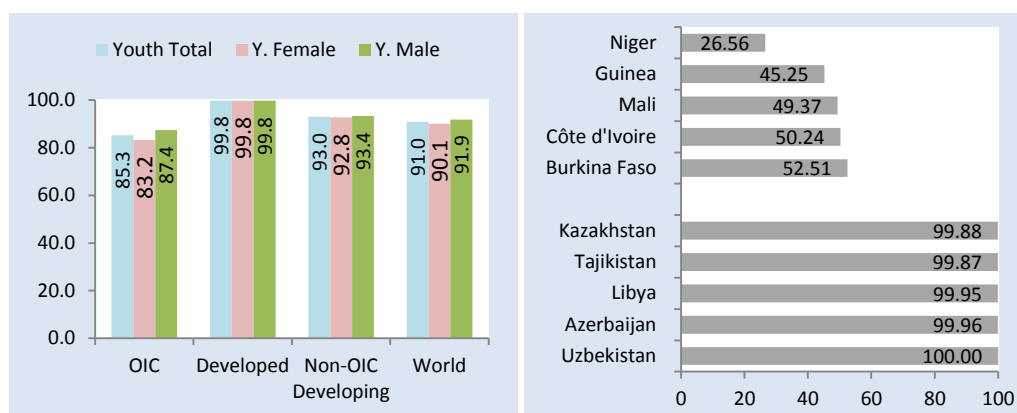
#### 2.1.1 Youth Education Trends in OIC Member States

Inadequate levels of education and a lack of required skills make it especially difficult for youth to find jobs in labour markets. In addition to its impact on economic development and productive capacity, long-term unemployment among youth may trigger major social problems within affected communities including exclusion of youth, deviance, radicalism, violent extremism, and substance abuse.

### 2.1.1.1 Youth Literacy Rate

According to the latest available data, literacy rates among youth are comparatively better than adult literacy rates in OIC Member States. However, average youth literacy rates in OIC Member States are still lower than those of non-OIC developing countries and the world average (Figure 2.1, below). On average, 85.3% of youth are literate, which is well below the world average (91.0%) and average of non-OIC developing countries (93.0%). In many countries, however, illiterate women far outnumber their male counterparts. On average, the gap between young male (87.4%) and female literacy rates (83.2%) in OIC Member States is 4.2%, which is higher than the gap to be found between non-OIC developing countries (0.6%) and the world average (1.8%). Gender inequality in education is characterized by, among others, a lack of access to and availability of gender sensitive educational infrastructure, materials and training programmes, as well as a high dropout rate amongst secondary school aged girls.

**Figure 2.1:** Youth Literacy Rates in Comparison (2015) (left) and Lowest and Highest Performing OIC Member States in Youth Literacy Rates (2015) (right)



Source: UNESCO, UIS Data Centre

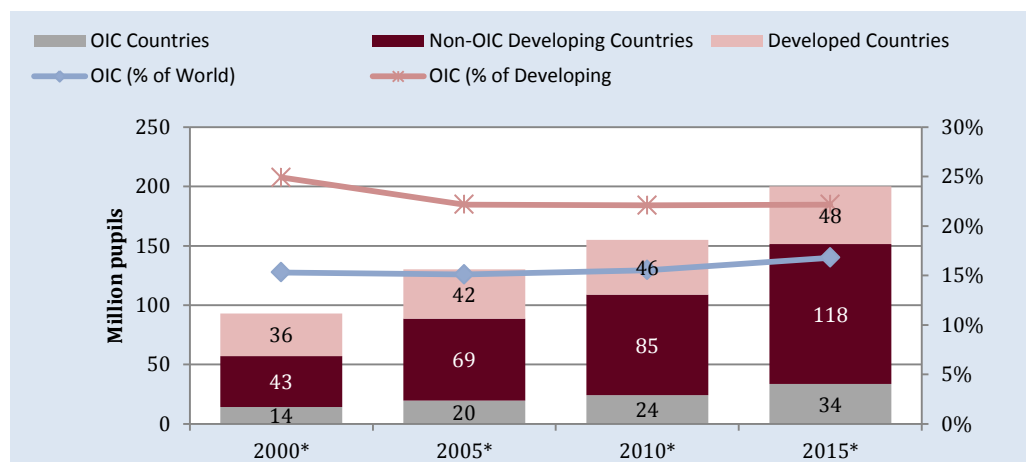
At the individual country level, five Member States have youth literacy rates that are lower than 50%. Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, with youth literacy rates of 100% and 99.96% respectively, are the best performing OIC Member States (Figure 2.1), followed by Libya (99.95%), Tajikistan (99.87%) and Kazakhstan (99.8%). With a rate of 26.5%, Niger is the country with lowest youth literacy within the OIC community, followed by Guinea (45.2%), Mali (49.4%), Cote d'Ivoire (50.2%) and Burkina Faso (52.5%).

### 2.1.1.2 Higher Education Participation (Tertiary Gross Enrolment Rate)

Figure 2.2 shows the total numbers of enrolled students in tertiary schools. The total number of tertiary school students in OIC Member States increased more than two-fold from 14.2 million to 33.6 million between 2000 and 2015. When compared with non-OIC developing countries and the world as a whole, it is observed that the share of OIC

Member States in total world tertiary school students has been on the rise. The tertiary school students in the OIC Member States represented 16.8% of those in the world in 2015, vis-à-vis 15.3% in 2000. In 2015, OIC Member States accounted for 22.2% (down from 24.9% in 2000) of total non-OIC developing country tertiary students.

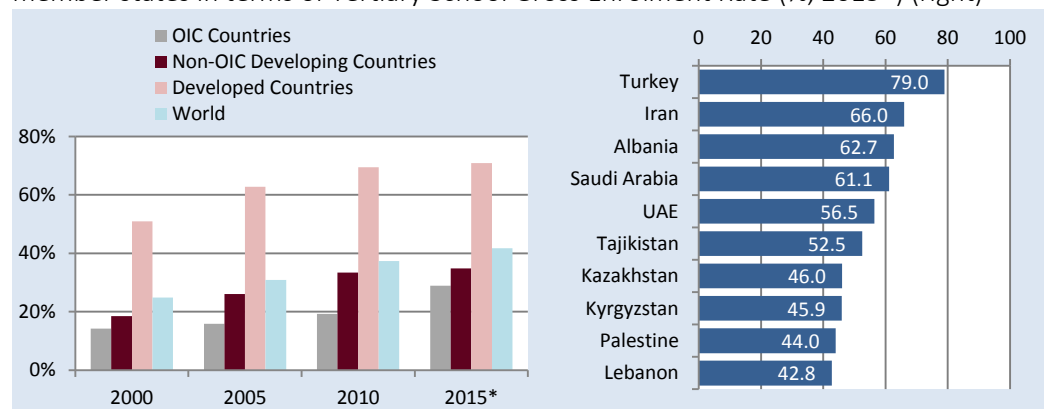
**Figure 2.2: Total Enrolment in Tertiary Schools**



Source: SESRIC; UNESCO; World Bank WDI and World Bank Education Statistics. \* Or latest year

With an average tertiary school gross enrolment rates (GER) of 28.9% in 2015, OIC Member States lagged behind both the averages of non-OIC developing countries (34.8%) and developed countries (70.8%) as well as the world average of 41.7% (Figure 2.3). In 2015, only 6 OIC Member States, namely, Turkey, Iran, Albania, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Tajikistan recorded GERs above 50.0% (Figure 2.3, right). In contrast, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, and Comoros recorded rates lower than 10%.

**Figure 2.3: Tertiary School Gross Enrolment Rates (left) and Highest Performing OIC member states in terms of Tertiary School Gross Enrolment Rate (% , 2015\*) (right)**



Source: SESRIC; UNESCO; World Bank WDI and World Bank Education Statistics. \* Or latest year



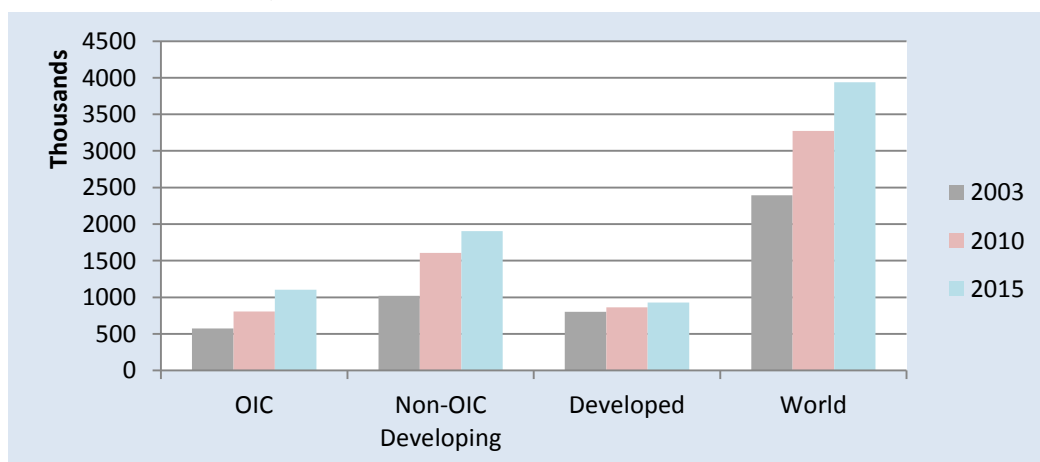
### 2.1.1.3 International Student Mobility

Increased international student mobility allows youth to study at foreign education institutions, learn about new cultures and languages, expand their knowledge of technology and make new friends in other countries. The acquired knowledge and skills abroad are usually transferable in nature. Youth who return to their home institutions and countries tend to bring with them new information and knowledge that ultimately may affect education outcomes positively in national institutions. There is no doubt that national policies and institutional factors have a significant effect on the level of benefit that can be derived from international student mobility.

The number of students pursuing studies abroad continues to surge not only because of rising demand for quality education but also due to increasing competition among higher education institutions around the world for the best and brightest minds. International recognition of qualifications and the availability of scholarships, reflecting demand from both sides, are the leading motivation for increasing mobility.

Outbound mobility rate is the share of students studying outside to total number of enrolments in the country. As depicted in Figure 2.4, similar to other parts of the world, the number of the students going abroad from OIC Member States for tertiary education has continuously increased during the period 2000-2015 where it has been almost doubled reaching 1.1 million in 2015. As a result, the share of OIC Member States in world total outbound student mobility went up from 24% to 28% during the same period. Among the main reasons for this significant increase is the growing number of youth and higher economic growth in OIC Member States that created opportunities for students to pursue their education at international education institutions.

**Figure 2.4:** Total outbound internationally mobile tertiary students studying abroad, all countries, both sexes (number



Source: UNESCO UIS Database

### 2.1.2 Policy Recommendations

Notwithstanding the educational achievements made by OIC Member States over the last few decades, 14.7% of youth in OIC Member States are still illiterate, lacking basic numerical and reading skills; accordingly subject to reduced likelihoods for successfully attracting full decent jobs. With many youth lacking even primary-level education, persistently high levels of youth unemployment are likely to threaten social inclusion, cohesion and stability. Youth who drop out of school early are vulnerable to unemployment, poverty and engaging in hazardous behaviour.

There are many reasons why youth are dropping out of school, including, among others, income poverty, gender, disability, conflict and war. Perceived low-market returns to education also discourage people with lower education in their decision to continue their education. While it is a real challenge to prevent such youth from dropping out of school, alternative learning opportunities to consolidate their basic skills and competencies should also be developed to support youth in their efforts to find a job or engage in other productive work.

Enhancing the quality of education and skill training plays a critical role in improving the responsiveness of educational system to the changing needs of youth, economies and labour markets. Even though access to education continues to improve all around the world, serious concerns regarding the quality of provision are still there. Poor quality education particularly affects disadvantaged segments of societies by having a minimal impact on their lives, and contributing insignificantly to their social participation as well as labour market outcomes; further exacerbating the already existing conditions of inequality, poverty and marginalization.

Further efforts are, therefore, needed to ensure that education at all levels is respondent to the needs of youth to foster their participation in social and economic life. It is also necessary to improve the quality of teachers and educational institutions through scaling up allocated budgets for education sectors in OIC Member States.

On the other hand, in cases where education and training systems do not furnish youth with the necessary skills needed to escape poverty and unemployment, non-formal education programmes may present an alternative remedy, even alongside formal education. Provided often through youth and community-based organizations, such programmes can fill the gap by providing learning and skill development opportunities, especially for disadvantaged and marginalized groups. By complementing formal education, such facilities can improve opportunities for youth to meet challenging demands of work and life. It is therefore extremely important to develop and invest into non-formal education programmes in OIC Member States for more inclusive education systems.

Technical and vocational education and training programmes are also critical to equipping youth people with the skills required for decent employment. Otherwise, it would be rather difficult for youth to find, keep or be promoted in a job. Such programmes would improve problem-solving capabilities and adaptability to changing environments, as well as awareness of new technologies, and entrepreneurial practices. By supporting life-long learning, such programmes will enhance the employability of youth throughout enabling them to seize immediate employment opportunities and to engage with new career opportunities.

## 2.2 Employment and Entrepreneurship

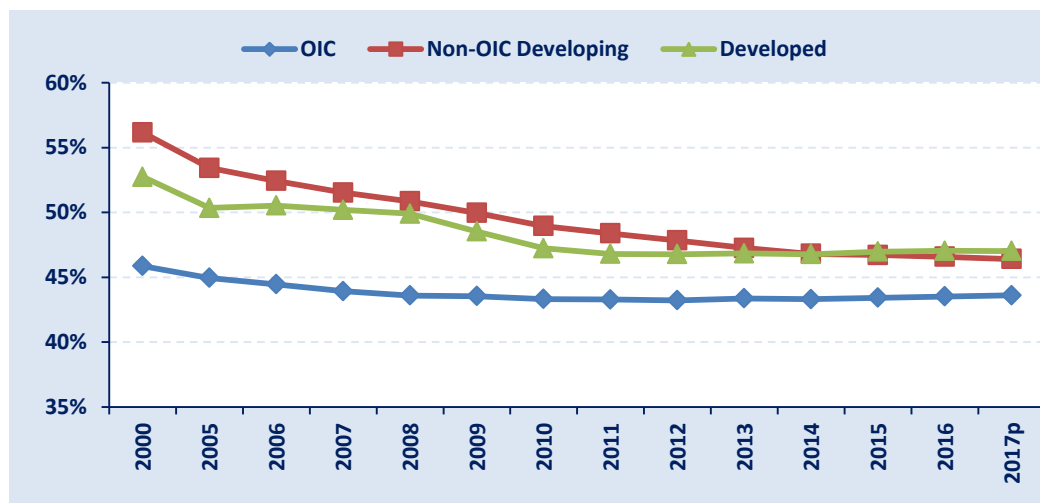
### 2.2.1 Employment

Youths' integration into the labour market, education and skill development are all crucial to the realization of a prosperous, sustainable and equitable socio-economic environment worldwide. According to ILO (2016), youth unemployment remains one of the most challenging issues where youth are estimated to account for over 35 per cent of unemployed population globally. On the other hand, ILO (2016) also reveals that more than one-third of youth in the developing world live in extreme or moderate poverty despite having a job.

#### 2.2.1.1 Youth in the Labour Market and Key Trends

Labour force participation rates of youth reflects the proportion of people aged 15-24 who engage actively in the labour market, either by working or actively searching for a job. It provides an indication of the relative size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services.

Figure 2.5: Youth Labour Force Participation Rate (2000-2017)

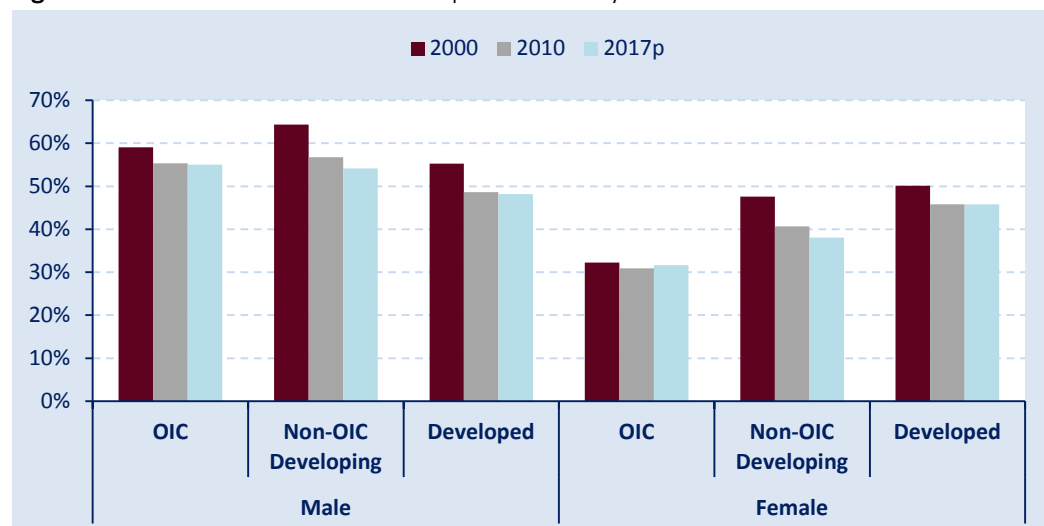


Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Database, (p: projected).

As depicted in Figure 2.5, a declining trend is observed in youth labour force participation rates in all country groups where the world average declined to 45.8% in 2016 compared to its level of 53.3% in 2000. In OIC Member States the average rate decreased from 45.9% in 2000 to 43.5% in 2016. It also went down from 52.7% to 47.0% in developed countries and from 56.2% to 46.6% in non-OIC developing countries during the same period. The negative trend can partly be explained by rising participation of youth in technical and vocational education programmes, longer years spent in education institutions and tough labour market policies avoiding teenage labour.

Youth participation rate among female population, on average, decreased from 32.2% in 2000 to 31.6% in 2017 in OIC Member States (Figure 2.6). Yet, it still remains significantly below the averages of other country groups. Male participation, on the other hand, showed a declining trend in all country groups during the period under consideration. It decreased from 59.1% to 55.1% in OIC Member States, from 64.3% to 54.1% in non-OIC developing countries and from 55.2% to 48.2% in developed countries during the same period.

**Figure 2.6:** Youth Labour Force Participation Rate by Gender

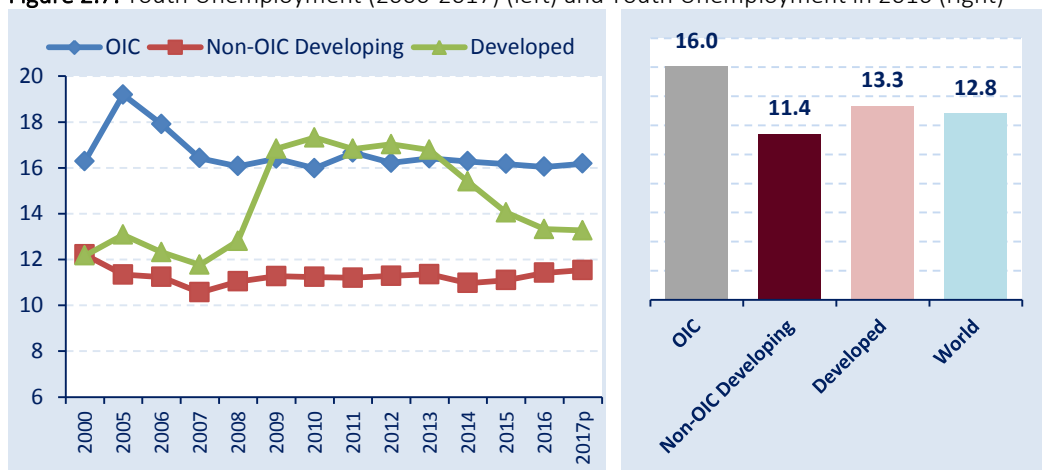


Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Database, (p: projected).

While economic conditions play a major role in large discrepancies observed in OIC Member States in participation rates of young men and women; institutional factors such as values, norms and culture are also among critical determinants of gender gap inequalities.

Figure 2.7 (left) shows that youth unemployment in OIC Member States stagnated at around mostly above 16% between 2000 and 2017. As of 2016, youth unemployment in the OIC group was estimated at 16%, in developed countries at 13.3% and in non-OIC developing countries at 11.4% where the global average hit 12.8%.

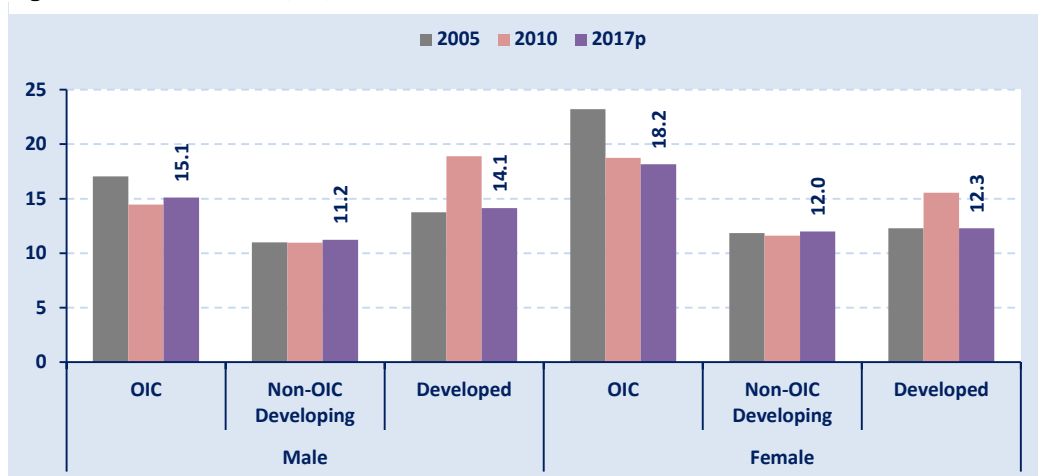
**Figure 2.7:** Youth Unemployment (2000-2017) (left) and Youth Unemployment in 2016 (right)



Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Database, (p: projected).

Female unemployment rate among youth in OIC Member States, on average, decreased from 23.2% in 2005 to 18.2% in 2017 (Figure 2.8). As of 2017, it was estimated at 12.0% in non-OIC developing countries and 12.3% in developed countries. With respect to male unemployment among youth, it went down from 17.0% in 2005 to 15.1% in 2017 in the OIC group, however, still standing as the highest rate among other country groups (Figure 2.8).

**Figure 2.8:** Youth Unemployment by Gender

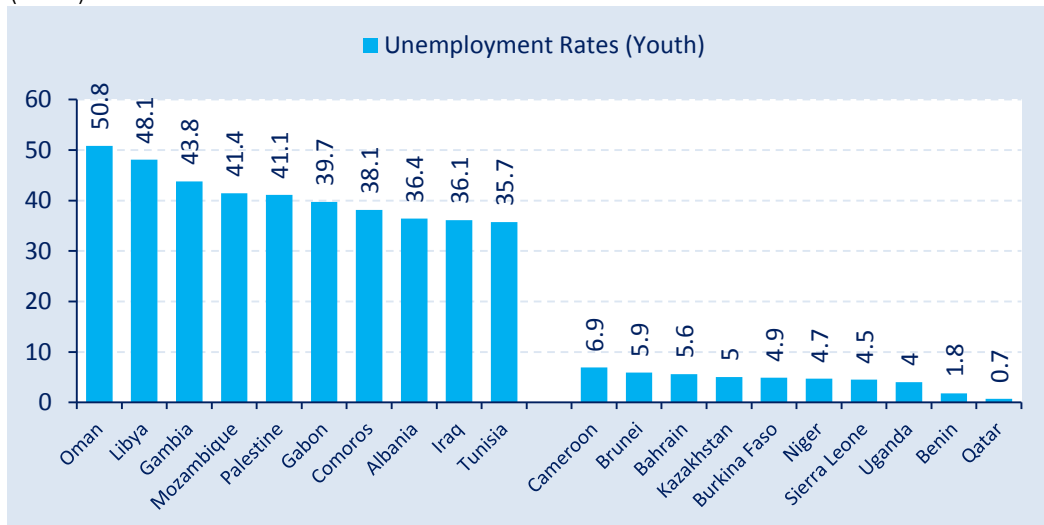


Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Database, (p: projected).

At the individual country level, Qatar (0.7%) and Benin (1.8%) had the lowest unemployment rates seen in 2016. In contrast, the highest youth unemployment rate was recorded in Oman (50.8%), followed by Libya (48.1%) and Gambia (43.8%) (Figure 2.9).

In order to show the relative significance of youth unemployment, their share in total unemployment is depicted in Figure 2.10. Until 2006, unemployed youth accounted for more than half of all unemployed people in OIC Member States. This share has been decreasing since then, falling to 44.6% in 2016 from its level of 53.4% in 2000. However, it can still be regarded as a significantly high ratio compared to the levels of 34.5% in non-OIC developing countries and 23.5% in developed countries for the year 2016.

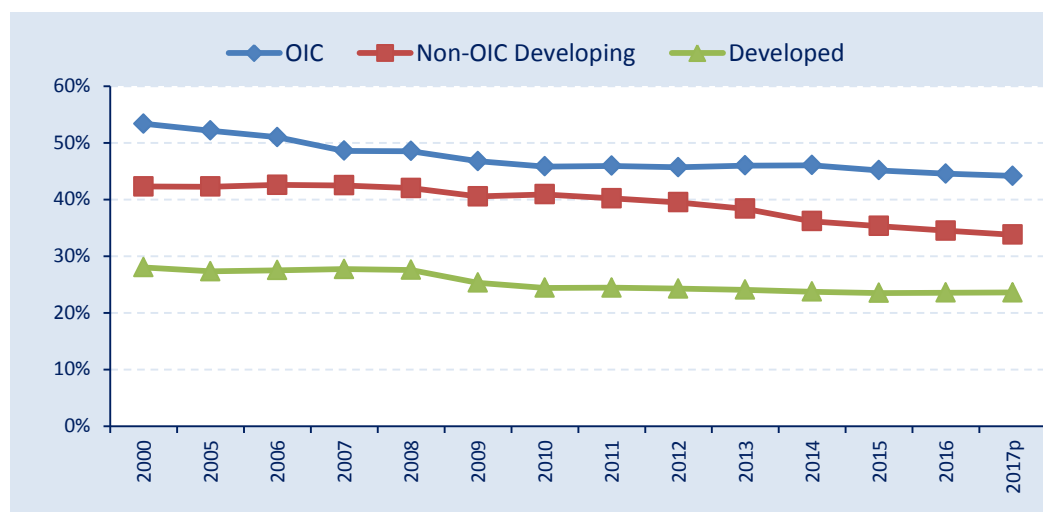
**Figure 2.9:** Top 10 Countries with Highest and Lowest Rates of Youth Unemployment (2016)



Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Database.

Several factors may explain the high unemployment rates seen among youth. Firstly, youth are more vulnerable than adults in difficult economic times. Assuming that employers seek employees with past working experience, youth entering the labour force for the first time will be at a disadvantage and have a harder time in finding employment. Secondly, young people often lack both labour market information and job search experience. Adults, on the other hand, might have the possibility of finding future work through references from previous employers or colleagues and are more likely to know the right focal points and institutions. Another possibility is that youth might wait longer to find work that suits their requirements (ILO, 2006).

Figure 2.10: Share of Youth Unemployed in Total Unemployed (2000-2017)



Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) Database, (p: projected).

### 2.2.1.2 Transitioning Youth into the Labour Market

Youth typically display lower labour market attachment and higher unemployment rates. This mainly stems from their ongoing engagement in full-time education as well as their desire to find a decent job that can fully satisfy them. The possibility of relying on parental support provides them with a safety net and margin to manage the transition less painfully. Nevertheless, their high expectations and limited work experience usually reduce their chance to have a smooth transition from education institutions to the labour market.

Apart from such frictional reasons, overall macroeconomic circumstances affect the state of youth in the labour market. Available job opportunities diminish during recessions where young people will be affected due to their lower level of skills and limited work experience. When the overall employment prospects deteriorate in a market, young people tend to respond by further reducing their attachment to labour market and increasing their time in education. Even some young people may respond through engaging in hazardous behaviour including crime and substance abuse.

Whatever the reasons might be, a considerable part of youth, particularly in developing countries, may never complete this transition until their adulthood. The large shares of 'youth in transition' will become 'adults in transition' and yet another generation of productive potential will remain underutilized. There are also serious gaps in participation rates and transition outcomes between young women and men. In a number of OIC Member States, young women remain much more likely to be neither economically active nor in school. Many of them face a lengthy job search before finally settling into an informal job with comparatively lower wages. In this context, it is

imperative for OIC Member States to devise policies to improve transition outcomes by taking existing gender disparities into account.

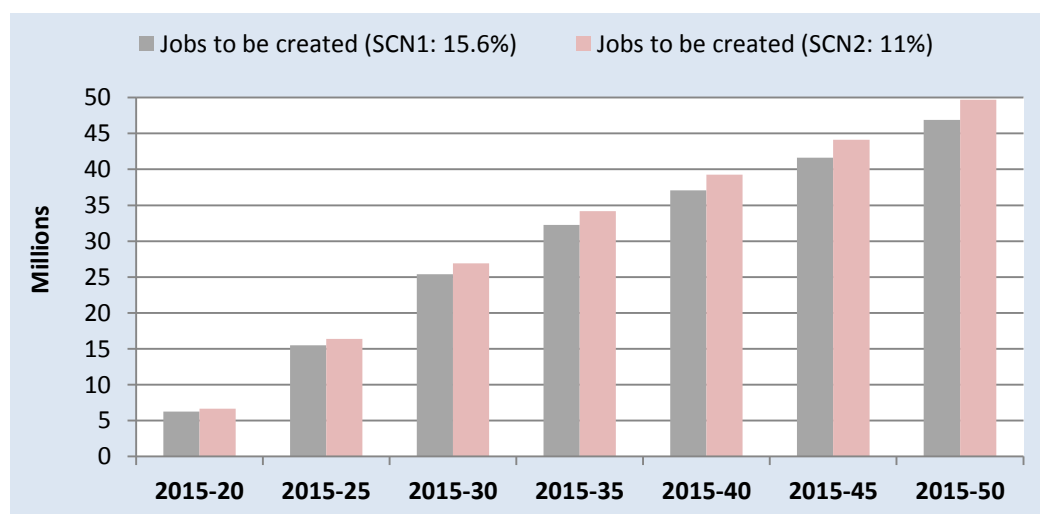
### 2.2.2 Policy Recommendations

The labour market conditions for youth in OIC Member States are not exceptionally promising where high unemployment, low labour force participation and underutilized entrepreneurship skills constitute a set of challenges for youth. Current and prospective challenges of youth unemployment in OIC Member States require comprehensive action by involvement of all key stakeholders, including governments, private sectors, educational institutions and civil society organizations.

The causes of unemployment vary across countries depending on the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions of each country, but most critical are insufficient job creation and skill mismatch. The available jobs do not increase proportionately with the increase in population and participation into labour forces. Moreover, well-educated youth may not possess the right skills to qualify for the existing and potential job opening. The mismatch between the supply of skill and demand by employers causes structural unemployment in several OIC Member States.

It will be illuminating to see the number of jobs to be created for youth in order to better grasp the challenge of job creation for youth. Considering the latest population projections, the number of jobs in need of being created for the increasing youth population is estimated under two scenarios. In the baseline scenario, the number of jobs to be created is estimated while keeping the current level of youth unemployment

**Figure 2.11:** Number of Jobs needed to be created



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculations based on ILO Statistics.



constant (15.6%). In the second scenario, the number of jobs to be created is estimated assuming that OIC Member States would reduce youth unemployment rates to the levels observed in non-OIC developing countries (11%). In both scenarios, labour force participation rates are kept at its current constant of 44%. The results are shown in Figure 2.11. From 2012 until 2020, OIC Member States need to create an additional 9.2 million jobs for youth and an additional 9 million jobs for every 5 years until 2035.

In order to improve the transition outcomes from education to job-market, OIC Member States should devise effective strategies and policies. As training appears to be positively linked to earnings of young workers, they might focus on establishing incentives for enterprises to provide training for employees, especially targeting those who would not normally receive it. Improving the quality of labour market institutions will facilitate youths' transition to more satisfactory and secure jobs. These can be public employment services or facilities and programmes within the education system, such as career planning and placements centres at the secondary or tertiary education level. These institutions can also collect and disseminate timely and relevant labour market information in order to ease the policymaking process and transition from school to work. In order to tackle such challenges, proper labour market information is required to avoid skill mismatch in the labour market. Therefore, it is imperative to develop labour market information and analysis systems to monitor developments in labour markets and devise effective policies.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to youth unemployment. National circumstances determine policy responses and strategic actions. In general, promotion of youth employment should be considered under a more comprehensive and integrated framework that promotes economic development and employment growth. An overly simplified approach that ignores different individual characteristics, including age, gender, level of education and socio-economic background, will fail to address specific labour market challenges faced by many young people. A good basic education, vocational training or higher education combined with initial work experience is critical for successful entry into the labour market. An effective strategy to facilitating the transition to work and improving decent work prospects to youth should involve targeted active labour market measures including giving incentives to enterprises for youth employment, promoting youth entrepreneurship and facilitating access to finance.

Besides labour market policies, macroeconomic and developmental policies should also pay attention to the problems of youth for better employment generation. Start-up businesses and risk-taking behaviours of young graduates can be supported by governments. Active labour market policies are another important dimension of reducing youth unemployment. While better functioning public employment services

and wage and training subsidies can motivate employers to hire youth, technical and vocational education programmes, training programmes, apprenticeship programmes and entrepreneurship training programmes can help offset the mismatch of qualifications and skill requirements. Partnerships among governments, business organizations and educational institutions can be instrumental in determining the most appropriate action to be taken at national and local levels for the promotion of decent work for youth.

### 2.2.3 Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship: Why Youth Entrepreneurship Should Be Core to the National Entrepreneurship Strategy?

To tackle youth unemployment and underemployment in the OIC Member States, an emphasis on entrepreneurship is an imperative. Entrepreneurship leads to higher economic growth and productivity (Valliere & Peterson, 2009; Klapper et al. 2007), more technological innovation and structural change (Acs and Audretsch, 1990), higher levels of education (Dias and McDermott, 2006), and higher amounts of job creation and employment (Fritsch, 2008; Carree & Thurik, 2008). Entrepreneurship can be particularly important for developing economies because ‘by developing novel products or increasing competition, new firms can boost demand, which could in turn create new job opportunities and reduce unemployment’ (Kritikos, 2014: 2).

These unique economic benefits of entrepreneurship may be best reaped by youth entrepreneurship, because:

Youth entrepreneurs tend to have higher business growth aspirations, and in turn pursue more aggressive growth strategies and create higher amounts of new jobs (Kew et al., 2013).

- Youth entrepreneurs are more likely to hire fellow youth (Kew et al., 2013).
- Youth are more likely to create breakthroughs in businesses given their ease towards adopting new technologies, skills, trends, and ways of thinking.
- Youth are more likely to come up with new ideas and innovation, and thus have greater potential to contribute to national and regional economic growth.
- Beyond economic benefits, youth entrepreneurship also facilitates social integration of youth, providing them opportunities to build sustainable lives and develop transferable skills that can be applied to other challenges in life (Kew et al., 2013).

In the last two decades or so, youth entrepreneurs have spearheaded a new category of entrepreneurship: ‘social entrepreneurship’. ‘Social entrepreneurs apply business

principles to solve intractable development challenges, which the public and private sectors are unable or unwilling to address' (Buckner et al., 2012: 5).

Social entrepreneurship can provide a powerful pathway for the OIC group to harness the potential of the "youth bulge". This is because social entrepreneurship not only undertakes an economic function but also the pivotal socio-political function of channeling youth's energy into constructive civil action, and giving them ample opportunity to become inspiring citizens.

This is particularly important in the post-Arab spring era, where not only Arab youth but youth from across OIC regions have become more vocal, active, and organized, demanding greater civil and political participation.

All in all, for OIC Member States, youth entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship have great potential to boost the economy, create value, and bring back substantial and diverse spillover benefits. This potential mandates policymakers to view youth entrepreneurship as a core aspect rather than secondary or a side aspect for their entrepreneurship strategy.

Below, the report will assess the current status of challenges against, and potential for youth entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship in OIC Member States in comparison to other country groups. It will identify where the eco-system is weakest and accordingly suggest policies to facilitate youth entrepreneurship.

### 2.2.3.1 *An overview of entrepreneurial activity and ecosystem in OIC Member States: GEI Index and other indicators*

A useful tool to map where the OIC stands as a group in terms of both quality and quantity of entrepreneurial activity is the Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI). The below table demonstrates average GEI mean by country groups. OIC as a group scores lower than both world average and advanced economies, while it has the same score with non-OIC developing country group.

Country Group	GEI
Global Average	40
Advanced Economies	58
Developing Economies	25
OIC Member States	25

Source: SESRIC staff calculations using GEI (2017) Data Set

There are only 2 OIC Member States of which GEI reaches to the average of advanced economies: United Arab Emirates (by 58.8) followed by Qatar (by 58). However, among

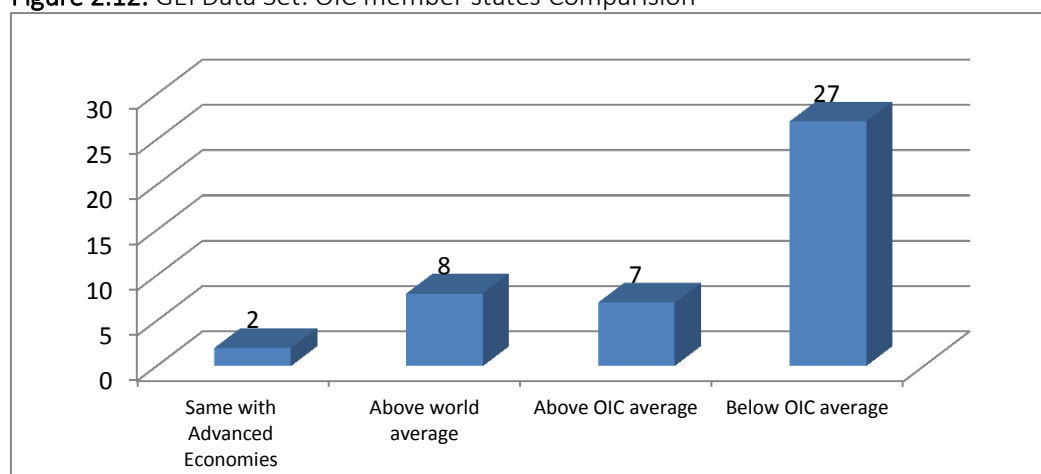
43 OIC Member States included in the data set, more than half are below the world average and non-OIC developing average. Chad has the lowest GEI score by 8.8.

A closer look at the OIC Member States' overall eco-system further demonstrates:

- Most entrepreneurial activity is driven by necessity.

Entrepreneurship can be driven both by necessity and opportunity. Entrepreneurs of necessity choose to engage in entrepreneurial activity because they have no other employment options (Kritikos, 2014). Opportunity entrepreneurs, on the other hand, exploit good opportunity to become more independent or increase their income or fulfill personal aims (Kritikos, 2014). While both types contribute to economy and youth economic integration, 'opportunity entrepreneurs are believed to be better prepared, to have superior skills, and earn more than necessity entrepreneurs' (Ács et. al, 2017), and are more likely to bring about innovation, scalable firms, and structural change.

**Figure 2.12:** GEI Data Set: OIC member states Comparison



Source: SESRIC staff calculations using GEI (2017) Data Set

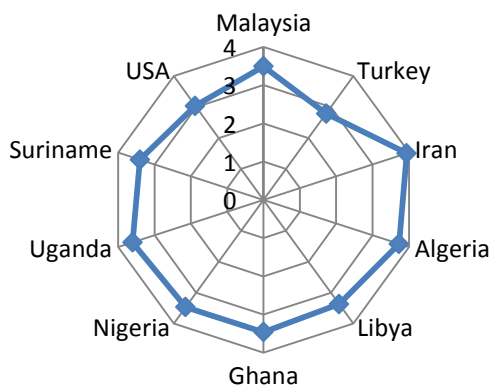
Most entrepreneurship in the OIC group and other developing country contexts is driven out of necessity (Almobaireek and Manolova, 2013). Moreover, studies have shown that throughout the world and in OIC Member States, young females are more likely than men to become entrepreneurs out of necessity where as men are more likely to have a financial success motivation (Almobaireek and Manolova, 2013).

- Young entrepreneurs have it harder.

SESRIC calculations based on the GEM National Experts Data set, which surveys national experts on aspects of entrepreneurship, have revealed throughout country groups and the world, experts believe that young entrepreneurs are met with greater challenges and constraints than older entrepreneurs. While this belief is universal, it is much more

prevalent in OIC Member States (included in the data set) suggesting that young people have it even harder in OIC Member States compared to other country groups. Among OIC Member States (included in the data set), the belief that young people have it

**Figure 2.13:** Young Entrepreneurs have it harder (1-5)



Source: SESRIC staff calculations using GEM (2013) Data Set

harder is highest in Iran and lowest in Turkey as shown in Figure 2.13. In fact, Turkey scores closest to the USA, a country with the highest GEI scores (2017). This could be related with the presence of successful incubators and success stories about young entrepreneurs, which might have created a more positive image of young entrepreneurship among

the investors and in popular opinion.

Rate of business failure remains high in OIC Member States.

In OIC Member States, failure rates of businesses as well as NGOs remain higher than advanced economies, while starting NGOs, which can be seen as proxy measures for social entrepreneurship, also remains quite challenging (Buckner et al. 2012). For example, in a survey by Stanford and Bayt.com on Arab entrepreneurship (Buckner et al., 2012), less than 20% of self-employed people indicated that their businesses was in operation and performing well.

Nevertheless, despite these challenges and bottlenecks, there are also positive developments within OIC Member States, suggesting that youth entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship can potentially gain a firmer footing:

- Qatar ranks 20th in terms of GEI out of 138.
- Turkey, as of 2015, hosts the 18th most successful university incubator—namely, ITU SEED (Istanbul University Cekirdek) (Bhatli, 2016).
- Entrepreneurship has grown in some OIC Member States, particularly in the MENA region, in the last decade 40 per cent of fresh graduates in the region are actively considering opening their own business. Since 2000 the pace at which new initiatives are launched has sharply risen from 1.5 per year to 10 per year (Bayt.com, 2014).
- As for social entrepreneurship, across the region, youth are more interested in improving their communities and contributing to the long-term development of

their societies after revolutions. These changing attitudes and practices suggest the emergence of a new generation of social entrepreneurs across OIC regions (Buckner et. al, 2017)

An overall picture of youth entrepreneurship in OIC Member States suggests that the group has a great potential. Nevertheless, the OIC as a group is met with structural and cultural barriers that prevent ecosystems conducive to entrepreneurship and innovative growth from fully thriving. As such, the OIC group is in need of comprehensive and aggressive reform to utilize its potential.

### INFO BOX 2.1: Can Social Entrepreneurship Help Development?

The Case of *Carezone* by Ratish Tilani in Dubai

Tilani, *CEO*:

"It is not unrealistic to say that if you spend around 10 Dhs (US\$2.70) on something you normally do anyway, you can feed someone in Africa"

*Carezone* is an application developed by a Dubai-based company founded by Ratish Tilani. The Application allows users to donate part of their money to a variety of causes, whether it is to plant a mangrove or help kids with autism, whenever they shop at partner outlets.

*Carezone* is a prime example of how youth social entrepreneurship can contribute to problem solving in OIC member states and at the intra-OIC level by fusing business principles with social responsibility.



### 2.2.3.2 Challenges against youth entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship:

An entrepreneurial ecosystem is typically composed of the following components: the policy and regulatory framework, financial opportunities, infrastructural environment, human capital and skill, and cultural environment. The below will briefly review the OIC entrepreneurial ecosystem and identify the bottlenecks in each component that hamper youth entrepreneurial activity; entrance of youth into entrepreneurial activity and survival of young entrepreneurs once they enter the ecosystem.

#### 2.2.3.2.1 Policy aspects and regulatory framework

- Entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial activity in the OIC, overall as a group, is hampered by a burdensome and weighty regulatory framework, from financial costs, taxing systems, incorporation and bankruptcy law, labor and employment law to property rights, patent application, licenses and permits, and global trading (Buckner et al., 2012). For example, it costs a MENA entrepreneur 26 percent of their countries' income per capita to start a small business compared to just 3 percent for entrepreneurs in OECD countries (Momani, 2017:5).
- Generally, the policy framework in OIC Member States supports big and established firms at the expense of new comers, who tend to be younger entrepreneurs (Momani, 2017).
- Over the last two decades, the global economy has witnessed the rise of new and non-traditional business models, most notably the Lean Start-up model, largely driven by youth entrepreneurs and their emerging needs. Most OIC Member States have yet to incorporate regulations that can cater these novel needs, such as crowd funding and convertible notes. Lack of nimble policy responses especially impacts young entrepreneurs who seek to scale their enterprises, and find themselves unable to tap into global investment networks.
- Most policy-makers in the OIC Member States lack data and measurement techniques necessary to develop a thorough understanding of what works for young entrepreneurs and what does not—e.g. effects of different types of capital investments, mentorship models, and networks on business longevity, profitability, growth, and return on investment. This prevents policymakers from developing most effective policies as well as identifying challenges.

#### 2.2.3.2.2 Infrastructural Environment

- Youth entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial activity is further hampered by an underdeveloped infrastructure in many OIC Member States; most notably, power outages, an underdeveloped transportation system as well as public transport in the form of railways and buses, and limited access to internet

(Momani, 2017). In fact, in the MENA region the average Internet speed (2.73 Mbps) is a mere fraction of the global average of 8.69 Mbps (WEF 2011: 18), especially impacting IT entrepreneurs and e-commerce enterprises.

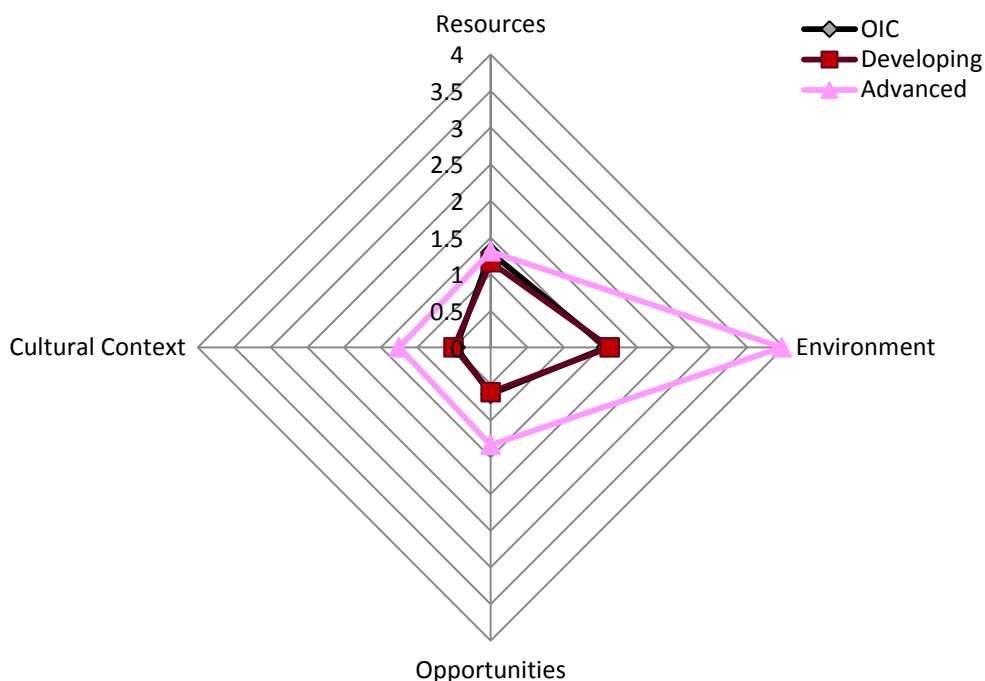
### 2.2.3.2.3 Financial and Skill Developing Institutions

- In the OIC group, the private sector is generally unwilling to take risks. Combined with the lack of adequate government support, such as risk guarantee schemes, this unwillingness results in limited availability of risk finance institutions and risk finance, especially in the form equity rather than debt (Eid, 2011). The lack of risk finance makes the securing of both early enterprise—and subsequent growth—capital more difficult; consequently, discouraging youth from engaging in entrepreneurship.
- Entrepreneurship thrives on specific human capital primed with a set of unique skills, characteristics, talents as well as values and beliefs. In fact, a growing body of evidence has shown that aspiring entrepreneurs are marked by certain values and attitudes, such as hard-work ethic, self-reliance, and creativity. (Jaén and Liñán, 2013; Tipu and Ryan, 2016). Such values and skills that lead to entrepreneurship can be developed among the youth through educational institutions from early on. However, most OIC Member States have yet to incorporate curriculums that can engage and nurture entrepreneurial competencies and mindset. On the other hand, in the last decades, new higher educational institutions in the form of university incubators specifically designed for entrepreneurship training and business assistance have emerged. University incubation programs are an important source of entrepreneurship education, training and cultivating entrepreneurial competencies (Belwal et al., 2015; Al-Mubarak and Busler, 2013). Incubators can provide a particularly important pathway for promoting youth entrepreneurship in OIC Member States, given that the majority lack content geared towards entrepreneurship in traditional educational institutions. However, in an UBI Global report (Bhatli, 2016), OIC regions appeared to also have the lowest amount of incubators in a sample including 64 counties from 6 regions. For instance, MENA hold only 3% of total incubators within the sample, in contrast to 35% held by Europe and 30% by Latin America. All in all, OIC member country ecosystems, as a group, are affected by the weak presence of educational institutions that can develop human capital necessary for vibrant entrepreneurial activities.



### 2.1.3.2.1.4 The Cultural Aspect

Figure 2.14: Pillars of Entrepreneurship



Source: SESRIC staff calculations using GEI (2017) Data Set

Empirical research on fundamentals of entrepreneurship have been increasingly pointing to the role of culture and cultural values on entrepreneurship development (Kreiser et. al, 2010; Meek et. al, 2010). Case studies on youth and entrepreneurship from across diverse OIC Member States, ranging from Oman (Belwal et al., 2015), Pakistan (Ijaz et. al, 2012), UAE (Tipu and Ryan, 2016), to Turkey (Turker and Selcuk, 2009) and Nigeria (Halliru, 2013), have also found common culture to be a powerful precursor of entrepreneurial activity.

In the line with this literature, the present report recoded GEI (2017) data set into four categories to examine the role of culture on entrepreneurship in OIC Member States (for details on the GEI sub-indexes, see Ács et. al, 2017). These four categories include cultural context (risk acceptance and cultural support), resources (human capital, start-up skills, risk capital, networking), environment (high growth, process innovation, product innovation, competition, and technology absorption), and opportunities (opportunity perception and opportunity start-up).

When these four categories were compared among advanced economies, OIC Member States, and non-OIC developing countries, the biggest gaps emerge, first, in the

environmental category (such as innovation and technology absorption) and, second, in the cultural context category, as shown in the above figure. This finding demonstrates the pivotal role played by culture in the development of entrepreneurship and indicates the need to identify what specific cultural attitudes or values may be hindering entrepreneurship in OIC Member States.

A closer look at the data reveals possible cultural challenges. The category cultural context is composed of, as stated above, risk acceptance and cultural support. Risk Acceptance 'captures the inhibiting effect of fear of failure of the population on entrepreneurial action combined with a measure of the country's risk' (Ács et. al, 2017: 28), whereas the cultural support pillar 'combines how positively a given country's inhabitants views entrepreneurs in terms of status and career choice and how the level of corruption in that country affects this view' (Ács et. al, 2017:28).

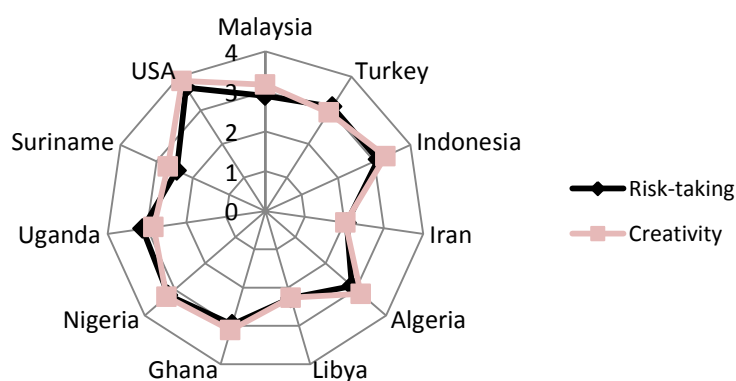
The below table compares the three country groups and shows that developing countries and OIC Member States have much lower risk acceptance and cultural support compared to advanced economies.

**Table 2.2: Risk Acceptance and Cultural Support**

Country Groups	Risk Acceptance	Cultural Support
Advanced Economies	0.65	0.6
Non-OIC developing	0.21	0.29
OIC Member States	0.17	0.3

Source: SESRIC staff calculations using GEI (2017) Data Set

**Figure 2.15: Risk Taking and Creativity**



Source: SESRIC staff calculations using GEM (2013) Data Set

An analysis based on a different data set, the GEM (2013) data set, reveals parallel results, while pointing out to another possible cultural contention: creativity. Advanced economies with vibrant SME and start-up ecosystems are marked not only by acceptance of risk and failure, but also high

levels of creativity, in itself a wellspring of entrepreneurship. When compared to the USA, used as a benchmark representing vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems, OIC Member States have much lower levels of risk acceptance.

Both GEI and GEM analysis are consistent with the broader literature, which have already identified reluctance of risk taking, fear of failure, and limited creativity as the cultural deterrents of youth entrepreneurship in diverse cases and regions of OIC (Ács et al, 2017). In large part these common cultural challenges can be explained through prevalence of political corruption, particularly patronage. Corruption and patronage prevent upwards social mobility of economically marginalized segments. In turn, this generates an understanding of success as something that is not based on personal merit and skills, but as something that is possible only if one is born into a privileged family. This belief then breeds fear of failure and risk aversion.

### **Cultural Change: Is the Generation Y a game changer?**

Despite various bottlenecks that face entrepreneurial development in OIC Member States, there are signs suggesting that things may be shifting under a new generation of youth, Generation Y or the Millennials. Surveys on modern Muslim youth have discovered that:

- 1) They are less reliant in public sector jobs and turning towards private sectors.

‘In 2012, 55 percent of Arab youth preferred a public sector job, but that figure dropped to 43 percent in 2014’ (Momani, 2017:3). This shift is evident even in the Gulf states, where public sector wages are higher than the private sector (Momani, 2017), signaling that this shift is more about changing values than being a simple economic calculation.

- 2) There is a growing interest in starting one’s own business.

Differing from their parents and grandparents, Muslim youth are more interested in running their own business than being employed. Eight in 10 fresh graduates in MENA, for example, prefer to become owners and runners of their own business. (Buckner et al. 2017)

- 3) There is a slow but seeming shift from necessity entrepreneurship to opportunity entrepreneurship.

A survey among Arab youth by Stanford University and Bayt.com (2017) revealed that the plurality of respondents started a business because they wanted the greater independence that it offered. For example, 43% of Egyptian respondents said that they were attracted to the greater independence, while 41% of Tunisians said the same (Buckner et al. 2017).

When it comes to social entrepreneurship, surveys highlight that a strong and growing interest in volunteerism indicate a greater involvement in social causes (Buckner et al. 2017). Surveys also demonstrate that volunteering with NGOs is the most common form of volunteer work across the region (Buckner et al. 2017), clearly suggesting to policymakers the pivotal role NGOs play in social and political integration of youth.

Surveys reveal another essential finding: *interest in volunteer work increased following the Arab Spring*. This rise is apparent even in countries that did not experience revolutions themselves, suggesting that the Arab Spring has triggered unanimous and general momentum among the youth towards a greater desire and urge to be part of problem-solving and development (Buckner et al., 2017). These changing attitudes present policymakers with a grand opportunity not only for youth integration but also to benefit from youth mobilization towards long-term development.

#### 2.2.4 Policy Recommendations

1. Building a balanced entrepreneurial ecosystem is a requisite to cultivate youth entrepreneurship and to strike such balance:

- An appropriate regulatory framework should be developed that address both traditional and emerging needs of entrepreneurship. Such reforms will also be necessary to connect young entrepreneurs with international ecosystems and investor networks.
- Alongside standard commercial lending, entrepreneurial finance should be established and increased. Risk finance and risk finance institutions should be developed at all levels to support entrepreneurship throughout each stage of the organization, covering venture-capital funds, mid-level funds, and microfinance. Moreover, establishment of risk insurance schemes would substantially help encourage risk-taking and cultivate an 'investor culture'.
- The existing infrastructure should be upgraded to facilitate a more effective business environment.

2. A thorough understanding of what works and what does not should be developed. For that:

- Basic data on the quality and quantity of youth entrepreneurship, such as business density, survival rates, growth rate, and share of scale ups should be gathered. This would provide an overall idea of the current status of national ecosystems.
- Knowledge about the most effective use of human, technical, and financial resources for stimulating youth entrepreneurship should be enhanced.

- Best practices and the most vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems across OIC Member States should be charted to generate transferable models. Least developed ecosystems across OIC Member States should also be charted to identify common bottlenecks that hamper entrepreneurial activity.

3. The educational system should be revised to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and skills. For that:

- Entrepreneurship should be brought into the classroom, and curriculums and be reoriented towards promotion of critical and creative thinking, self-confidence, and acceptance of risk and failure.
- What is outdated and counterproductive in educational systems and curriculums in regards to entrepreneurship and associated skills and values should be identified.
- Educational institutions geared towards business training, entrepreneurial activity and that provide certificates and degree programs offering skills relevant to business creation, marketing, and management should be created. Moreover, appropriate undergraduate, MBA, and executive education programs as well as university incubators and accelerators should be established and expanded.

4. A culture of entrepreneurship should be promoted, particularly to reduce fear of risk-taking and failure. This effort can be reached by glamorizing young entrepreneurs as heroes. This can include generating daily content on entrepreneurship and success stories of self-made young entrepreneurs in and through media channels as well as using high-profile public opinion makers and influencers to promote entrepreneurship.

5. Social entrepreneurship should be promoted. For that:

- Investment networks, market facilitators, incubators, and mentorship specifically designed for social enterprises should be developed.
- The study and practice of social entrepreneurship should be supported through competitions, academic programs, and incubators.
- Non-profit sphere reform (most notably, rapid establishment, funding, and audit) should be undertaken to encourage and support NGO-type activity.
- Partnerships between the public, private and NGO communities that identify, support, and celebrate social entrepreneurs across the region should be encouraged.

6. OIC Member States should provide required and necessary support to already existing programs/projects in the OIC geography or run by relevant OIC Institutions, including

the OIC Start-Up Platform (OSP), an ICYF-DC run initiative. OSP is a multiphase entrepreneurship platform that offers young entrepreneurs from the OIC Member States the opportunity of online & offline trainings in related fields and to be matched with the specifically chosen investors both in online platform and in a yearly Summit. It was designed by the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), an OIC Affiliated Institution, in cooperation with its partners. OSP's purpose is to train young entrepreneurs from the OIC Member States on innovation and value creation, help to create role models, and provide formal education on creating successful tech businesses and bringing young entrepreneurs, techno cities, leading universities and representatives of business world together to establish well-structured start-ups in highly competitive global business arena.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.3 Health Services

### 2.3.1 An Overview on Health Services and Policies

Provision of health services for youth is critical for the future of a society. Lack of comprehensive health services or poor quality of such services may affect both physical and mental health of youth; with the consequence that they may turn out to be less productive throughout their life span. Youth health is closely linked to health services extended to them during childhood.

The health of youth is also closely linked to nutritional attitudes. OIC Member States bore one-third of the global burden of stunted children in 2009-2013 stemming from undernutrition. On the other hand, OIC Member States accounted for 32% of the world total overweight children, with an overweight prevalence rate of 7.4% compared to 4.6% in other developing countries (SESRIC, 2015).

SESRIC (2015) found that in OIC Member States, on average, spending on health was almost half of the world average when measured as a share of GDP. Limited availability of human resources in the health sector also is another risk factor for the health of youth. Overall, key figures reveal the existence of some pressing issues that threaten the health of youth living in OIC Member States.

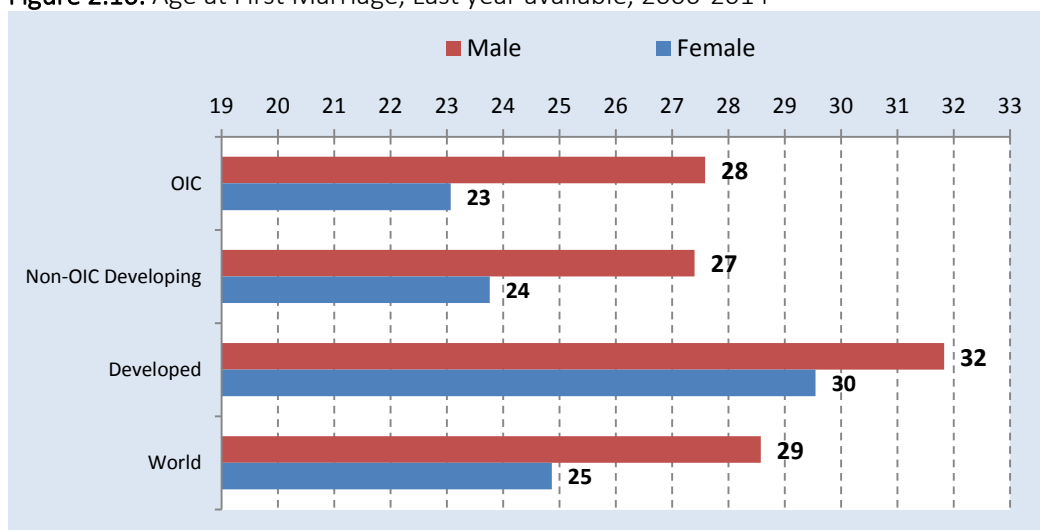
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<sup>1</sup> More details available at: [www.oicstartups.org](http://www.oicstartups.org)

### 2.3.2 Reproductive Health and Youth

Age at first marriage (AFM) tends to go up along with increased urbanization, industrialization, and educational enrolment. Figure 2.16 displays the age at first marriage (AFM) across country groups between 2006 and 2014. In developed countries, people tend to marry at relatively older ages where AFM is 32 for males and 30 for females, putting them at high risk of serious fertility rate decline. In OIC Member States, on average, AFM for males and females are 28 and 23, respectively. The world average of AFM average is 29 for males and 25 for females.

Figure 2.16: Age at First Marriage, Last year available, 2006-2014



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

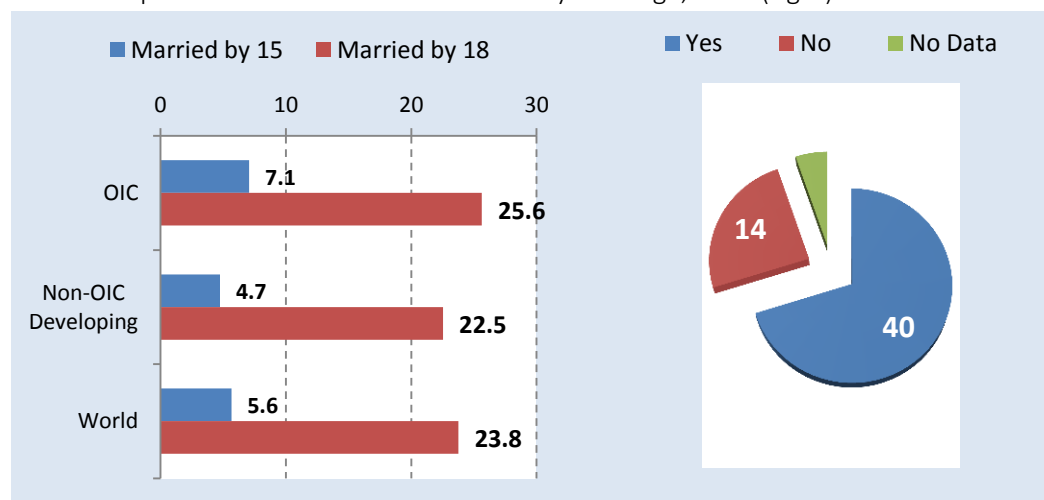
Early marriage, typically followed by early pregnancy, constitutes a serious threat not only to individuals, particularly women’s, physical and emotional health, but also to the wellbeing of family, with a significant cognitive, emotional, and physical effect on children and youth development.

Figure 2.17 (right) displays the prevalence of child marriage (both for marriages before 15 and 18 years) across country groups between 2008 and 2014. OIC Member States have the highest child marriage prevalence rate where, on average, 7.1% of all marriages take place before 15 years old and 25.6% of all marriages are being performed before 18 years old. The global average prevalence of marriages before 15 years old is 5.6% and for marriages before 18 years old the average is 23.8%. In non-OIC developing countries, it is less common than the OIC group with averages of 4.7% and 22.5% for marriages before 15 and 18 years old, respectively. From the regulation and policy side, it is reported that 40 OIC Member States have a law that prohibits or invalidates child or early marriage (Figure 2.17, below). Thus, a number of OIC Member

States still need to make amendments in their existing laws in order to eradicate child or early marriage.

In many parts of the developing world, especially in rural areas, girls marry shortly after puberty and are expected to begin having children immediately. Figure 2.18 displays Adolescent Fertility Rate (AFR) that reflects the number of births (per 1,000 women) aged between 15 to 19 years. On average, it decreased from 94 in 1990 to 68.8 in 2015 in OIC Member States. Yet, it remains higher than the global average of 44.4 recorded in 2015. In this regard, young women in OIC Member States are under a relatively higher fertility pressure that prevents them from investing in their self-development.

**Figure 2.17:** Child marriage (%) 2008-2014 (left) and Number of OIC member states with a Law that prohibits or invalidates child or early marriage, 2015 (right)



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation from UNICEF global databases, 2016, based on DHS, MICS and other nationally representative surveys and World Bank, World Development Indicators

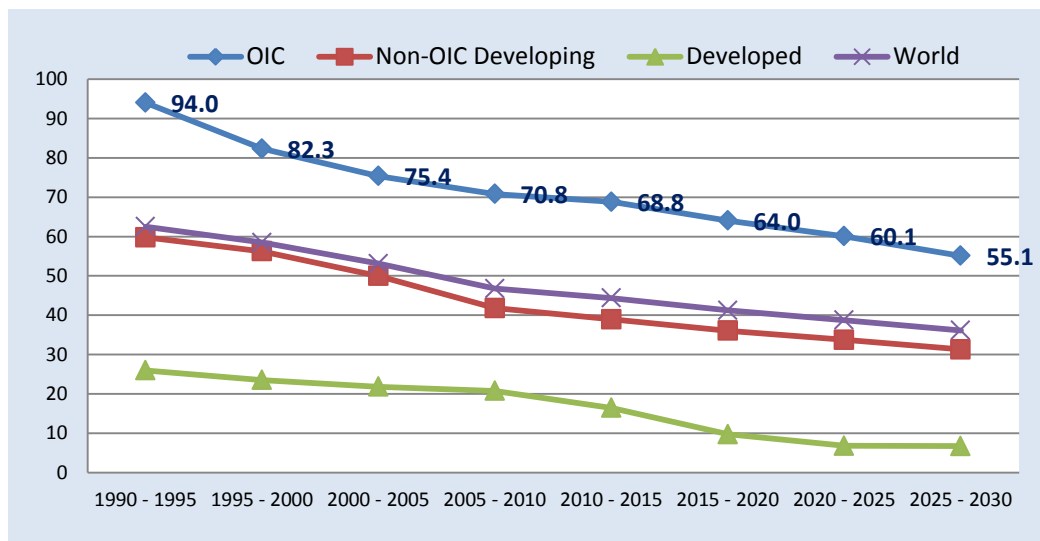
### 2.3.3 Mental Health and Youth

Youth are at greater risk of a range of mental-health conditions as they transition from childhood to adulthood (Kessler et al, 2005) and these mental health conditions negatively impact youths' development, quality of life and ability to fully participate in their communities (Fisher and de Mello, 2011). This is why it is paramount that decision makers in OIC Member States develop policies, legislations, and plans to improve the state of mental health, allocate resources to establish mental health facilities and build the capacity of mental health human resources, and provide mental health services for youth who are in need.



## Key Challenges of Youth

Figure 2.18: Adolescent Fertility Rate (Births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)

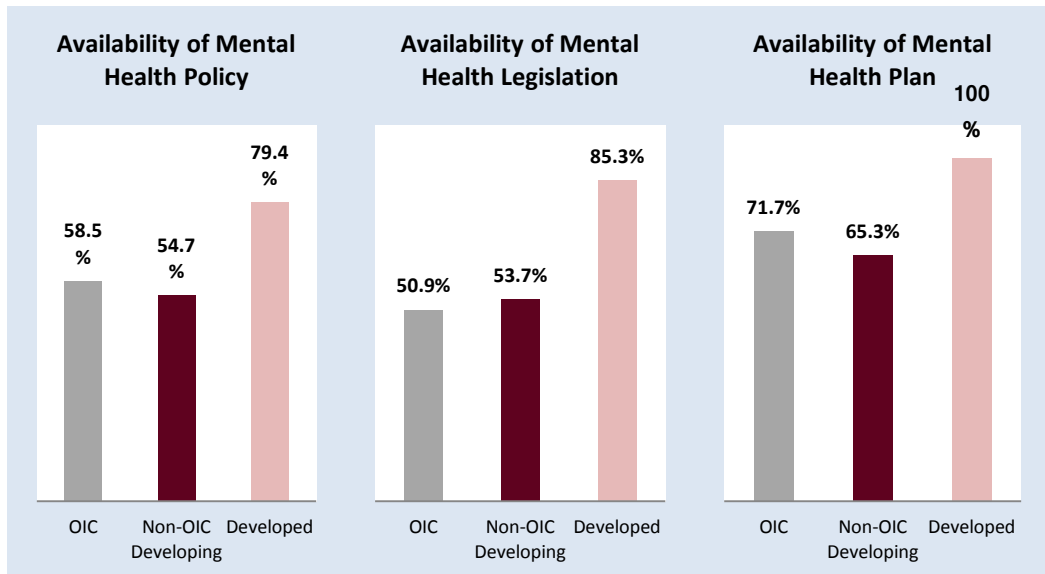


Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

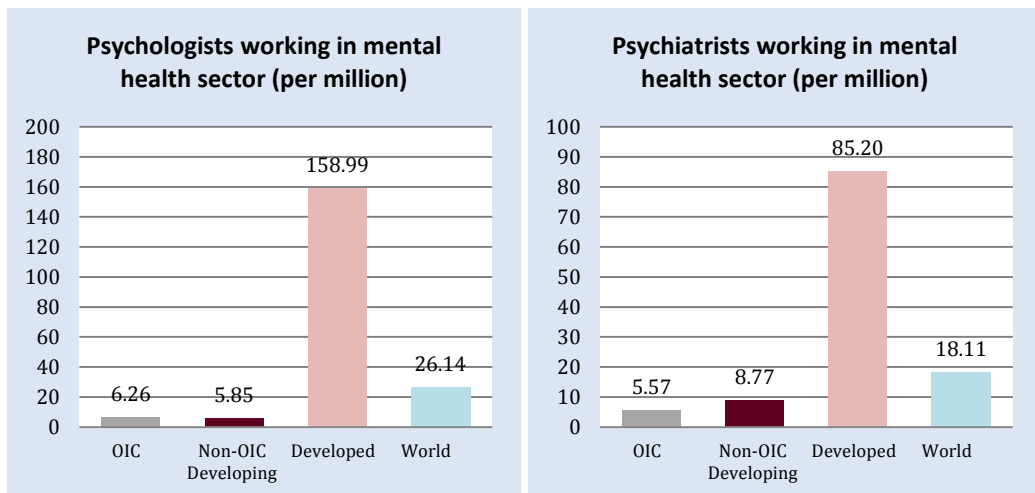
### 2.3.3.1 State of Mental Health Policies, Human Resources and Services

In 58% of OIC member states a mental health policy exists. This percentage is comparable to non-OIC developing countries (58.5%) but it falls short from the average of developed countries where 100% of countries have a mental health policy (Figure 2.19). Similarly, mental health legislation is available in 50.9% of OIC member states compared to 53.7% in non-OIC developing countries and 100% in developed countries (Figure 2.19). In terms of the availability of a mental health plan, 71.7% of OIC member states have a mental health plan compared to 65.3% of non-OIC developing countries and 100% of developed countries (Figure 2.19). These figures reveal that OIC member states have much room to improve the state of mental health through policy interventions.

The numbers of psychologists and psychiatrists working in the mental health sector are shown in Figure 2.20. The number of psychologists (per million population) is 6.26 in OIC Member States, slightly higher than the average of non-OIC developing countries (5.85). However, in terms of the number of psychiatrists (per million population) the average of the OIC group is found to be lower (5.57) than that available in non-OIC developing countries (8.77). Both in terms of the number of psychologists and psychiatrists, the averages of the OIC group are lagging behind the world averages.

**Figure 2.19:** Availability of Mental Health Policies, Legislations and Plans, 2011

Source: WHO, 2011. Data available for a total of 179 countries of which 53 are OIC Member States

**Figure 2.20:** Number of Mental Health Staff per million population

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on WHO, 2014.

### 2.3.3.2 Mental Health of Youth and Conflicts

The weak state of mental health policies, human resources and services in OIC Member States leaves youth with little chance at rehabilitation and social integration. This in turn leads to structural behavioral risk such as substance use, hazardous behavior and violence (Patel et al., 2007). As a result, a high percentage of youth with mental health problems end up breaking the law and finding themselves in prison (Glaser et al., 2001).

Due to cultural reasons and social norms, many youth in OIC Member States tend to express their mental problems not as a psychological issue but in terms of physical symptoms. Their objective is to avoid stigma associated with mental illness. The issue of stigma is made worse by the lack of adequate mental health services in OIC Member States. In such a setting, a vicious cycle is formed; stigma creates barriers to mental health service delivery for youth while the lack of adequate mental health services for youth amplifies the problem of stigma.

Exposure to war and conflict remains one of the greatest risk factors for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental-health conditions among adolescents (Attanayake et al. 2009; Barenbaum et al., 2004). The incidence of PTSD among children and adolescents affected by conflict (including refugees and displaced people) has ranged from 25 per cent to 75 per cent across studies (Dyregrov and Yule, 2006). Furthermore; in conflict settings, children and adolescents often have disproportionately higher rates of morbidity and mortality compared with adults (Attanayake et al., 2009; Bellamy, 2005).

On the positive side, teachings of Islam enable youth living in OIC Member States to stay mentally strong and sound even in the presence of conflicts. The majority of people in OIC Member States consider their selves religious; a fact highlighted by the 2010 Gallup poll results, in which about 90 percent of the adults residing in OIC Member States consider religion an important part of their daily lives (Crabtree, 2010). Moreover, Islam positively affects the behaviour and attitudes of youth and protects them from self-inflicted harm. Religion and spirituality have been identified as cogent sources of developmental influence (Benson et al., 2003). Also, several studies provide evidence that religion acts as a buffer against risky behaviour and a support for positive attitudes and actions among youth (Donahue & Benson 1995).

### **2.3.4 Youth Dependencies on Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs, and Technology**

#### **2.2.4.1 Alcohol**

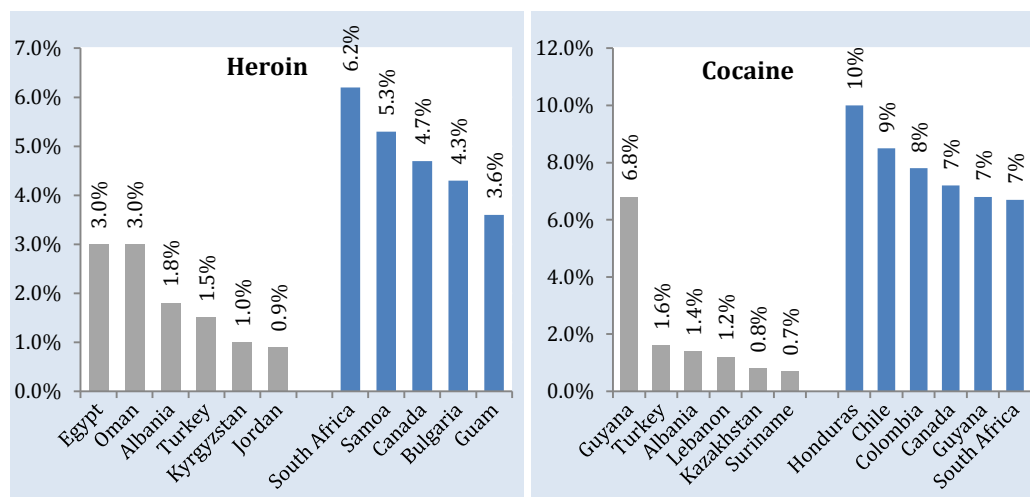
There is a limited data on alcohol consumption among youth in OIC Member States where only 26.1% of OIC Member States having national surveys on youth alcohol consumption compared to 67% in non-OIC developing countries, and 100% in developed countries (SESRI, 2016a). Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the rate of alcohol consumption among youth in OIC Member States is low compared with other country groups stemming from the fact that the consumption of alcohol is considered a deviation from the teachings of the holy Quran and Islam. The consumption of alcohol is also usually associated with a strongly negative social stigma in many OIC Member States. The findings of the World Health Organization supports this argument and states

that “consumption is highest in countries in Eastern Europe where total adult per capita consumption ranges from 15 to 21 litres per year, and is lowest in Northern Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, South Central Asia, South- East Asia and the Indonesian islands where the majority of the population abstains (WHO, 2010).”

#### 2.2.4.2 Drugs

Due to religious and social reasons the use of illicit drugs among youth in OIC member states is limited when compared with many other developing and developed countries, as illustrated in Figure 2.21. In spite of this, OIC member states must keep a watchful eye on the use of drugs among youth. Most OIC member states have a large population of youth who are facing various challenges in their daily life. This could potentially lead to an increase in the use of drugs among youth. This concern is not misplaced and the tramadol case in Egypt and Gaza and the Bonzai case in Turkey justify such concerns (Fawzui, 2011).

**Figure 2.21: Drug Use Among Youth (% who ever tried), 2014 or latest data**



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on WHO dataset.

#### 2.2.4.3 Tobacco

Among youth, the short-term health consequences of smoking include respiratory and non-respiratory effects, addiction to nicotine, and the associated risk of other drug use. Long-term health consequences of youth smoking are reinforced by the fact that most young people who smoke regularly continue to smoke throughout adulthood (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1994). Rate of tobacco products use among youth in OIC Member States was estimated at 14.7%, which is slightly higher than the world average of 14.3% (SESRIC, 2016a). The epidemic of using tobacco products among youth is not homogenous among OIC Member States as depicted in Figure 2.22. Among data

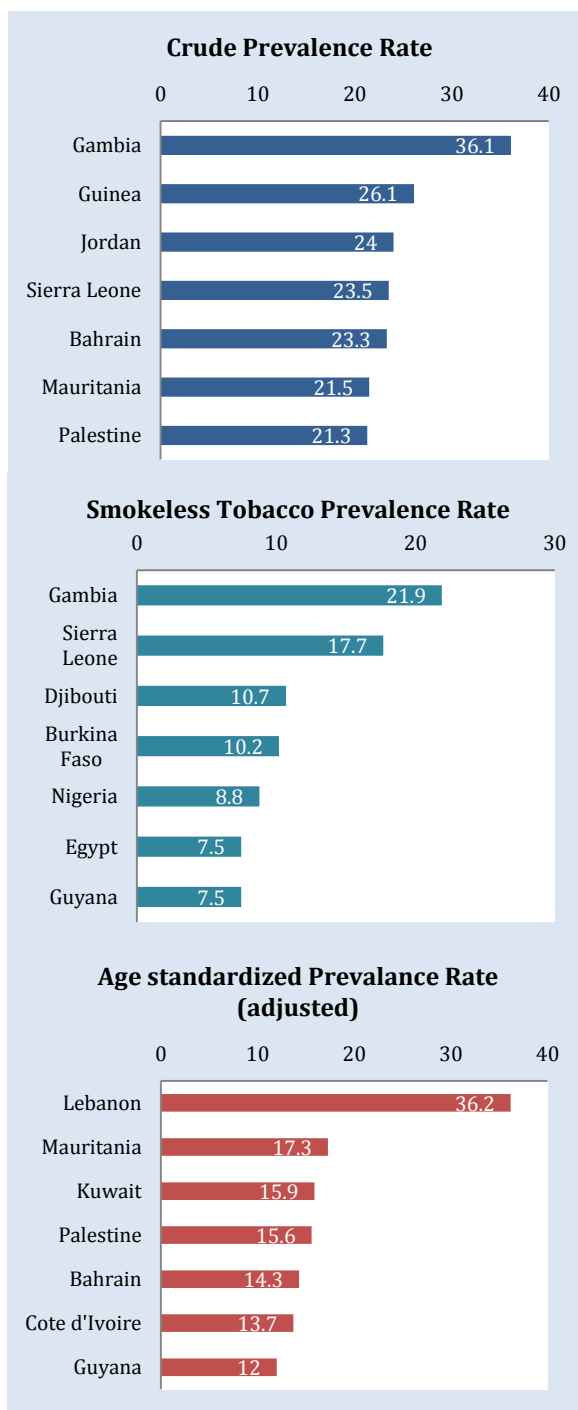
available OIC Member States, Gambia has the highest crude smoking prevalence rate (36.1%) as well as smokeless tobacco prevalence rate (21.9%) among youth. In terms of adjusted prevalence rate, Lebanon took the lead with a rate of 36.2%.

According to SESRIC (2016a), only 16% of OIC Member States have complete policies for monitoring tobacco use. Only 21.4% of OIC Member States have complete policies for protecting people from tobacco smoke. A mere 8.9% of OIC Member States have complete policies for the offer of help to quit tobacco use. It is, therefore, majority of OIC Member States need to review their existing policies in order to effectively reduce tobacco use among young and adult population.

**2.2.4.5 Technology**

While new technology tools (i.e. internet, smart phones, tablets) offer youth opportunities for learning, communicating, entertainment and skill growth; they also may lead to technology addiction which is the habitual compulsion to engage in using technology instead of addressing life’s problems (Young & de Abreu, 2010). The excessive use of these new technology tools may lead to addictions that resemble the behavior associated with drug and alcohol use (Byun et al., 2008).

**Figure 2.22: Top 7 OIC Member States in Youth using Tobacco Products (%)**



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on WHO report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2015

In OIC Member States few studies exist regarding youth addiction on technology. For instance, a study found that youth in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) spending 9.9 hours on average a day with media – more time than they sleep. The same study found that youth spend as much time on the internet as they do in the combined activities of reading magazines, newspapers and books (Walters et al., 2005). Another study revealed that 40% of the youth living in the UAE are addicted to their usage of technology and spend almost 10 hours a day on social and other media (Hashem & Smith, 2010).

The challenge posed by these new technology tools for OIC Member States lays in ensuring that youth are using these new technology tools responsibly and productively. This can be achieved through ensuring an effective partnerships among education institutions, parents and youth that will result in healthy technology related habits.

### 2.3.5 Policy Recommendations

1. Despite recording significant progress over the last two decades, in OIC Member States millions of youth starting from their childhood period still have to cope with undernutrition and malnutrition due to poverty, lack of access to food and protein as well as limited parental knowledge on feeding. Policy-makers in OIC Member States, therefore, need to intensify their efforts to reduce undernutrition and malnutrition practices through training parents as well as supplying them with necessary vitamins and proteins that are critical for the development of children and youth.
2. Nutritional problems of youth are not limited to malnutrition or undernutrition. Childhood and youth overweight conditions and obesity are on the rise across the globe especially in the developing world including OIC Member States. As there are serious health consequences for childhood and youth overweightness and obesity such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and many cancers, OIC Member States need to design effective policies with a view to promoting healthy diets, encouraging increased physical activity, and regulating food industries for the health of youth.
3. Limited availability of mental health services and professionals, insufficient knowledge of parents about the needs of youth, increasing numbers of conflicts and rising unemployment have intensified pressure on youth mental health in OIC Member States; in turn leading to increased numbers of youth who engage in substance abuse and suffer from addictions. In this regard, targeted policies, legislation and plans for reaching youth are needed to address the mental health problems of youth living in OIC Member States. Adequate resources

should be effectively allocated to improve mental health facilities, human capacity, and mental health services both in terms of quality and quantity.

4. HIV/AIDS is an important disease that affects youth and adult populations living in some OIC Member States especially those in the Sub-Sahara Africa region. (A total of 28 OIC Member States could not reduce the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS between 1990 and 2014 whereas 3 OIC Member States, Mali, Uganda, and Burkina Faso were able to record reductions in the prevalence rate when compared to their average values in 1990 (SESRIC, 2016b). In particular, youth have limited knowledge of reproductive health and preventive measures in many OIC Member States. Therefore, youth living in OIC Member States need to be trained well about measures and ways to protect their health against communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and syphilis.
5. In order to prevent youth from diseases and addictions as well as provide better health care to them, OIC Member States need to allocate more resources to health related investments from health facilities to national youth rehabilitation centres. It is also crucial to combat tobacco use through fully implementing the MPOWER (Monitor, Protect, Offer, Warn, Enforce, Raise) measures set by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to eradicate the use of tobacco products by youth. OIC Member States are recommended to take measures to reduce demand for tobacco, alcohol and drugs especially through promoting partnerships among public institutions, NGOs, and society. On the other hand, it is important to increase coordination between public institutions and NGOs that are active in rehabilitation of addicted youth with a view to improving the scope and effectiveness of rehabilitation services.
6. Raising awareness in the society about the issues that threaten the health of young people would increase the impact of policies. Organising large-scale public awareness campaigns, therefore, would be effective. In order to promote responsible use of technology among youth, it is also necessary to increase the level of cooperation among various national institutions. For instance, the Ministry of Education may need to closely work with the Ministry of Health while integrating courses on the adverse effects of technology addictions into education curriculums.

## 2.4 Political Challenges

OIC member states face considerable turbulence, made all the more critical by rapid growth and increasing challenges to security and social harmony. While youth embody significant potential in resolving crisis and furthering the growth and prosperity of their countries, a significant challenge remains in meaningfully engaging youth as stakeholders in building the future.

### 2.4.1 Political Engagement and Civil Participation

While political awareness has developed considerably throughout OIC member states, the role of regional popular movements and conflict has contributed to disengagement and cynicism towards governments and political institutions. This is especially problematic and prevalent among present-day youth; generating apathy and preventing youth from becoming actively involved in realizing their futures. In this respect, mistrust and low political engagement also act as impediments to the development of political culture, and reinforcement of democratic experience in countries.

On most measurements of conventional political participation, activity amongst youth appears low when compared to other age categories. This section will seek to identify ways to generate linkages between youth and governance, institutions, parties and civil society groups. This stems from the operative premise that youth are not fundamentally politically apathetic or indifferent. This is best seen in cultures of civil engagement worldwide, where levels of civil society engagement through volunteerism are consistently higher than political engagement; reflecting a will to participate but a lack of accessibility and relevancy. In this respect, enhanced civic engagement with deeper political roots is a feasible goal for all OIC Member States.

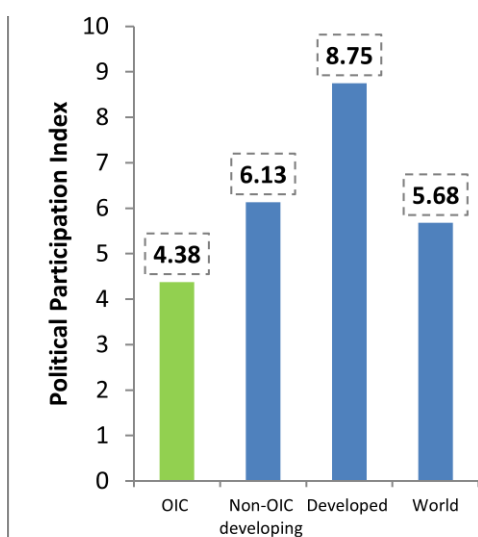
The critical question therefore, is how can youth segments of society become politically engaged and constructive civic participants? The apparent answer is through strategic institutional reform, leaps and improvements in political literacy and culture, and a significant shift in perception of youth and attitudes towards them by older societal strata. None of the ideas presented in this section, taken alone, will ensure that youth are better engaged in society and politics, but taken as an applied policy package they will go far in reinvigorating political engagement and youth citizenship.

Currently, OIC Member States lag significantly behind other country groupings, with rather low political participation. As a group, they recorded a low score of 4.38 in terms of political participation index (highest possible score is 10) while non-OIC developing countries score 6.13, developed countries 8.75, with the world average at 5.68. This is also similarly seen when assessing political and social integration. OIC Member States score a low 4.24 on the political and social integration index, whereas, non-OIC developing countries score 5.29, non-OIC developed countries score 7.84 and the world average is 5.09 (Figure 2.23, 2.24). Given data limitations, the presented statistics are not youth-specific. However, given that youth political participation conventionally falls behind average societal participation rates.

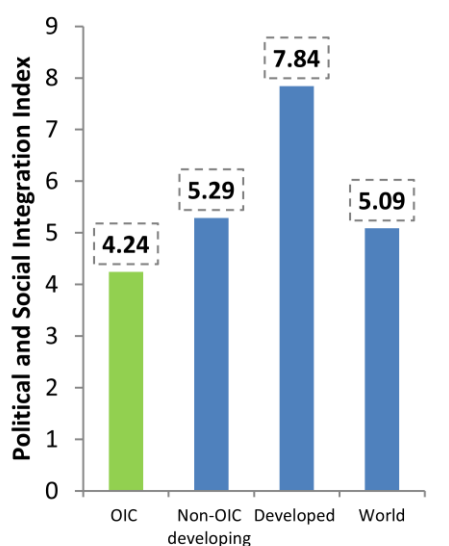


In this regard, there is a definitive need to address low participation and engagement, given the serious implications it holds on other areas such as state de-legitimization, marginally less effective governance and policy applications, reduced economic activity and entrepreneurship, as well as increased potential for radicalization and violent extremism.

**Figure 2.23: Political Participation**



**Figure 2.24: Political & Social Integration**



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation, BTI Index 2016.

### **2.4.1.1 Empowered Youth**

Continued youth disengagement from political participation has its roots in a lack of faith in the political process and system. If youth are to be re-engaged in governance and political participation, state actors must interact with youth in a manner that reaffirms the value of the political process. In this regard, short term actions by political actors and institutions include directly connecting and speaking to youth, listening to concerns, visiting centers of higher education, using technology to engage with youth opinion, and utilize the internet and social networks for establishing presence and ownership.

Moreover, governments should visibly signal action on youth concerns. In particular, this includes making youth a priority in their policy, providing inclusive accessibility in carrying out youth-related action, and most of all by fulfilling commitments to youth.

As active, participatory citizens, youth generate dynamism and optimism necessary for the well-being of all societies; particularly given the challenges confronting OIC Member States on other fronts. While political disengagement among youth is less than ideal, it

has potentially preserved disengaged youth from hardened cynicism and hopelessness as found in older population segments; presenting a significant opportunity for re-engaged youth. While youth may not reflect considerable experience, they are endowed with an innate acceptance of change and innovation. To that end, a lack of experience should not be problematized. Rather, youth inexperience is a result of the absence of comprehensive citizenship education readying them for political engagement and opportunities for engagement.

The calculus embodied in this reasoning is that youth inexperience presents an opportunity to present new mediums and practices of political engagement that relies on their innocence. In supporting environments, youth may hold the drive, idealism and absence of scepticism to instil significant dynamism into the development, growth and reform of OIC Member States.

#### 2.4.1.1.1 Voting Age

Perhaps foremost as a mechanism of reconnecting with youth is the lowering of the voting age. While this may complement other alternative methods of youth engagement, it may nonetheless be insufficient if taken alone.

While superficially, lowering the voting age may allow for an increased number of youth voters, the policy nonetheless responds to the consequences of youth disengagement, as measured through low election participation, rather than the root cause of the issue per se. Therefore, lowering the voting age without addressing other issues that prevent youth engagement and political participation will ultimately make less of a difference than required. By the same token, lowered voting ages in an environment conducive to civic engagement and political participation will yield greater impact than the former.

Root issues may include a lack of trust, or simply feeling that policy makers do not perceive youth segments of society with gravity; reflected in the number of public youth-related policies taken in periodic governance. Moreover, the general sentiment of inaccessibility to decision-makers further compounds this contention, in addition to the fact that few youth policy-makers exist as examples or focal points for engagement and empathy.

An alternative perspective suggests that lowering voting ages through reform of voting eligibility laws will change the means in which governance and policy-makers engage with youth; given increased youth representation in elections. While this may hold true to a certain extent, this disregards remaining youth populations able to vote yet unengaged in the political and civic spheres, suggesting that the issue remains tied to root causes of political and civic disengagement. Thus, the onus on engagement should be to encourage sustainable participation with a focus on the quality rather than the

quantity of participation, taking care to address the issues behind apathy and disinterest, rather than the symptoms.

Nonetheless, voting should comprise innovative methods of engagement as a minimum, through provision of secure voting mediums by mail, phone and perhaps online; as well as extending elections beyond one day. While the traditional voting conception is that those not willing to put in the effort to vote are not worthy of voting, providing more accessible voting is not a matter of making voting easier, but rather recognizing that voting has become more difficult for specific population groupings than others.

Significantly however, while providing more innovative and accessible voting mediums to youth may increase the number of votes, it will do little to instil in them a desire to politically engage. While the issue of youth willingness to engage can be bypassed altogether by simply enforcing mandatory voting, the policy would be rather extreme even if only applied to first time voters in the hopes of establishing a habit.

For that matter, mandatory voting would have to be assessed in light of potentially criminalizing significant cross-sections of the youth population, not to mention the potential for resentment and further disengagement when forced to choose between two political options that they do not support. Allowing for an abstention in this case would eliminate that specific problem, but would have a negative result on the actual goal of the election.

In spite of the challenges a low voting age presents, it nonetheless remains more conducive to forming habits of engagement before disenfranchisement or disengagement has taken root, with the potential result of higher political engagement all around. Even looking at cases of developing countries where low voting ages were put into effect, disengagement still occurred quickly for the reason that governance and decision-makers did not make any effort to change attitudinal behaviour towards youth (Barbosa et al, 2014). In this respect, a lower voting age without undertaking the reform of political and governmental bodies will not yield worthy returns in terms of sustainable political and civic engagement. Taken into effect with institutional, attitudinal change however holds significant potential for the same.

Finally, clarity must be shed on the nature of disengagement with regards to voting. Scientifically, very little evidence exists to support the argument that youth do not care for political engagement than other age groups (Dermody et al., 2010; Hay, 2007). Rather, youth are more likely to feel powerless about being able to affect change through voting. This perhaps stems from low political culture, or lack of awareness of mediums and platforms for engagement for change.

#### 2.4.1.1.2 Political Literacy and Citizenship Education

Political literacy can be understood as necessary knowledge and capacities that enable an individual for effective political participation. This includes a comprehensive understanding of the workings and functions of government, an awareness of key societal agenda items, and the ability for critical thinking; necessary to objectively assess and consider different platforms, views and agendas.

In many senses, the best setting for development of political literacy is the school. Children begin to address political concepts from an early age; as with the distribution of goods, and so on. Through strong focus and emphasis on democratic habits from an early age, youth may mature in a setting that emphasizes constructive civic and political engagement with significant benefits for governance and societal stability in the future.

In addition, such education would instil values of multiculturalism, tolerance, morality and justice. This includes an awareness of the nature of power and authority, the political implications of small decisions, challenges to democracies, the role of governance and civil society, and that society is naturally a complex organism of conflicting interests.

In this regard, educational institutions should take on the essential role of being 'sites of citizenship', providing development of critical thinking and practice of constructive engagement through respectful debate, adoption of class and school councils, and election of student representatives. Schools should also serve as sites for electoral registration of youth, as well as polling and voting centers to reinforce the link between education and the future of the student as a model citizen engaging positively with surrounding society. While providing the means for political engagement and participation through schools is one matter, there remains the need to ensure that low political participation is not a result of youth lacking eligibility to vote. Shifting the initiative for electoral registration to educational institutions is essential, particularly given the supporting environment to be found within schools and environments.

Registration in this sense may be enhanced through issuing informational material for teachers, and the use of parental volunteers to facilitate registration. The voluntarism element is problematic however, in that it cannot ensure that all schools are provided with volunteers to run registration, or that all teachers may support such an initiative. In this respect, there is much to be said for mandatory electoral registration in schools and universities, similar to the mandatory nature of a birth or marriage certificate. To minimize youth resentment, mandatory registration can implement once during varying periodic educational stages, if only to instill the habit of participation. This can be supplemented through online systems for registration to ensure ease of access.

There can be no doubt that citizenship education is essential to civic growth throughout OIC Member States, with potential to directly address societal challenges before they become an issue, including a broad range of social problems, potential for radicalism, habits of non-violent dialogue, and most importantly an awareness of the mechanisms for change, without which youth may feel inclined to use violence to bring about the change they desire.

To this end, citizenship education for increased political literacy should seriously consider reform of curricula, supporting social responsibility, and linking rights, duties and active citizenship by means of political participation. Without a dedicated politics or social studies class, inclusion of citizenship classes should be made a priority, dedicated to challenging the extremely low levels of political literacy, and to engage youth in the feeling that they are stakeholders in their societies and communities, while coming to terms with their duty for civic engagement.

A distinction must be made however, between teaching civil engagement, civic engagement, and political literacy. Often, education in civil engagement is hoped to grow into considerable civic engagement, but does not address issues of political engagement and participation, beyond a repeated hope that civic activism may evolve or change into political activism. To date, no evidence exists linking education for civil engagement to increased political engagement. This can only emphasize the essential role for complementary political literacy within such educational settings.

The benefits of citizenship education are well founded however, proven to have long-term effects on social and political engagement and providing needed skills across disciplines and workplaces, (Circle, 2013). Youth with civic knowledge are clearly linked to ongoing and planned political engagement (Schulz, 2010). Civic awareness and knowledge is primarily developed through addressing and collectively discussing key societal issues, aiding in the development of critical thinking, collaboration and rhetoric.

### **2.4.1.1.3 Higher Education**

While youth political engagement continues to be a necessary element of development and growth planning throughout OIC Member States, significant concern is warranted over decreasing youth political and civic participation. As highlighted previously, in spite of marginalization of youth policy issues and considerable employment challenges, youth are not indifferent to politics but rather lack accessibility matching their preferred forms of political and civic engagement.

In choosing alternative forms of political engagement over traditional participation, youth are in fact responsible for broadening the range of political engagement and expression. While this may be inherently positive, the growing distance between youth

and political establishments has negatively affected the process of political socialization, (Flanagan et al. 2012). To offset this gap, higher education institutions have become more critical than before in shaping and defining public attitudes to civic and political engagement.

Moreover, the link between political literacy education towards enhancing political and civil engagement is statistically established through rigorous scientific study, (Tonge, Mycock and Jeffrey, 2012; Whiteley, 2012). Citizenship education in this context is critical to linking youth to political establishments, and facilitating healthier, engaged populations. As highlighted earlier, it would establish political literacy by providing comprehension of political concepts; local, national, regional and international processes and institutions; develop critical thinking and public speaking, both essential to civic and political engagement, and grow sought values perceived as necessary throughout OIC Member States.

Centers of higher education are an essential capstone to an education-long process of socialization. Given the potential for universities and colleges to play a critical role in this regard, initiatives should not be limited to civic and community service or token activism. Rather, a formal educational course would be ideal given disparities of political literacy across disciplines even at tertiary education stages. Efforts may include coordination of civic engagement internships and community-gearred projects and opportunities along with formal study in the form of university coalitions. This would require recognition of universities in their essential roles as centers for practical knowledge, as well as contribution to society and the common good.

To this end, universities should begin by becoming more engaged in broadening their social footprints and formally recognizing student civic engagement as part of their educational journeys. It must be said that the current absence of formal citizenship education at all levels of educational achievement is a critical lost opportunity.

Ultimately, citizenship should come to be identified as a valuable societal resource and a necessary skill to bring make the efforts of other competencies both relevant and guided. Therefore, political and civic engagement should be given priority and advocated for; with recognition for completion of citizenship programs, and capable supported staff to instruct them. To achieve this, emphasis must be made on leadership and organization of engagement, and linked to deep, insightful debate and discussion on larger contexts for specific actions.

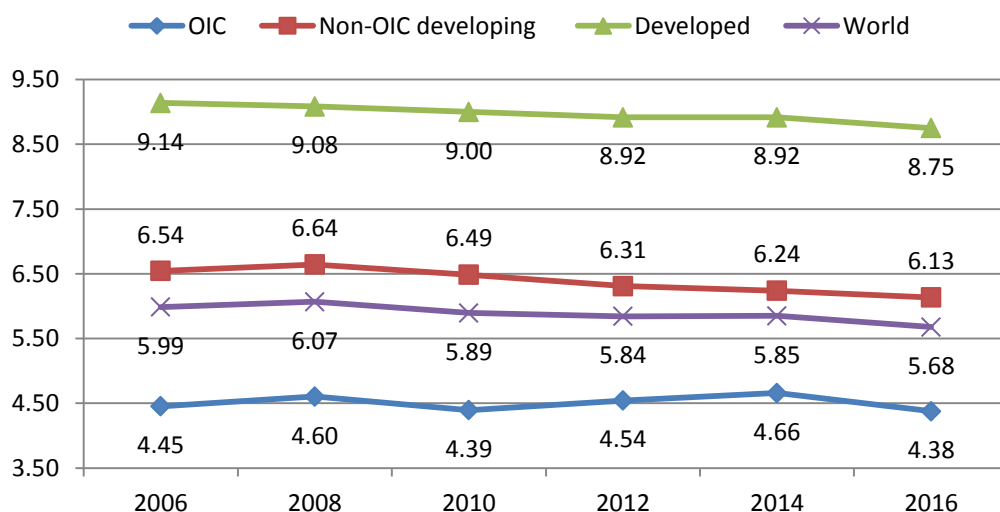
#### **2.4.1.1.4 Youth Disengagement**

There is a global trend suggesting a growing divide between a deepening disconnect between citizens and democratic politics and institutions (Norris, 2011). As reflected in

Figure 2.25, the OIC in particular has trailed behind other country groupings consistently in terms of political participation, well below other averages from the years 2006 to 2016.

In situations of such disconnect, and declining political participation; youth population segments traditionally feature the lowest levels of participation. This is interesting given that youth will engage in alternative means of engagement such as protests and rallies. The lack of youth engagement with governance and elections however only serves to reinforce the perception that youth are uninterested in politics. Moreover, there is a critical generational gap between the more numerous older population segments and youth populations, leading policy makers and government to prioritize older population interests at the cost of youth interests, with considerable consequences for existing policy disparity and socioeconomic inequality.

**Figure 2.25: Political Participation Trends Across Country Groups**



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on BTI Transformation Index 2016.

In OIC Member States, unique circumstances come together to ensure low civic engagement and political participation. With a strong emphasis on the priority of the collective over the individual, youth may be perceived as social radicals in attempting to bring about changes to the status quo. More critically, in situations where youth are unable to provide for themselves economically, politics often becomes a secondary consideration. Unemployment, high costs of housing and dowry are but one example of obstacles to youths' self-actualization, necessary steps to engaging with society as an involved stakeholder. Moreover, in spite of a measure of interest in the political process, youth may lack knowledge necessary for effective participation or feel that they cannot individually have an effect on decision-making processes. The loss of faith in political

participation is destructive to any culture of political and civic engagement, with repercussions of delegitimization of authority, and susceptibility to political or ideological radicalism. To this end, there is a need for youth to feel that the political process may enable their wishes and goals, in the absence of which the drive to vote is reduced to choosing between one or more disliked choices.

While introducing mandatory voting for first time voters is a common suggestion, this once again falls into the pitfall of addressing the symptoms of the challenge rather than the cause. To this end, youth distrust of governments and deep scepticism that expressions of the need for youth to engage and participate are not genuine will require efforts by the mistrusted to reverse this perception. This should be done primarily through developing action-oriented platforms and establishing a track record of serious consideration and potential implementation of their recommendations and ideas. Other requisite initiatives would include direct communication with youth, effective use of social media, and defining clear channels for interaction and engagement.

While compulsory voting may increase voting turnout, it would not necessarily develop engagement with the process per se. With that said, it is worth bearing in mind that youth disengagement and skepticism is not hardened and permanent; but rather dependent on treatment and their perception of being valued rather than isolated or ignored. Such key variables hold the potential to shift political commitment to political participation.

Prior to elections, governance and parties should organize regular youth policy forums throughout schools, universities and community centers with the purpose of listening and communicating with youth. Such forums can exist on local and national levels to maximize impact, attempting to generate engaging and interesting discussion of key contentions for youth. Moreover, their reach can be enhanced through transparent use of familiar technology, signalling a policy shift to youth that their views and engagement are valued and worthy. It is necessary to realize that while increasing numbers of politically engaged population segments is necessary, the issue of political culture and socialization is far more critical. Given that youth are less likely to formally involve themselves in civic or political groups, or interest and lobby groups, they lack the essential infrastructure to facilitate their engagement. As a consequence, interaction between policy makers and youth is minimized, leading to the perception of disinterest in youth and a negative view of political engagement as a whole.



### **2.4.1.2 Inclusive Practices**

#### **2.4.1.2.1 Political Parties**

Political party structures globally witness increased difficulty in attracting party members, facing significant challenges in engaging youth given an aversion to traditional organizational structures and hierarchical organizations, (Heidar, 2006). The exact numbers of this phenomenon in OIC Member States are difficult to pin-point given the intricacies of membership conditions and absence of reliable records, but the trend is one of a general decline.

While developed countries feature nominally accessible parties aiming to attract diverse opinions and viewpoints, developing countries often feature more elitist ideologically focused parties that appeal to specific electorates, at the cost of the many. Given that youth are more attracted to alternative forms of non-institutionalized political engagement such as protests, charities and network driven collective action, political institutions and parties should rethink their mandates and the role of their membership if they wish to engage youth further. The youth preference for alternative forms of political engagement can be summarized in that youth prefer action-oriented politics where results are tangible, observable and can serve as a means of validation for the individual as they work towards bettering their society.

Youth often hold the perception that political parties are distanced, and do not prioritize unity or the general well-being in their policies and approaches to key social issues. Moreover, youth are keenly aware that their concerns are usually ignored or paid little attention by political parties and establishments both prior to and after elections. The end outcome of this is a grievous divide between political establishments and youth populations, even in spite of youth branches of such parties. Even in circumstances where youth party bodies exist, they are often not directly linked to internal party deliberations with restrictive membership criteria. While such youth bodies benefit from independence in terms of event organization and political positioning, they nonetheless remain subject to the central political body in terms of budget, legitimacy and access.

In the unusual circumstances where youth are directly engaged in party policy formation, they nonetheless face restrictions. There is a risk of losing older votes should upsetting youth policy proposals come into effect. As a consequence, youth are often simply consulted on youth-specific issues rather than being engaged directly with general policy and decision making.

#### **2.4.1.2.2 New Approaches**

While there can only be friction in political parties over addressing the role and desires of youth membership, their role should be perceived as a critical investment in

countering citizen apathy and disenfranchisement. Thus, inclusion represents presenting requisite chances for active civic and political participation. To reach this, there is a need to reappraise conditions and roles of youth within such organizations, as well as the institutional linkages joining traditional parties and their youth bodies.

Moreover, youth party bodies should not only be seen as mechanisms for enlistment, or training grounds for precise roles within the larger party; as this would consistently impose a drain on effective and promising leadership within the youth party body. Moreover, drawing youth party body leadership away into the central party for specific roles often sets them in settings where their marginally less experience restricts their involvement in policy making and decision making.

To that end, there is a need for political party youth bodies to have separate budgetary autonomy, ensuring they are able to effectively and independently gain experience, allowing for stronger assertions and influence on the main party body; ultimately paving the way for elimination of policy segregation.

In this context however, organizational reform of political party structures is by no means enough to change youth political engagement on its own. When youth are driven to engage in political and civic circles, they often have a specific issue in mind; suggesting an inclination to one-issue politics which parties cannot accommodate for without difficulty. Furthermore, party atmospheres often reflect a sense of familiarity and exclusivity which would act as an inhibitor to engaged youth who are not interested in traditional forms of political and civic engagement.

As such, youth should be better engaged and included in political parties by directing them to be active on issues they joined for, to begin with. In line with such initiative, political parties should reclaim specific one-issue narratives and enhance their visibility, accessibility and engagement with youth in their respective localities. Through strategic engagement with youth, political bodies stand to become relevant once more, while allowing for the socialization of political literacy and culture in youth populations throughout society.

#### **2.4.1.2.3 Social Mobility and Youth Inclusion**

OIC country societies are experiencing dynamic and rapid change with direct implications for their youth populations, where youth are specifically challenged by limited opportunities for social mobility and restrictions on full inclusion in social, cultural, economic and political life. In many cases, these circumstances lead to social turmoil and political unrest.

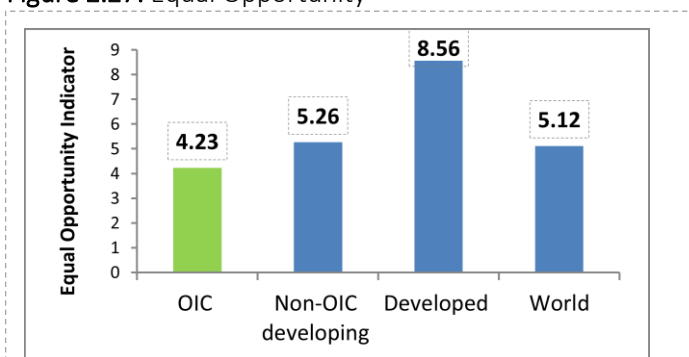
Figure 2.26: The Relationship between Income Inequality and Social Mobility



Source: Greenstone et al. (2013).

This section highlights some social issues related to youth in OIC Member States. Social mobility is the movement of people between social strata in a society. Social mobility can be evaluated using the indicators of education, occupational, wage and family income mobility; however, these are based on highly specialized datasets, not available for OIC Member States. Social mobility is strongly correlated with inequality. Countries suffering from higher income inequality tend to have lower social mobility as Figure 2.26 reveals. OECD (2011) states that rising income inequality “can stifle upward social mobility, making it harder for talented and hard-working people to get the rewards they deserve”.

Figure 2.27: Equal Opportunity



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on BTI Transformation Index 2016. Data available for a total of 128 countries of which 47 are OIC Member States

As shown in Figure 2.27, OIC Member States, as a group, suffer from a serious inequality problem with people being denied access to equal opportunity. The figure shows that OIC Member States fare worse than all other country groups with regards to equal opportunity. OIC Member States score a mediocre

4.2 on the equal opportunity scale (ten being the highest score possible) whereas non-OIC developing countries score 5.3, developed countries score 8.6; with the world average at 5.1. Without tackling the inequality problem in OIC Member States, it will be very difficult to increase social mobility. However, OIC Member States should take care that policy measures taken to reduce inequality and increase social mobility do not have a negative impact on efficiency and long-term growth.

What can be done to improve social mobility in OIC Member States? Major factors that determine individual success include inheritable abilities as well as environmental characteristics. Given the direct linkages between human capital development and labour productivity growth, providing equal opportunities for educational achievement is an important element in promoting social mobility in OIC Member States.

Empirical studies of mobility suggest that the transmission of economic status across generations is higher in non-OIC developing countries than in developed countries (e.g., Solon, 2002). This indicates that social mobility in a country will increase with economic development and improvement of the educational system. Evidence from the Middle East, however, suggests that this may not always be the case. Binzel (2011) documents profound changes in intergenerational educational and economic mobility in Egypt by providing quantitative, microeconomic evidence for a decline in social mobility among well-educated youth in Egypt.

A plausible explanation for increased educational attainment but lower social mobility across the Middle East would be the improper functioning of the labour market. Labour markets in the Middle East are characterized by a dominant public sector and highly regulated private sector that limits the ability of the labour market to accommodate new talents and utilize their skills (Binzel, 2011). When increased educational achievement does not translate to corresponding economic outcomes, new generations will be bound by an environment determined by parental background. It should not therefore come as a surprise for youth to reflect dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement in some form when well-educated youth do not experience a considerable change in their social status despite significant investments in education.

In order to improve equality and social mobility, actions should be taken not only during transitions from school to work, but efforts should be initiated right in the early years of an individual life and followed up throughout his/her life. Literature suggests that children from poorer settings who have shown early signs of high ability tend to fall back relative to more advantaged children who have not performed so well (Feinstein, 2003). Poorer children generally have lower birth weight, poorer health and behavioural conditions, as well as lower personal, social and emotional development. Therefore, early intervention is crucial in ensuring equal opportunities for fulfilling people's true potentials.

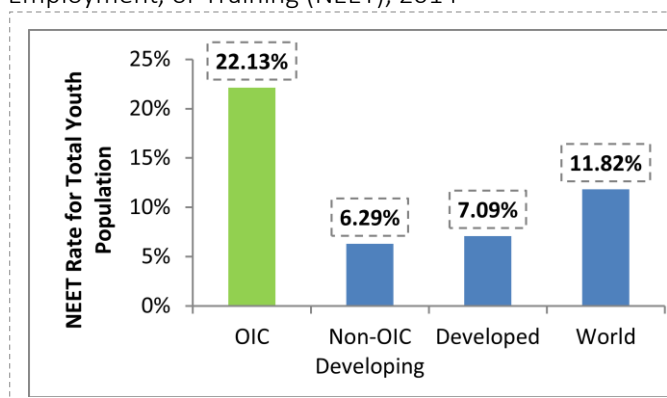
During the school years, children develop the skills, qualifications and aspirations that are crucial in determining their future life paths. There are large gaps to emerge and widen in educational attainment and achievements of children from diverse background during this period. During transition to work, many young people are failing to achieve their potential, with some falling out of education, employment and training altogether. Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) can experience long-term negative effects in their social status. In the labour market, people tend to progress to better jobs with better earnings as they become more experienced. However, some young adults, particularly the lower skilled, have little chance to progress and are given few second chances to succeed through learning new skills. Particularly women and youth with inferior skills face particular challenge in finding a job or getting competitive salaries over their working life.

In this perspective, in order to improve social mobility in OIC Member States, a comprehensive approach should be developed that encompasses the critical stages of individual development from early childhood care to schooling and from higher education to transition to work and progress in the labour market. This requires attention and action from all relevant stakeholders. Governments of OIC Member States should ensure equal access to opportunities, civil society organizations should support disadvantaged people to succeed, educational institutions should consider the diverse background of students in their efforts to acquire quality education and labour market actors should be flexible in accommodating those who struggle to adapt to working environments.

### 2.4.1.2.4 Inclusion of Youth in Society

Social inclusion is a process in which individuals or entire communities gain the opportunities and resources necessary to fully participate in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their societies. While the majority of the literature focuses on the economic dimension of youth inclusion, we strongly believe that this single dimensional focus is not

**Figure 2.28(a):** Youth who are not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), 2014



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on World Bank using the most recent data up to year 2014. Data available for a total of 45 countries of which 10 are OIC member states (2014)

valid for OIC Member States, and instead will consider social inclusion of youth through both economic and political dimensions.

From the economic dimension, the best protective measure against youth exclusion is to maximize youth participation in education and the labour force, and to further maximize youth opportunity in fulfilling their aspirations to acquire

a home and establish a family. The reality remains however, that a growing percentage of youth in OIC Member States are not able to fulfil those aspirations.

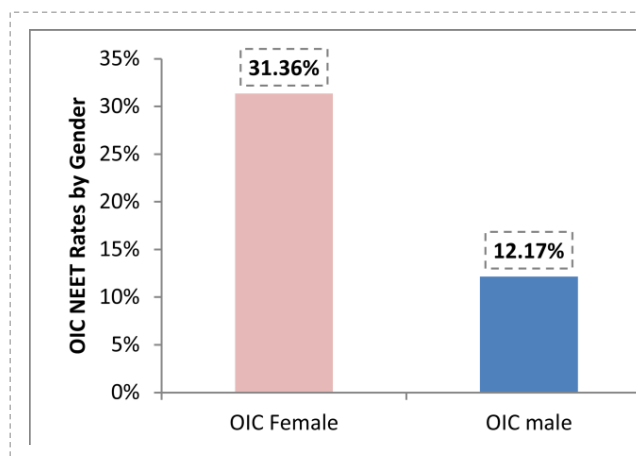
The reason for this can be primarily attributed to the fact that 22.1% of youth in OIC Member States are excluded from education, employment and training as shown in Figure 2.27(a). The NEET rate (Youth who are not in education, employment and training) for OIC Member States is higher than that observed in non-OIC developing countries (6.3%), developed countries (7.1%) and the world (11.8%).

Youth, however, are not a homogeneous group. Within youth ranks there are groups that are highly vulnerable and subject to social exclusion such as women. As Figure 2.28(b) reveals the NEET rate for young women in OIC Member States (31.4%) is more than double that of young men (12.2%).

Another youth group that is vulnerable and subject to exclusion is that of youth living in rural areas. The percentage of OIC population living in rural areas is 45.9 (SESRIC staff calculation 2013 based on World Bank) where youth in rural areas experience higher levels of poverty, and lesser access to: technology and telecommunication infrastructure, education opportunities, and the labour market.

Overall, as shown previously in Figure 2.23, political participation in OIC Member States is relatively weak. As a group, they recorded a low score of 4.38 according to a political participation index (highest possible score is 10) while non-OIC developing countries score 6.13, developed countries 8.75, with the world average at 5.68. The same fact can

**Figure 2.28(b):** OIC Youth NEET by Gender, 2016



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on World Bank using the most recent data up to year 2012. Data available for a total of 45 countries of which 10 are OIC member states (2014)

also be seen when assessing political and social integration. OIC Member States score a low of 4.24 on the political and social integration index, whereas non-OIC developing countries score 5.29, non-OIC developed countries score 7.84, with the world averaging 5.09 (Figure 2.24).

The economic and political dimensions of youth inclusion in society are highly inter-linked. Governments are, therefore, advised to recognize the importance of adopting a multi-dimensional approach to addressing the issue of youth inclusion in society. On the economic front, OIC Member States need to improve youth access to employment, education and training. In particular; youth without university degrees and who are not in education, employment, or training must be given access to programs tailored to their needs and to the needs of the labour market. On the political front, new policies and initiatives should be taken and geared towards enabling greater youth participation in political and socio-economic decisions with a view to rebuilding trust between youth and the public institutions. Furthermore, the challenge of youth inclusion in society should not be left to the government alone. The government, private sector, civil society and youth themselves should work as partners with regards to issues related to youth inclusion in society.

### **2.4.2 Extremism and Conflict**

There can be no doubt that youth populations are significantly more susceptible to the dangers of radicalization and the consequences of violent extremism. In spite of their dynamic and adaptable nature, youth today seek out stability, success and meaningfulness to their lives, particularly when confronted with rapidly changing lifestyles, and an occasionally problematic dichotomy between traditional values and culture and conditions of modern life. In many cases, radicalism is the simplest answer to a complex equation. To this end, public policy should choose to engage with root causes that facilitate radicalization and disenchantment pathways; not only for security concerns, but to fully engage their potential and as insurance against youth fragility.

The overwhelming majority of people engaged in radicalism and violent extremism happen to be youth. This is of high relevance to the OIC Member States since their demographic structure is younger than the rest of the world. The share of OIC Member States in total world youth population is in steady increase in contrast to non-OIC developing countries and the developed world. In 1990, 19.9% of the world's youth lived in OIC Member States, but this percentage increased to 26.7% in 2015 and is projected to reach 30.9% by 2030. Theoretically speaking, the youth bulge should carry a lot of potential to OIC Member States in terms of economic development; yet, it also carries a lot of threat. The youth bulge when associated with widespread unemployment carries the risk of serving as a radicalizing element for youth which is exactly the case in many OIC Member States. Unemployment of youth in OIC Member

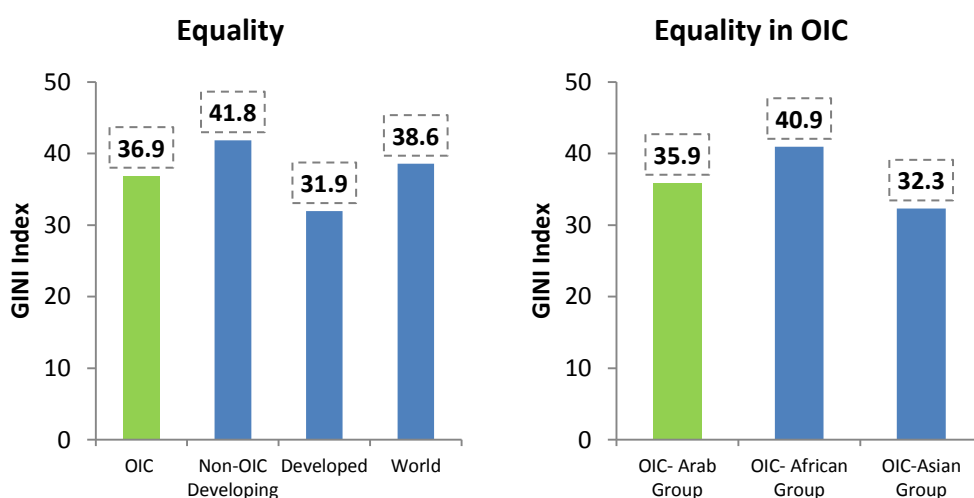
States is more than 16% and also well above the averages of non-OIC developing and developed countries. Youth who cannot find decent jobs and as a result cannot get married- end up excluded from the economy and society alike. This causes tremendous frustration to youth and without the availability of conduits to channel this frustration, a portion of those youth end up being driven down the path of radicalism and violent extremism believing that it is the only solution to implement change. Also, terrorist organizations use the fact of youth unemployment as part of their narratives in order to attract followers and in some cases utilize the promise of a job as part of their recruitment campaigns.

With upheaval felt in different OIC country regions, the consequences of conflict and displacement will persist for a significant period of time as the generational effects of un-education, absence of self-actualization and uprooted social support structures affect youth throughout OIC Member States. To that end, there is a need to understand the root causes behind such negative factors for instability and unfulfilled potential.

#### 2.4.2.1 Socioeconomic Challenges

While traditional structural poverty and health related challenges are predominantly found throughout the literature, less attention is given to challenges that draw primarily on perception. As such, while youth may not live in conditions of absolute deprivation, perceptions of economic inequality or corruption may be equally damaging to youth civic engagement, state legitimacy and even potentially radicalizing.

Figure 2.29: Equality (income distribution)



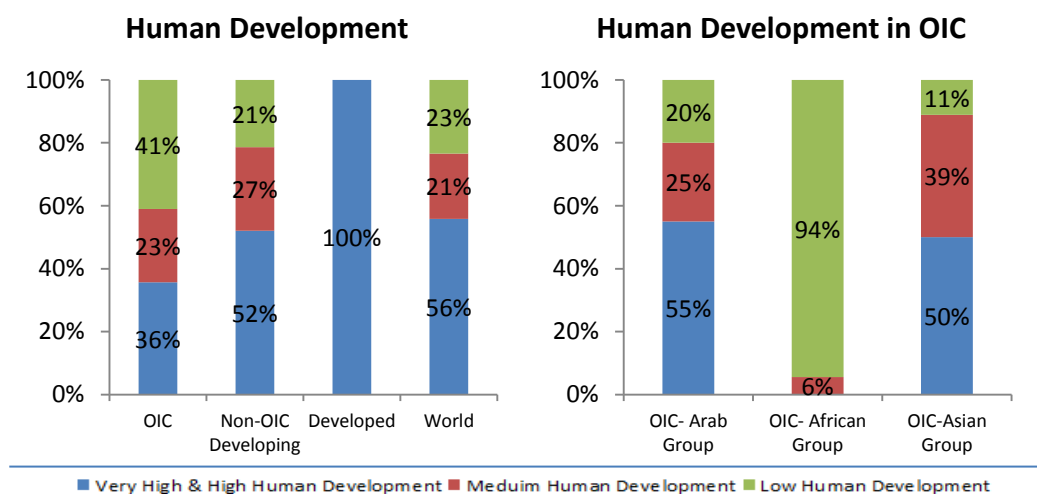
Source: SESRIC Staff Calculations based on World bank WDI database, latest available data since 2005



As reflected in Figure 2.29, equality as measured through income disparity is significantly high for other country groups. Income inequality is closely linked to the issues of social mobility, corruption, and self-actualization; all critical contentions to youth populations seeking to make the best of their circumstances.

To further reinforce the case that while challenges may be development-related in nature, youth grievances and disenfranchisement are not primarily associated with economic reasons; consider the human development levels found throughout OIC Member States. According to the Human Development Index, OIC Member States perform poorly with 41% of OIC Member States recording low human development levels, 23% recording medium human development levels and only 36% recording very high or high human development levels. The performance of the OIC Member States in human development compares poorly to other country groups (Figure 2.30). When focusing on the OIC Arab country group compared to the OIC African country group, it can be observed that that the majority of countries in the Arab group (55%) actually enjoy very high or high levels of human development, in spite of significant levels of conflict, radicalism and violent extremism.

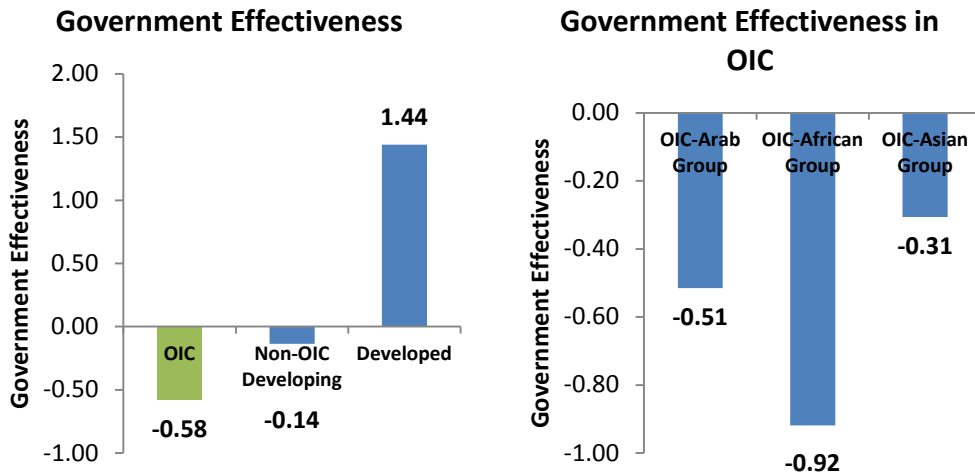
**Figure 2.30: Human development**



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculations based on the Human Development Index, 2015

Equally critical to youth perception, with major effects on potential radicalization and civic engagement are the issues of government ineffectiveness and corruption. Such perceptions directly affect state legitimacy, and consequently the ability of the state to project law, order and authority, and allow for easier radicalization of disaffected youth populations.

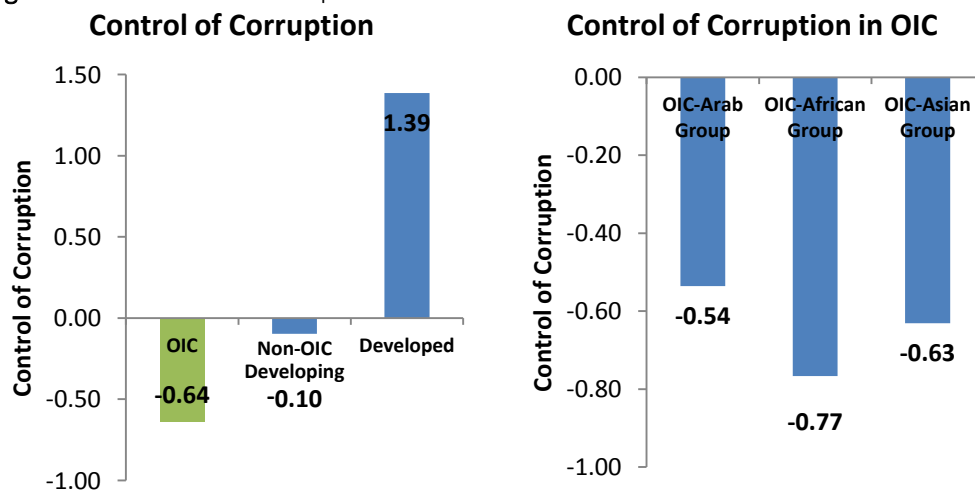
Figure 2.31: Government Effectiveness



Source: SESRIC Staff calculations based on the World Wide Governance Indicator, 2016

Figure 2.32 shows control of corruption which is part of the World Wide Governance Indicator. Control of corruption scores captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. Estimates of control of corruption ranges from -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong governance performance). As the figure illustrates, perception of corruption is very high in OIC Member States greatly exceeding those in other country groups. This shows that the perception of corruption in OIC counties is a serious issue that can no longer be ignored.

Figure 2.32: Control of Corruption



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on the World Wide Governance Indicator, 2016 Update

### 2.4.2.2 Online Radicalization

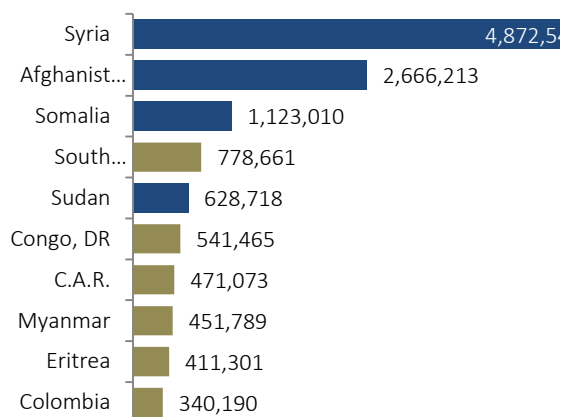
Given relative youth disengagement and disenfranchisement throughout the OIC country region, a difficult challenge is posed in preventing and countering the growing threat of online radicalization and recruitment. The phenomenon is difficult to track and counter, building on base sympathies among youth. As a process, it then engages them in discussions and debates on core values and concepts, and elicits progression from empathy to sympathy, followed by emotional and material support for radical groups and their agendas. That the internet can be an effective and covert platform for training and coordination makes the concern all the more dangerous. To this end, preventing online radicalization requires educational curriculum specifically designed to provide immunity against such methods and effective counter-narrative campaigns aimed at youth in society to provide alternatives, counter-arguments and key rationales that may reduce or prevent effectiveness of online radicalization.

One experience worthy of note is the Saudi Arabian engagement with online radicalization, and engagement with youth and websites that support extremist thought. This was done from the base premise that the internet presents one of the most important fronts for extremist groups to spread their ideology to youth (Ansary, 2008). In this light, the Saudi government launched the al-Sakinah Campaign, to provide counter-narratives to online extremist dialogue through volunteer scholars and imams by engaging with radical members of extremist domains. The al-Sakinah campaign makes use of over 60 academics, scholars, psychologists and social science experts who engage with extremists through the internet by means of infiltration, targeting individuals who are sympathetic to or support extremist beliefs, yet have not committed terrorist acts. In one presented case, over nearly 54,000 hours of interaction, a total of 972 online subjects were alleged to have reverted from their extremist ideologies (Ansary, 2008).

While modest efforts may not entirely solve or prevent online recruitment or radicalization, the absence of such initiatives would essentially allow uncontested access to vulnerable youths; with potential for social and political instability. In this respect, the investments required for such initiatives are more than worthy of their effects.

### 2.4.2.3 Youth Migration and Displacement

While there are no studies that document youth migration throughout OIC Member States, and in spite of relatively sparse literature on migration; a UN World Youth Report is clear in asserting that: "*Young migrants constitute a relatively large proportion of the overall migrant population.*" To this end, data on total migration and displacement is nonetheless indicative of approximate youth related statistics.

**2.33: Major Sources Countries of Refugees (2015)**

Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on UNHCR, 2015 and World Bank Data

SESRIC (2013a) estimates the number of OIC international emigrants to reach 60 million in 2015. This is a significant number and can be explained by the “Push – Pull – Facilitation” model proposed by SESRIC (2014a). Push factors are factors driving people out of their country of origin, pull factors are factors attracting people to the country of destination, and facilitation factors are factors

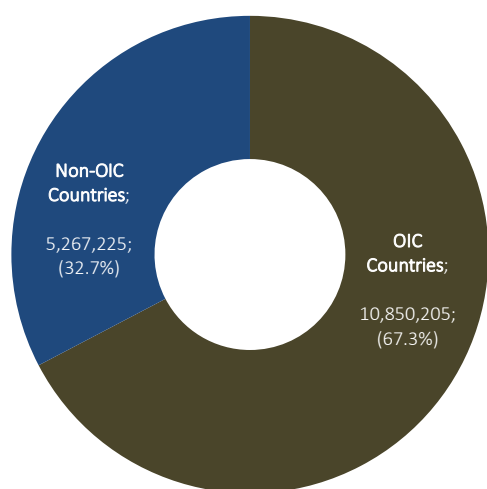
facilitating the immigration process from the country of origin to the country of destination. One of the major push factors is the lack of inclusion of OIC youth in society. Other push factors include: low wages, unemployment and underemployment, poor working conditions, political instability (such as civil wars in Syria, Iraq, South & West Sudan, Afghanistan, etc.), poor governance, lack of freedom, discrimination in appointments, corruption, and poverty. Pull factors include: higher income, better working conditions, better employment prospects, higher living standards, freedom, and political stability. Facilitation factors include: globalization which has increased people mobility across country boundaries, internationalizations of professions and professional markets which has also led to an increase in the level of people mobility and advances in information and communication technology. Advances in information and communication technology (ICT) affect youth more than the general population due to higher adoption of ICT by youth. ICT provides easy access to information about employment opportunities abroad and easy access to cheap communications (i.e. Skype, WhatsApp, Viber, etc.). Also social networks (such as Facebook) in particular are playing an important role in shaping the migration process of youth by facilitating their immigration to locations where members of their network reside.

The effects of migration, whether voluntary or forced, are complex and difficult to quantify, and subject to controversy. Numerous articles claim that immigration has positive effects on sending countries (see Commander et al. 2004, Docquier & Rapoport 2012, and Gibson & McKenzie 2011). This is based on the premise that immigration is accompanied by remittances to the sending country that serves as a boost to the economy, increased trade as a result of diaspora activities, expertise and know how

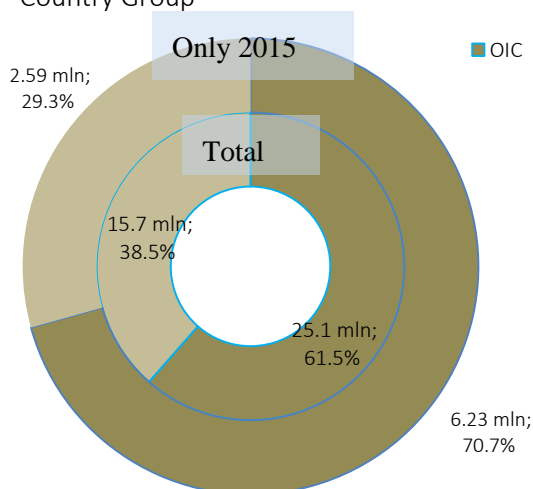
brought by returning emigrants, and a positive effect on human capital accumulation due to people striving to achieve high educational levels and professionalism with the hope of emigrating. The above literature about the benefits of immigration for sending countries can be best described as being theoretical, based on static partial equilibrium analysis or anecdotal evidence. On the other hand, youth left behind by migrating parents are deeply affected by immigration. The majority of OIC Member States have traditional and conservative values where the family serves as the corner stone of society. The role of guiding youth is typically performed by families and the absence of one of the parents has serious consequences on the social, psychological and emotional development of youth and on their transition to adulthood. Furthermore, youth left behind migrating parents have to assume responsibilities previously assumed by their parents. This is especially true for elder sons and daughters and such added responsibilities have the potential to affect academic performance of youth and in extreme cases lead to their exit from schooling.

As reflected in figures 2.34 and 2.35, the OIC country group bears the full force of the present-day refugee and IDP crisis. As of 2015, 67.3% of all refugees worldwide originated from an OIC member country. Furthermore, 61.5% of all Internally Displaced Persons are to be found in OIC Member States. This necessitates serious reflection about the role of the state in projecting stability, and ensuring livelihoods, economic reintegration and social support for youth who are among the most deeply affected population segments in this regard. Moreover, while the brain drain challenge is not new to OIC Member States, the precedent set by such large scale upheaval and displacement can

**Figure 2.34:** Refugee Share by Country Group



**Figure 2.35:** Internal Displacement Share by Country Group



Source: SESRIC Staff Calculation based on UNHCR, 2015 and World Bank Data

only promote the need for brain migration in search of stability, with devastating effects on economies, and scientific capital of OIC Member States.

Addressing the effects of migration on youth requires OIC Member States to consider the push and pull factors described earlier in this section. Of course migration is a fact of life throughout human history and will continue. Thus for youth who have already migrated or will migrate, OIC Member States need to create modalities through which emigrants can be involved in their country's development while they are abroad. In this regard three mechanisms stand out: First, OIC Member States need to establish diaspora networks with the objective of securing effective communications and exchange of ideas between emigrants and their peers back home, this in turn, will ensure that emigrants contribute to the economic and social development of their home countries. Second, OIC Member States need to encourage the transfer of knowledge and expertise possessed by emigrants. Third, OIC Member States need to develop trade associations with participation from emigrants and their counterparts in the home country. The objective of these trade associations is to maximize the benefits of having a well-connected diaspora on trade and business opportunities for the home country. As for the youth that have been left behind by migrating parents, OIC Member States need to identify these youth as "*at risk and vulnerable group*" and develop programs targeting them at both the school level and community level with the objective of providing them guidance and ensuring their academic success.

### 2.4.3 Policy Recommendations

1. Institute election registration in all schools and universities;
2. Mandate schools to ensure that all eligible students are supported with opportunities to register to vote in their school;
3. Use schools as polling centers, which should be encouraged to remain open so youth can see transparency and democracy at work;
4. Appoint youth advisory panels for consultancy on specific issues such as education, employment and justice;
5. Institute a social reward scheme to facilitate youth citizenship engagement;
6. Ensure provision of effective citizenship education;
7. Adopt country wide referendums to lower the voting age to 16 or 18, if higher;
8. Provide annual legislative/parliamentary and local municipal policy forums to be held throughout schools, universities and communities;
9. Form youth parliaments, assemblies and bodies, empowered with the ability to call a non-binding referendum on a matter of their choosing;
10. Form an inquiry into the reasons and resolution for absence of female youth in local and national politics;

11. Found a joint-ministerial standing committee on citizenship education to follow-up on implementation and performance of citizenship education across schools and universities;
12. Mandate all political parties to review conditions of youth membership, and the restructuring of political bodies to provide more autonomy, influence and engagement to political party youth wings;
13. Form a student representative governing body in all schools and universities, with periodic elections;
14. Organize of biannual issue-specific youth advisory panels on national, regional and local levels consisting only of youth;
15. Form of a New Media Committee under the executive branch to explore the best online means for engaging with youth who seek to be involved in constructive citizenship;
16. Introduce a mandated equality impact measure criteria to take note of the impact of policy on youth;
17. Ministries of Family, Education, Justice and the executive branch should follow and measure progress on set goals for youth citizenship and engagement by means of survey;
18. For the purpose of policy cohesion and promoting nation-wide youth engagement, all local governance bodies should be mandated with developing strategies and plans of action for developing and promoting youth citizenship platforms and opportunities;
19. Introduce one, highly publicized youth award for outstanding youth citizenship, engagement and contribution to society;
20. Provide effective platforms that facilitate comparative information on elected representatives and provide communication access to them;
21. Improve the structural conditions for social mobility across generations by: ensuring equal access to opportunities for all, supporting disadvantaged people to succeed, considering the diverse background of students in their efforts to get good quality education and being flexible in giving a second chance to those who fail to adapt to working environment;
22. Adapt a multidimensional approach for increasing youth inclusion in society. On the economic front: improve youth access to employment, education and training. In particular; youth without university degrees and who are not in education, employment, or training must be given access to programs tailored to their needs and to the needs of the labour market;
23. Identify youth that have been left behind by migrating parents as “at risk and vulnerable group” and develop programs targeting them at both the school level

and community level with the objective of providing them guidance and ensuring their academic success.

24. Reappraise educational curricula to immunize youth against the threats of online radicalization.
25. Institute effective counter-narrative campaigns that address the root causes of social grievance and youth, offering alternatives of constructive and meaningful civic engagement to mindless violence.
26. Foster solidarity and youth engagement through establishing Model OIC Parliaments throughout national universities to benefit from intra-OIC Youth Parliament engagement.

## 2.5 Youth and Culture: Between Community and Globalization

Globalization, a process whereby capital, goods and services, technology, information, and cultural items flow beyond national boundaries (De Silva, 2003), is a defining characteristic of modern society. By the turn of the new Millennium, however, globalization has assumed a level of intensity unseen before, becoming the main driver of economic and cultural change in contemporary societies. Although flow of items is cross-cultural, globalization has largely resulted in the spread of Western values to the rest of the world, and the OIC group has not remained untouched by globalizing and westernizing processes.

Both in the world and OIC Member States, youth have been the most-affected segment by globalizing processes (Shediac et al. 2013). In fact, contemporary youth, the so-called Millennials or the Generation Y (Gen Y), by virtue of being born into the current globalized and digitalized era have also become the most globally connected generation. Studies on Gen Y have shown that while each country's Gen Y is different, Gen Y worldwide is more similar to one another than any previous generations (Shediac et al. 2013).

This clearly demonstrates the extent to which globalization has been shaping and will continue to shape the worldview and values of youth in OIC Member States., The direction and content of this change, however, are yet to be thoroughly understood. More broadly, across OIC Member States, there is a lack of general understanding of Gen Y's cultural, political, and sociological orientations. Nevertheless, understanding youth's cultural orientations as well as the effects of globalization on these orientations are more than necessary for efforts towards youth development as well as national development. In this light, this section of the report will assess how globalizing processes, especially the emerging new global lifestyles marked by individualism, have been impacting youth's values and beliefs in OIC Member States.



In a nutshell, this review reveals a cultural tension between the values associated with new urban lifestyles and authentic values shared across OIC Member States; this tension, nonetheless, works both as a challenge and an opportunity.

### **2.5.1 Youth in a Cultural Clash**

Historically, the OIC group has been marked by a communitarian and a family-oriented culture and lifestyle. Family constitutes the basic unit of community, and family interests and needs are given priority and a higher moral value than mere self-interest. One key consequence of globalization, however, has been the spread of new lifestyles marked by individualism, consumerism, and materialism that are at odds with and that challenge traditional values shared more or less across OIC Member States.

This new urban, individualist lifestyle promotes higher demands for individual development and gives priority to fulfillment of individual needs and desires over family and community, endorsing atomistic individualism. Atomistic individualism views community bonds (including family) and customs to be oppositional to the wellbeing, achievements, happiness, and freedoms of the individual (Yankelovich 1994).

Studies show that Gen Y, including that of OIC Member States, is increasingly adapting these emerging values (ASDAA 2010; Shediak et al., 2013). The rapid spread of atomistic individualism among youth is in part due to the advances in communication technologies. In contemporary societies, media plays a prominent role in socialization of adolescents and young adults (El-Haddad, 2003; Yamazhan, et al. 2007). In particular, soap operas broadcasted in satellite channels and social media and Internet have become main entry gates for the youth into this new global urban lifestyle endorsing individualism as a way to freedom, wealth, and self-actualization, while depicting family and community as a source of conflict and oppressive tradition. (Yigit, 2013; Wilcox and Cavallé, 2011). More specifically, Gen Y in OIC Member States is increasingly orienting towards:

- Individualism: Studies on Gen-Y agree that this generation is the most self-oriented of all. Indeed, Gen-Y has been dubbed ‘Me-Generation’ (Twenge, 2006) as well as ‘Entitled Generation’ (Altınbasak-Farina & Guleryuz-Turkel, 2015). Gen-Y capitalizes more focus on the self and less focus on the group, society, and community, and this individualism gets reflected in personality traits and attitudes (Altınbasak-Farina & Guleryuz-Turkel, 2015)
- Consumerism and Extravagance: This cohort is characterized by a materialistic consumer culture (Hanzaee and Aghasibeig, 2010). It desires distinctive brands with traits of their own that will serve as a form of self-expression (Gupta et al., 2010). A MENA survey has revealed that fashion and clothing is the main item on which Arab youth spend their disposable income (ASDA’A, 2008). Another

study that focused on generational differences in the Arab region also found that Gen-Y associates itself more with “adventure” and “extravagance” than the older two generations (Shediak et. al., 2013).

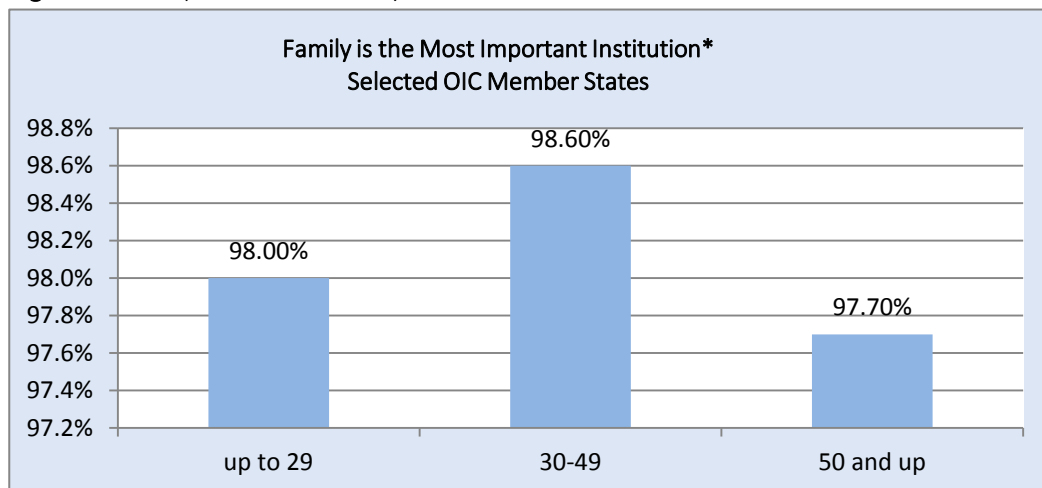
- Low Interpersonal Trust: Gen-Y is also informed by low levels of interpersonal trust as well as only conditional loyalty to work space and brands (PRI, 2014)
- Career-Oriented at the expense of Family and Personal Life: Gen-Y is distinguished by its strong career-orientation. In fact, Millennials in the MENA Survey found that among the young adults, 78% would be willing to sacrifice their personal life in order to further their career, 74% would move to another country to make for a better salary and perks, 61% would work longer hours, and 57% would live away from their family (Bayt.com, 2014).

Yet importantly, despite such tangible changes in values and attitudes towards the self and community, work, and personal life, it is also observed that the youth in OIC Member States are not fully alienated from the common cultural heritage and traditional values. In fact, values that reflect globalizing influences coexist with well-established and historically cherished values and orientations, especially in regards to family and religion. Gen-Y still adheres to the ideal of family and believes that religion is important and that tradition should be safeguarded.

### **The Millennials and Family Values: Family is still very important**

In regards to family, as Figure 2.36 shows, 98%, of youth (across available OIC Member States in the World Value Survey Data Set, 2010-2012) thinks that “family is the most important institution in their lives”. The youth, according to various case studies conducted in OIC Member States, also consider family as the main space to find love and security (Altınbasak-Farina & Guleryuz-Turkel, 2015). Additionally, they think family and tradition should be preserved and safeguarded. In a PRI survey, 85 per cent of Arab youth, for example, agreed that it is important to preserve traditional values for the future (PRI 2014). The youth, moreover, endorse the institution of marriage as the most appropriate form of romantic union and believe that children need both a mother and father (Wilcox and Cavalle 2011), and also have a strong desire to strike a balance between work and family (Altınbasak-Farina & Guleryuz-Turkel, 2015).

Figure 2.36: Importance of Family



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on WVS 2010-2012 Wave on country available data (\*Very important and Important combined)

### The Millennials and Religious Values: Religion is more than about right and wrong

When it comes to religion, a captivating picture emerges particularly for MENA Countries. To being with, the “Muslim Millennial Attitudes on Religion & Religious Leadership Arab World Survey” (Tabah Foundation, 2016), which sampled the age bracket of 15-34 in eight Arab countries (Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Palestine), has found that majority of Millennials say it is important that they be known by their Muslim identity. Even more importantly, however, Millennials “contend that their belief in Islam is based on their conviction that it is the truth”. Moreover, young people are more likely to think that “religion is a private spiritual affair” than to view religion to be merely about beliefs and laws that define right and wrong. These findings very importantly demonstrate that the youth in MENA overall has a strong religious conviction. However, “a substantial majority of youth also think that both the language used and content addressed by religious leaders need to be made more relevant for contemporary issues and needs”.

In regards to religion’s role in public and political spheres, young people in general agree that religion has a key role to play in their countries’ futures. On the other hand, many do not think that “the state should have full authority to get involved in anything that relates to religion in society”. Where the young people want to see state involvement regards extremism; the Millennials say that “movements like ISIS and Al-Qaeda are a complete perversion of Islam and give the state the pivotal role of fighting against extremism”.

The review of Gen Y's key cultural leanings have so far pointed out to a seeming cultural tension: the youth are being exposed to new cultural values that put them at odds with shared cultural values of OIC Member States. This cultural tension may eventually create a frustrating gap between beliefs and attitudes; while, for example, the youth thinks that family is the most important institution, their increasing self-orientation, consumerist urges, and low interpersonal trust may result in delay family formation. Similarly, while Gen Y believes that religion and tradition must be preserved, their individualist leanings may eventually cause them to become estranged towards those religious and traditional values that are community-oriented. This seeming clash signals the coming of substantial cultural change and value transformation among the youth. How this tension will evolve will be in large part determined by how well policies can help to youth to strike a balance.

### 2.5.2 The potential of Gen Y is curtailed

While globalization poses new challenges, it also ushers in new opportunities and new prospects for youth and national development. While surveys highlight Gen Y's greater orientation towards individualism and materialism, they also demonstrate that Gen Y is in a quest for self-expression and a strong self-identity; and it wants to speak its minds. In MENA, for example, 78% of youth highly value independence (Bayt.com 2014). Other empirical studies in the Arab Region as well demonstrate younger generation promoting the right to pursue one's goals, to be more self-expressive, and to value independence and self-reliance (Shediak et al. 2013).

Moreover, Gen Y is rather concerned about gender equality and the role and place of women in society. In general, they are marked by greater gender egalitarianism. For example, as the below table shows, a majority of MENA youth say that their societies need more female religious scholars and preachers who are given the opportunity and space to preach more widely, as shown by the below table, attesting to gender egalitarianism, even in the sphere of religion (Table 2.3)

**Table 2.3:** Societies need more female religious scholars and preachers

Bahrain	Palestine	Morocco	Jordan	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	UAE
95%	88%	87%	85%	80%	76%	66%	63%

Source: 'Muslim Millennial Attitudes on Religion & Religious Leadership Arab World Survey'

These values, namely independence, self-expression and gender egalitarianism, are cultural values that drive social and economic development, in particular entrepreneurship and a dynamic society. Therefore, while Gen Y's value transformation

is a source concern, it is also a potential source of positive development and change. Yet, Gen Y is met with challenges in regards to expression of positive values as well.

SESRIC analysis, based on WVS 2010-2012 Wave, has shown that whereas Gen Y capitalizes self-expression, self-identity, and speaking one’s mind; the wider culture in the OIC group endorses discipline, tradition, obedience, and hierarchy, revealing a gap between the emerging values of Gen-Y and wider values in OIC societies. When people from across OIC Member States were asked to pick five most important values that parents should teach to their children at home, the value self-expression (as well as imagination) did not make it to top five values. On the contrary, obedience is ranked as the third important value, revealing a gap between emerging values of the Gen-Y and wider values in OIC societies. This gap between the new generation and wider society, in turn, hampers Gen-Y’s potential in bringing about positive change to their communities, especially in regards to entrepreneurship, community involvement, and gender equality.

**Table 2.4:** Values Parents Should Teach Children at Home

Order	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Values	Tolerance	Religion	Obedience	Thrift	Determination	Unselfishness	Self-expression	Imagination

**Source:** SESRIC staff calculations based on WVS 2010-2012 Wave (only data available countries)

The potential of Gen Y is further curtailed by its limited access to regional and global opportunities. While Gen-Y is the most globally connected generation, when it comes to access to, participation in, and benefiting from global and regional opportunities, youth in OIC Member States lags behind the youth of the developed world. This is particularly the case in areas of technological innovation, global and regional institutions and public debate, cultural interaction, educational advances, or quality of life.

### 2.5.3 Policy Recommendations

1. Member States should advance a thorough understanding of the Millennials’ worldviews, cultural and political leanings. One way to realize this goal would be encouraging universities and think tanks to study the attitudes and values of Generation Y both through qualitative and quantitative surveys.
2. Policies should be developed to fight against the false separation of ‘community versus individual’ and balance out social cohesion and individual expression. For that, policies should aim at promoting alternative narratives and images, those that can endorse communal ties as something that is not in conflict with individual development, but on the contrary, as something that would complement and facilitate individual progress, quality of life, and happiness.

3. To enable Gen Y to realize its markedly positive values as creativity, self-expression and gender egalitarianism across spheres of society, policies should consider intergenerational relationship building. This would require increasing efforts in gerontology studies towards developing an understanding of youth relationship to parents, larger family and the elderly and developing programs and projects to foster mutual understandings between parents and the youth. Schools, nursing homes, universities, and community centers as well as public spaces like parks and malls can be utilized to enable intergenerational mingling, dialogue, and interaction.
4. Policymakers should spare substantial effort to facilitate youth's participation in global and regional process and policy making. For that, instruments that would raise young citizens' awareness on and encourage youth volunteerism towards global, regional, and OIC-level issues and causes should be developed. New opportunities for youth to get involved in exchange processes with their peers from other regions of the OIC and beyond should be generated. In this framework, the OIC may serve as the key instrument that can offer young citizens new opportunities to take part in and shape global and regional decision-making, public debate, and policy-making especially regarding intercultural dialogue, peace, human rights, the discourse on Sustainable Development Goals, community voluntarism, and cultural and technological innovation.



### 3. Concluding Remarks

This report aims to map the challenges that hamper and prospects that can facilitate youth development in OIC MSs. It examines the state of youth in OIC Member States across the areas of: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and mental health, political and civil participation, and cultural and value change.

In a nutshell, the report reveals that education and training continue to be a key challenge hampering youth development and in turn national development of OIC Member States. In examining education outcomes, the report pays particular attention to youth literacy rates, high-school enrollment rates, and international student mobility.

Just like education, work opportunities, as reflected in such labor indicators measuring employment, unemployment, and the transition to labor markets, constitutes another macro challenge to youth economic integration and overall well-being. In regards to entrepreneurship, the report identifies common and key bottlenecks across OIC Member States that prevent dynamic and stimulating ecosystems. The report takes a holistic approach, looking not only at the financial, infrastructural, and political atmosphere that surround young entrepreneurs and investors but also cultural values and attitudes (risk taking, fear of failure, etc.) that either facilitate or hamper youth from taking the entrepreneurial path. Finally, this sub-section also pays attention to the newly but rapidly emerging phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, while examining what prospects and hindrances social entrepreneurs—who tend to be youth—face in OIC Member States.

Health and mental health are pivotal determinants of youth wellbeing. In regional and national contexts across OIC, youth face varying health issues. However, overall, poor reproductive health, substance addiction, technological dependence, and mental health continue to threaten the wellbeing and the future of youth. The report, additionally, pays specific attention to mental health in conflict areas.

The sub-section on political challenges addresses a plethora of relevant issues including voting age, political literacy, political citizenship, social mobility, inclusion, radicalism, conflict and institutional reform. The section provides actionable policy recommendations to achieve constructive political engagement and civic participation of youth.



Youth are also faced with rapid cultural change. Particularly, the spread of new global lifestyles have generated both new challenges and novel prospects for youth. The section, more broadly, brings into attention the Muslim youths' cultural values, with a focus on attitudes towards religion and family. Another challenge that faces Muslim youth is the growing intergenerational value gap, which limits possible youth contributions to value change, especially with regards to gender egalitarianism and social progress. Moreover, while more globally connected than ever before, youth in OIC Member States are disadvantaged compared to other groups as a result of limited access to regional and global participation and opportunities ranging from technological innovation to educational access.

Finally, efforts towards youth empowerment are further restrained by challenges in policymaking. As such, a thorough identification of particular difficulties OIC MSs face in youth policymaking and addressing those challenges will be fundamental for youth development. Nevertheless, differing from demographic or economic areas, in policy, data is rather too specific and mostly missing. To address this gap, the report has attempted to the first youth policy indicator, the *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries*, as a prototype, that is unique to OIC MSs. This will help map key aspects of youth policy-making, its weaknesses and strengths, in a standardized way leading, therefore, to systematic and actionable comparisons and new intra-OIC collaboration channels. *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries* and related questionnaire and scoring system are presented in the Annex along with pilot applications to five pilot Member States, who have responded to the questionnaire, which has been circulated to all Member States. The report hopes that the prototype will be further improved through inputs from national experts, OIC GS, and other OIC institutions.

## 4. Annex. Taking the First Step for an OIC-specific Indicator: Youth Policy Score Indicator

Identification of social and economic challenges is only the first step toward greater youth well-being. Yet, how well these challenges can be tackled will largely depend on how well policies can address them. As such, the second, but an equally important, step for youth empowerment is the identification of the most appropriate and effective youth policy framework.

Compared to some other policy areas, in the area of youth, developing an effective and successful national policy may prove to be more difficult (Denstad, 2009). According to World Bank report (2007), this is largely because:

- 1) A successful youth policy requires inter-sectoral cooperation to develop one holistic strategy. Nevertheless, in most cases youth policy generally is not integrated into the overall national development policy
- 2) A successful youth policy also requires inclusion of youth themselves in the design and implementation of the policies.
- 3) Achieving success in youth policy is challenged by the fact that there are limited examples of best practice.

Given these difficulties, policymaking itself becomes a challenge in the march towards youth empowerment. As such, a thorough identification of particular challenges OIC MSs face in youth policymaking and addressing those challenges will be fundamental to efforts on youth development.

Nevertheless, while such data as education or fertility in OIC Member States are relatively more accessible, policy level data is rather specific and mostly missing. The missing data not only hampers opportunities to upgrade policies but it also prevents regional and OIC level cooperation.

To fill this gap, the report takes a bold step and suggests a new tool: *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries*. The *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries* is calculated by a basic scoring of 19 policy-related questions. Each question captures a key aspect or component of a successful youth policy as established in the literature. They include, for example, such key elements as budget, responsible authority, and research on youth and related issues.

After answering each question, MSs will get a sum score as demonstrated in Table 1. The sum score then determines the category of a given MS's youth policy level. The highest score a country can get is 23, where a score between 0-8 points to an *underdeveloped Level*, 9-14 to *lower mid-level*, 15-20 to *upper mid-level*, and 21-23 to *Advanced Level*.

These scores are then presented and summarized in the *OIC Youth Policy Score Card*, as shown in Boxes 1, 2, and 3.

The *OIC Youth Policy Score Card* will serve to

- Assist MSs in identifying their weakness so that those weaknesses can be directly addressed
- Assist MSs in identifying their strengths so that they can share best practices with other MSs
- Developing intra-OIC collaboration more thoroughly and in more concrete ways.
- Compliment the OIC Youth Strategy (2017)
- Take the first step to develop an indigenous, unbiased, and objective indicator rather than using open source indicators that tend to either fall short in taking specific cultural contexts into account or have normative biases

To demonstrate how the *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries* works, the report presents below 5 pilot case studies from Lebanon, Turkey, Bangladesh, Palestine, Azerbaijan, and Senegal. Yet, pilot cases are also a tool to further develop the *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries*. In fact, as is the indicator should be considered as a proto-type that will be subject to change and improvement by inputs of experts from youth and statistical from MSs, the General Secretariat, and other OIC institutions.

All in all, the Score Card will constitute a major step taken in the way of developing an OIC specific data bank on youth related policy and developing the ever first OIC indicator.

The following presents the *Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries Questionnaire*, the coding and scoring system, and five pilot examples.

### **I. Survey Questions**

*Youth Policy Score Indicator for OIC Countries* has 23 questions in total. However, five of these questions are not included (questions 1, 2, 3, and 20) in the scoring system but serve for the purposes of gathering descriptive and additional information. Table 1 demonstrates which questions are included in the scoring.

#### **Descriptive Data**

1. Which age group does your country define as the ‘young people’ category? Please provide the answer in brackets (e.g. age group 18-30 or age group 16-25)
2. What is the gender ratio of young people in your country?

3. What is the percentage of the following age group distribution in your country?
- 16 -18 : % ---
  - 18-25:% ---
  - 25-30:% ---
  - 30-35: % ---

#### Governance Data

1. Do you have a government body dedicated to youth and youth issues, such as a ministry, or a state commission?
    - Yes
    - No
  2. Do you have a national policy/strategy on youth?
    - Yes
    - No
  3. Does your country have a budget allocated for the implementation of youth national policy or strategy?
    - Yes
    - No
  4. Do you have a national umbrella organisation (such as a coalition or a council) of non-governmental youth organisations in the country?
    - Yes
    - No
- 4.a). **If yes** provide its name and contact info:  
National Council/Umbrella:  
Contact info:
5. Do you have a policy for youth participation in political decision making in your country?
    - Yes
    - No

**5.a) If yes**, please select each that applies:

- My country has a policy that facilitates youth political participation at the local or municipal level
  - My country has a policy that facilitates youth political participation at the national Level
  - My country has a policy that facilitates youth political participation at the regional/ international level
6. Do you have any governmental mechanisms (actual institutions or bodies) to facilitate for youth participation in political decision making in your country?
- Yes
  - No
- 6.a) If yes,** please select each that applies:
- My country has a mechanism that facilitates youth political participation at the local or municipal level
  - My country has a mechanism that facilitates youth political participation at the national level
  - My country has a mechanism that facilitates youth political participation at the regional/international level
7. Does your country have any elected or allotted young political representatives?
- Yes
  - No
- 7.a) If yes,** how many elected or allotted young political representatives you're your country have?
8. Do you have cross-sector cooperation (for example, co-operation among ministers of health, employment, and education) on youth issues?
- Yes
  - No
9. Do you have think tanks or research centers that focus on youth issues?
- Yes
  - No

**9.a) If yes** provide their names and contact info:

Name of the center or think tank:

Contact Info:

10. Is there any research on state of youth on national level that was held in your country?

- Yes
- No

**10.a). If yes**, please attach as PDF file.

### Existing Services

11. Do you have national youth centres throughout your country to serve the young population?

- Yes
- No

12. Do you have a policy to reduce the population of youth who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)?

- Yes
- No

13. Do you have specific policies for employees to encourage youth employment?

- Yes
- No

14. Do you have training programmes for parents of youth to train and improve their knowledge about problems of youth?

- Yes
- No
- 

15. Do you have technical and vocational training programmes targeting youth population?

- Yes
- No

16. Do you have active and structured student exchange programmes with foreign education institutions aiming to improving knowledge of youth?

- Yes
- No

**16.a) If yes, 15.a) of them, how many are with OIC Member States?  
15.b) of them, how many are with non-OIC Member States?  
15.c ) of them, how many with EU Member Countries?**

17. Do you have a mental health policy for youth?

- Yes
- No
- 

18. Do you have a policy for fighting against addictions among youth?

- Yes
- No

19. Do you have a policy/strategy to fight against youth recruitment by violent extremist groups?

- Yes
- No

### Challenges

20. Please select the most important three challenges in the area of youth in your country by scoring them from 1 to 3 (1 presenting the greatest challenge)

- Education
- lack of economic opportunities(e.g. unemployment, poverty, etc)
- Rise of violent extremism and radicalization
- Health and mental health
- Addiction to substances
- Family and marriage formation (e.g early marriage, delay in marriage,
- rising divorce rate)

- Political participation
- Lack of opportunities and infrastructure for recreational, leisurely and sports activities for youth
- Lack of data and research on youth and youth issues
- Lack of civil society involvement on youth issues
- Lack of gender equality
- Access to technology
- If not included above, please type

## II. Coding and Scoring

Table.1. Coding and Scoring

Question number	Code	Content	Score scale (No: 0, Yes:1)
Question 1	GOVBOD	Government body	0-1
Question 2	NAT-POL-STR	National Policy or strategy	0-1
Question 3	BUDGET	Allocated budget to youth	0-1
Question 4	UMBNGO	Umbrella NGO	0-1
Question 5	PPP	Policy on Political Participation	0-3
Question 6	MPP	Mechanism on Political Participation	0-3
Question 7	YPP	Elected representatives	0-1
Question 8	CRSSEC	Cross-sector cooperation	0-1
Question 9	TTANK	Think Tanks	0-1
Question 10	RSC	Research	0-1
Question 11	YTHCENTER	Youth centres	0-1
Question 12	NEET	Policy for inclusion	0-1
Question 13	EEMP	Policy to encourage employment	0-1
Question 14	PARENTS	Training for parents	0-1
Question 15	TECHVOC	Training for technical and vocation skills	0-1
Question 16	EXCHNG	Programme on student exchange	0-1
Question 17	MENTAL	Mental Health Policy	0-1
Question 18	ADD	Fight against addiction	0-1
Question 19	VIOEXT	Policy to fight against violent extremism	0-1
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>23</b>



### III. Pilot Examples

	Number	Question Code	Score
<b>Governance</b>	1	Government body	1
	2	National Policy or strategy	1
	3	Allocated budget to youth:	1
	4	Umbrella NGO	1
	5	Policy on Political Participation:	2
	6	Mechanisms on Political Participation	2
	7	Elected Representatives	0
	8	Cross-sector cooperation	0
<b>Services</b>	9	Think tanks	1
	10	Research	1
	11	Youth Centers	0
	12	NEET	1
	13	Policy to encourage employment:	1
	14	Training for parents	1
	14	Training for technical and vocational skills	1
	16	Programme on student exchange:	1
	17	Mental Health Policy	1
	18	Fight against addiction:	0
	19	Policy to fight against violent extremism	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>17</b>

Category: Upper Mid-level

	Number	Question Code	Score
<b>Governance</b>	1	Government body	1
	2	National Policy or strategy	1
	3	Allocated budget to youth:	1
	4	Umbrella NGO	1
	5	Policy on Political Participation:	3
	6	Mechanisms on Political Participation	3
	7	Elected Representatives	1
	8	Cross-sector cooperation	1
<b>Services</b>	9	Think tanks	0
	10	Research	0
	11	Youth Centers	1
	12	NEET	1
	13	Policy to encourage employment:	1
	14	Training for parents	0
	15	Training for technical and vocational skills	1
	16	Programme on student exchange:	0
	17	Mental Health Policy	0
	18	Fight against addiction:	0
	19	Policy to fight against violent extremism	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>17</b>

Category: Upper Mid-level

<b>TABLE 4. THE YOUTH POLICY SCORE CARD - PALESTINE</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Question Code</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Governance</b>	1	Government body	1
	2	National Policy or strategy	1
	3	Allocated budget to youth:	1
	4	Umbrella NGO	0
	5	Policy on Political Participation:	3
	6	Mechanisms on Political Participation	2
	7	Elected Representatives	1
	8	Cross-sector cooperation	1
<b>Services</b>	9	Think tanks	1
	10	Research	1
	11	Youth Centers	1
	12	NEET	1
	13	Policy to encourage employment:	1
	14	Training for parents	1
	15	Training for technical and vocational skills	1
	16	Programme on student exchange:	1
	17	Mental Health Policy	1
	18	Fight against addiction:	1
	19	Policy to fight against violent extremism	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>20</b>

Category: Upper Mid-level

<b>TABLE 5. THE YOUTH POLICY SCORE CARD - BANGLADESH</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Question Code</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Governance</b>	1	Government body	1
	2	National Policy or strategy	1
	3	Allocated budget to youth:	1
	4	Umbrella NGO	1
	5	Policy on Political Participation:	0
	6	Mechanisms on Political Participation	0
	7	Elected Representatives	0
	8	Cross-sector cooperation	1
<b>Services</b>	9	Think tanks	1
	10	Research	0
	11	Youth Centers	1
	12	NEET	1
	13	Policy to encourage employment:	1
	14	Training for parents	0
	15	Training for technical and vocational skills	1
	16	Programme on student exchange:	0
	17	Mental Health Policy	1
	18	Fight against addiction:	1
	19	Policy to fight against violent extremism	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>

Category: Lower Mid-level

TABLE 6 THE YOUTH POLICY SCORE CARD -TURKEY			
	Number	Question Code	Score
<b>Governance</b>	1	Government body	1
	2	National Policy or strategy	1
	3	Allocated budget to youth:	1
	4	Umbrella NGO	0
	5	Policy on Political Participation:	3
	6	Mechanisms on Political Participation	3
	7	Elected Representatives	1
	8	Cross-sector cooperation	1
<b>Services</b>	9	Think tanks	1
	10	Research	1
	11	Youth Centers	1
	12	NEET	1
	13	Policy to encourage employment:	1
	14	Training for parents	1
	15	Training for technical and vocational skills	1
	16	Programme on student exchange:	1
	17	Mental Health Policy	1
	18	Fight against addiction:	1
	19	Policy to fight against violent extremism	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>22</b>

Category: Advanced Level

TABLE 7. THE YOUTH POLICY SCORE CARD -INDONESIA			
	Number	Question Code	Score
<b>Governance</b>	1	Government body	1
	2	National Policy or strategy	1
	3	Allocated budget to youth:	1
	4	Umbrella NGO	1
	5	Policy on Political Participation:	1
	6	Mechanisms on Political Participation	1
	7	Elected Representatives	0
	8	Cross-sector cooperation	1
<b>Services</b>	9	Think tanks	1
	10	Research	0
	11	Youth Centers	1
	12	NEET	1
	13	Policy to encourage employment:	1
	14	Training for parents	1
	15	Training for technical and vocational skills	1
	16	Programme on student exchange:	1
	17	Mental Health Policy	1
	18	Fight against addiction:	1
	19	Policy to fight against violent extremism	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>16</b>

Category: Upper Mid-Level

<b>TABLE 8. THE YOUTH POLICY SCORE CARD -AZERBAIJAN</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Question Code</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Governance</b>	1	Government body	1
	2	National Policy or strategy	1
	3	Allocated budget to youth:	1
	4	Umbrella NGO	1
	5	Policy on Political Participation:	3
	6	Mechanisms on Political Participation	3
	7	Elected Representatives	1
	8	Cross-sector cooperation	1
<b>Services</b>	9	Think tanks	1
	10	Research	1
	11	Youth Centers	1
	12	NEET	1
	13	Policy to encourage employment:	1
	14	Training for parents	0
	15	Training for technical and vocational skills	1
	16	Programme on student exchange:	1
	17	Mental Health Policy	1
	18	Fight against addiction:	1
	19	Policy to fight against violent extremism	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>22</b>

Category: Upper Mid-Level



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