



# STATE OF YOUTH IN THE OIC MEMBER STATES 2020

Enhancing Economic Participation of Youth





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# ACRONYMS

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| AFM      | Age at First Marriage   |
| AFR      | Adolescent Fertility Rate   |
| AIDS     | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome   |
| BTI      | Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation   |
| BTVET    | Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training                           |
| CDs      | Communicable Diseases   |
| ESALA    | East and South Asia and Latin America   |
| GER      | Gross Enrolment Rates   |
| HIV      | Human Immunodeficiency Virus  |
| ICYF     | Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum   |
| ICYSM    | Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers                                    |
| ILO      | International Labour Organization   |
| LFPR     | Labour Force Participation Rate   |
| MoSYA    | Ministry of State for Youth Affairs   |
| MSME     | Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises   |
| NCDs     | Non-Communicable Diseases   |
| NEET     | Not in Employment, Education or Training  |
| NTCs     | National Teachers' Colleges   |
| OECD     | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development                              |
| OIC      | Organisation of Islamic Cooperation   |
| OIC-SHPA | OIC Strategic Health Programme of Action  |
| OMR      | Outbound Mobility Rate  |
| PTSD     | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  |
| SESRIC   | Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries |
| SSA      | Sub-Saharan Africa  |
| TUBE     | Bumiputera Youth Entrepreneurship Programme   |
| UN       | United Nations  |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme  |
| UNESCO   | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization                    |





|        |                                   |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund    |
| UPE    | Universal Primary Education       |
| VET    | Vocational Education and Training |
| WHO    | World Health Organization         |
| YEP    | Youth Empowerment Project         |



# PREFACE

The world's population is young: 42% of it is under the age of 25, and a significant portion of that young population lives in OIC Member States. The OIC Member States account for one-fourth of the global youth population, and, according to the UN World Population Prospects, the OIC Member States are projected to have more than one-third of the world's young population. The fate of this demographic potential is all the more important as it coincides with the peak of the technological revolution. Consequently, the millennial-youth is the most globally connected generation and the most affected by globalized cultural tendencies. As a result of these trends, youth have a totally different way of thinking, and traditional approaches may not resonate with their needs.

Facing those challenges requires governments, relevant institutions and other stakeholders to have a clear picture of the situation of youth in our Member States in terms of sound education and skills development, employment, entrepreneurship, good health, and social participation, which are all addressed in the first part of this report. After an uncompromising diagnosis of this situation, proposing policies that aim at enhancing the economic participation of youth throughout the decision-making processes in our Member States is of utmost importance as highlighted in the second part of the report.

This report prepared by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) in collaboration with the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum and under the supervision of the OIC General Secretariat scrutinizes the persistent constraints along with challenges and opportunities. It also highlights that priority must be given to the enhancement of the role of youth in all areas of social and economic development; not only for the benefit of youth themselves, but also for fostering a sense of community in our Member States.

However, the required policy interventions differ from one geographical and economic area to another. This is the reason why the report provides insight into the role that young people, as key drivers for inclusive growth and sustainable development in OIC Member States, regardless of the heterogeneity of their life experiences, cultural background, education, social group and economic status, should play in the context of the implementation of the OIC Youth Strategy in response to growing interest in this regard.



It is my firm belief that this report will contribute in addressing the challenges facing our youth and in raising awareness among the decision-makers at national and international levels. I avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the stakeholders who have participated in the elaboration of this report for the sake of a bright future of our youth.

Yousef A. Al Othaimeen  
Secretary General  
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



# FOREWORD

Currently, the OIC Member States are home to over 338 million young people aged 15-24, which makes 17.9% of their total population. With this, OIC Member States host 28% of the world's total youth, and this number is projected to reach 30.7% by 2030. The “State of Youth in OIC Member States 2020: Enhancing Economic Participation of Youth” report attempts to provide answers to questions like who are these young people in the OIC Member States? What are their visions, hopes and dreams? What are the efforts of their countries towards helping them build brighter futures into adulthood to become active citizens indulged in their societies through finding their right place in the labour market? Overall, the report provides a detailed picture of OIC youth while highlighting major challenges and proposing remedial measures.

In general, the main findings of the report indicate a noteworthy progress in the condition of youth in the OIC Member States. On average, at the OIC country group level, improvements have been recorded in the field of economy, education, health and social participation. Many OIC Member States have put into practice policies, programmes and initiatives designed to improve the overall status of young people in their countries. Equally important, the report finds that many Member States have taken concrete steps to implement the OIC Youth Strategy that was adopted in Baku in 2018.

However, notwithstanding the progress that has been achieved at the average OIC country group level, the report underlines that many OIC Member States still need significant improvements to close the gap with the developed countries and reach the world averages on numerous indicators. Issues such as low-economic participation, unemployment, youth inactivity and limited political and social participation combined with conflict, migration and displacement constitute serious obstacles hindering young people's productive contribution to the development of OIC Member States. The report also highlights the prevalence of gender disparities in a number of the socio-economic indicators related to youth. In many OIC Member States, female youth are still behind males in many important indicators, including, but not limited to labour force participation, educational attainment, health and wellbeing.



An in-depth understanding of the contemporary state of youth is a crucial factor that can help the OIC Member States put forward effective and sustainable development strategies and policies, which leverage on the full utilization of the vast potential of their youth population. It is through a comprehensive understanding of their needs, capacities and challenges that appropriate solutions can be formulated and implemented for youth. I believe that this report will prove to be an excellent tool to understand the hopes and dreams of youth in the OIC Member States and develop policies and programmes to meet their economic and social needs.

Nebil DABUR  
Director General  
SESRIC



# FOREWORD

At its inception, this report took on the critical mandate of reporting on the state of youth in the Muslim world. Its sustained reportage is key to charting progress and shedding light on the dynamic and multi-faceted policy landscape that directly impacts the challenges and opportunities youth represent in OIC Member States.

With over 1.75 billion youth worldwide, nearly two-thirds of whom reside in OIC Member States, a holistic study is imperative to address and map the potential youth can offer for development, growth and innovation. This can only be achieved by identifying the challenges and inhibitors that stand in their way to self-actualization and becoming engines of progress and excellence.

To this end, ICYF is dedicated to serving the youth of the Muslim world throughout the OIC region and beyond. It is our belief that proliferating an understanding of Muslim youth is essential and coming to terms with the rapid cultural and economic changes stemming from globalization that affect them is equally necessary.

In the present day, youth continue to face variants of the same socioeconomic pressures, trends and restrictions that limit their potential; coupled with a lack of opportunity and engagement, sustainable youth development or serious empowerment is hard to achieve.

In the face of far-reaching phenomena of migration, chronic unemployment, and conflict youth are more at risk than ever before. In this sense, they may be the region's greatest untapped resource or a risk to stability and growth in cases of radicalism, disenfranchisement or absence of mediums for expression and growth.

The path forward requires answers to issues pertaining to the role of youth in governance and development, ease of access to opportunity, potential in civil society, quality of education and life, and youths' fundamental right to live with dignity, purpose and meaning. Based on this, and the constructive possibilities this report emphasizes, it is necessary to devise actionable agendas and strategies to see this become a reality.



This is particularly necessary within the OIC Member States, which enjoys one of the highest concentrations of youth in the world, offering it unfulfilled advantages in industry, innovation and growth.

While addressing the prospects and potential of youth, we must not only address the contentions of the present, but also empower youth to resolve the strategic questions of the future. To achieve this sustainably, we cannot overlook the need to instil in them values of Islamic solidarity and cooperation, innovation, civic duty, excellence and foresight.

It is our hope that this report and its future iterations will continue to serve as a medium of foresight and insight into the condition of youth in OIC Member States for development and growth while illuminating all that our Member States are capable of by taking one-step closer to a better world for all humanity.

Taha AYHAN  
President  
ICYF



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A core research team at SESRIC led by Cem Tintin and comprising Kaan Namli, Ayse Sena Köşger and Tazeen Qureshi prepared the report. The research was conducted under the general supervision of Mazhar Hussain, Director of Research Department, and leadership of H.E. Mr. Nebil Dabur, Director General of SESRIC.

Chapter 2 on Education and Skills Development and Chapter 4 on Health and Well-Being are prepared by Ayse Sena Köşger. Tazeen Qureshi prepared Chapter 3 on Employment and Entrepreneurship. Chapter 5 on Social Participation and Chapter 6 on Economic Inactivity among Youth are prepared by Kaan Namli. Chapter 1 on Introduction, Chapter 7 on Success Stories from OIC Member States in Addressing Major Root Causes and Enhancing Economic Participation of Youth, and Chapter 8 on Policy Recommendations on Enhancing Economic Participation of Youth are prepared by Cem Tintin. Tazeen Qureshi also helped in data visualisation and formatting of the report.

Amel Ouchenane, Senior Researcher at the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) contributed to the report by submitting success stories and providing comments on the outline of the report as well as the OIC Youth Survey 2019 under the general supervision of H.E. Mr. Taha Ayhan, President of the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF).

The SESRIC research team presents its gratitude to the General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) for facilitating the preparation and circulation of the OIC Youth Survey 2019. The research team also thanks the focal points from 22 OIC Member States who responded to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, which enriched the discussions and policy recommendations of the report.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people aged 15-24 make up a large segment of the population in the OIC Member States. Even though OIC Member States have made noteworthy progress in improving the state of their youth, many of them are not able to realize the full potential of their young population. In varying degrees, youth in the OIC Member States face a number of challenges ranging from economic inactivity and limited social participation to concerns over health and wellbeing and education and skills development. Such major challenges faced by youth limit not only the constructive and healthy development of youth themselves but also the sustainable development and growth of OIC Member States.

It is against this backdrop that the *State of Youth in OIC Member States 2020: Enhancing Economic Participation of Youth* report is prepared. In Part I, the report examines the state of youth in OIC Member States in four key areas: Educational and Skills Development; Employment and Entrepreneurship; Health and Well-being; and Social Participation. Part II of the report focuses on the low-economic participation of youth to uncover the root causes and provide policy recommendations to enhance the situation of youth across the OIC Member States.

## PART I: STATE OF YOUTH IN OIC MEMBER STATES

### *Education and Skills Development*

The OIC Member States have made significant achievements in the area of education and skills development, however, 17.7% of youth in OIC Member States were unable to read or write in 2018. Consequently, many young people cannot find decent jobs. The high unemployment rate amongst young in OIC Member States has negative outcomes for economic development, societal inclusion, cohesion, and participation. The educational level of youth is influenced by numerous factors in OIC Member States. Economic instability, poverty, conflict, and war along with limited social participation and gender related issues hinder youth education continuation and completion rates. Effective policies to enhance and develop quality education for youth are necessary to achieve sustainable development in the OIC Member States.



### *Employment and Entrepreneurship*

The labour market conditions in many OIC Member States are not very promising for youth. High unemployment, low labour force participation and limited engagement of youth in entrepreneurship form a set of challenges for young people across the OIC Member States. In 2019, the OIC average for youth unemployment was at 13.9% that exceeded the world average of 11.8%. In terms of youth labour force participation, the average of OIC Member States (38.7%) stayed well below the world average of 41.4% in 2019. Moreover, when data are disaggregated by gender, a significant discrepancy arises amongst the OIC Member States in terms of male versus female unemployment and labour force participation rates. The overall entrepreneurship ecosystem for youth is not very much enabling in many OIC Member States. These stem from amongst others limited access to finance and the prevalence of informal economy. Unemployment and lack of decent wages are amongst the major determinants of youth migration that impedes the socio economic development of OIC Member States. In this regard, OIC Member States need to address the root causes of high youth unemployment, low labour force participation rates as well as to eliminate existing gender gaps. Moreover, policies to improve the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem need to be developed.

### *Health and Well-Being*

Health and well-being is an important measure of society's development and progress. Major health challenges faced by youth hinder their productive and constructive ability to contribute to their economies and societies. In terms of health and well-being, OIC Member States witnessed an improvement in life expectancy at birth (LEB) between 2000 and 2017 where it went up from 62.6 years in 2000 to 68.1 years in 2017. However, the average of OIC Member States lagged behind the global average of 72.5 years in 2017. Addictions among youth including alcohol, tobacco, drugs and technology constitute a challenge for youth health in a number of OIC Member States. The practice of child marriage still exists in some OIC Member States. Youth in a number of OIC Member States have only limited knowledge on reproductive health including some communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Improving knowledge on reproductive health, devising effective policies to prevent youth from addictions, and allocating more resources on youth physical and mental health related services are among the major areas that OIC Member States need to take further steps on.

### *Social Participation*

The social participation of youth in its various forms such as political, economic, and civil is an important aspect of young people's wellbeing and productive contribution to the development of OIC Member States. Due to various cultural, political, economic, and social issues, youth participation in OIC Member States is lower than in other country groups. Amongst others, political instabilities, on-going conflicts, traditional ageist perspectives and limited development of civil society organisations are some of the main reasons that hinder effective social participation of youth. With globalization and technological connectedness,



the traditional forms of social participation for youth have become less attractive. As youth spend more time on online activities, existing policies and programmes need to be adjusted to encourage the social participation of youth. Moreover, OIC Member States need to exert more efforts to increase the participation of youth such as on decision-making, community life, and voluntary associations.

## PART II: ENHANCING ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

Economic inactivity emerges when there are limited opportunities for youth in the labour market or the existing opportunities are not attractive enough for them. A range of factors economic, social, and demographic may lead to or contribute to inactivity among youth. Low salaries, lack of hope for career advancement, and employment conditions may discourage young people from actively participating in the economy. Social issues leading to inactive youth may arise from discrimination based on gender, age or status. Cultural norms and practices may also discourage young people to be economically active.

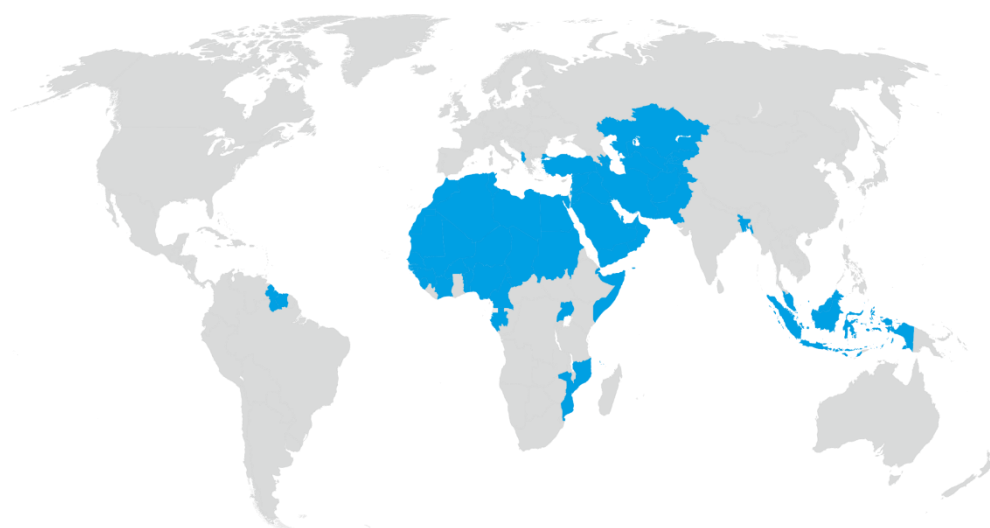
The global youth inactivity rate was 58.6% in 2019 while 61.3% of youth in OIC Member States, on average, chose to remain out of the labour force. In the OIC Member States, on average, 24.1% of youth were not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in 2019, a proportion that is higher than the global average of 21.2%. Even worse, more than one third of young women (34.5%) were in neither employment, education nor training in 2019 in OIC Member States.

Limited youth inactivity in the economic sector has serious implications for the development and growth of OIC Member States. Therefore, special attention needs to be paid on how to enhance the economic participation of youth. A combination of several factors that come together to produce limited economic participation or inactivity amongst young people in OIC Member States that include education and skills development, economic challenges, health and wellbeing, and social participation. In this context, OIC Member States need to formulate comprehensive and multi-sectoral policies and programs to benefit from the economic potentials of youth to a higher extent. As the OIC Youth Survey 2019 revealed, several OIC Member States have already developed specific programmes and policies to enhance the economic participation of youth. Some of these programmes and policies even turned out to be success stories or best practices that can be used by the other OIC Member States. Moreover, a number of OIC Member States have also started to implement the OIC Youth Strategy that could further support their efforts on enhancing the economic participation of youth.



## Part I

# State of Youth in the OIC Member States



# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

The OIC Member States can be characterized by their young and dynamic population, which constitutes a window of opportunity for development. The dynamism of youth is not only an opportunity for high economic growth and sustainable development, but it also acts as a catalyst for social cohesion and well-being. Nevertheless, when the potentials of young people are negated and the required social services do not provide for their wellbeing, it results in negative implications for societies and communities such as increased unemployment, civil unrest and under-education.

According to the 2020 United Nations (UN) estimations, OIC Member States are home to 338.3 million youth, which represents a share of 17.9% of the total OIC population, where the world average was measured at 15.5%.<sup>1</sup> It is projected that by 2030 the number of young people will further increase to reach 396.9 million or around 17.8% of the total OIC population. In 2020, the share of OIC Member States in the world's total youth population was recorded at 28%. Due to the global trends of reduced fertility rates, the practice of late marriage, and increased life expectancy, the share of OIC Member States in the world's total youth population is estimated to reach 30.7% by 2030. For the OIC Member States to plan effectively for the future of youth, an understanding of the contemporary obstacles that hinder their development is of vital importance. In this respect, OIC Member States need to initiate policies today to meet the growing needs of millions of youth as well as to address the challenges they currently and will in the future face to achieve sustainable development.

Against this background, the present report examines the state of youth in OIC Member States with a view to identify key challenges faced by them, understand prospects that could help the development of youth, and come up with a set of policy recommendations at the national and intra-OIC cooperation level by focusing on key areas of concern for sustainable development. One distinguishing feature of the 2020 Report is the use of primary data obtained from the OIC Youth Survey 2019. 22 OIC Member States responded to this survey and shared information regarding the status of youth in five main areas: employment and

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<sup>1</sup> This report adopts the UN definition of 15-24 as the common young age bracket.



entrepreneurship; education and skills development; health and well-being; social participation; OIC Youth Strategy and intra-OIC cooperation.

The report has two main parts. Apart from this introduction, Part I includes four chapters in the following areas: education and skills development; employment and entrepreneurship; health and well-being; and social participation. Part II of the Report focuses on enhancing the economic participation of youth as a thematic discussion to understand better the importance of economic participation of youth for development, and to identify the underlying factors that lead relatively to low economic participation of youth in the OIC Member States. In addition, Part II lists some selected success stories from the OIC Member States in addressing the major root causes of low economic productivity of youth and enhancing economic participation of youth as well as providing a set of policy recommendations for the consideration of policy makers at both at the national and OIC cooperation level.



# CHAPTER 2

## Education and Skills Development

Education for sustainable development is fundamental to changing values, attitudes, and behaviours of youth. The benefits of investing in human capital are not necessarily linked with reaching higher enrolment ratios. A comprehensive approach to education that also considers the quality of learning is needed. This entails ensuring that the education policy provides students with good learning opportunities to obtain essential knowledge and skills. In this connection, this chapter examines the state of youth education in the OIC Member States. Selected indicators, namely youth literacy rate, tertiary enrolment ratio, government expenditures on education, student-teacher ratio and student mobility rates are examined to identify challenges that undermine quality youth education and outline possible recommendations to overcome them. The indicators provide a comprehensive and comparative overview of the performance of OIC Member States related to youth education policies and outcomes.

### 2.1 Youth Education Trends

This sub-section focuses on youth education trends by examining the youth literacy rates and indicators on participation in education to assess the performance of OIC Member States in comparative perspective.

#### 2.1.1 Youth Literacy Rate

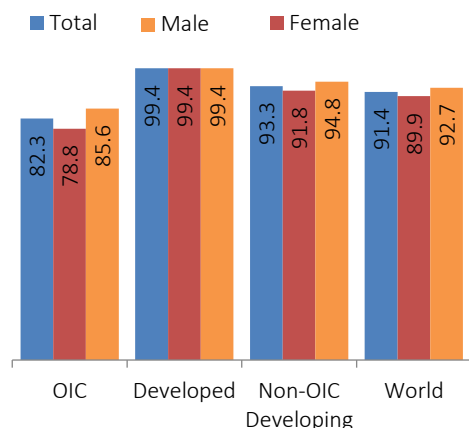
According to the latest data available, literacy rates among youth are comparably better than adult literacy rates in the OIC Member States. However, the average youth literacy rate in OIC Member States are still lower than those of non-OIC developing countries and the world average (Figure 2.1). On average, 82.3% of youth in the OIC Member States are literate, which is below the world average (91.4%) and the average of non-OIC developing countries (93.3%). The discrepancy between male (85.6%) and female (78.8%) literacy rates among the young population narrows down to 6.8%, compared to 11.9% difference in the adult population.

In the majority of the OIC Member States, youth literacy rates are above 90%. Only in 10 of the OIC Member States is the youth literacy rate lower than 60%. 23 OIC Member States have achieved youth literacy rates of 95% or higher. Uzbekistan, with a youth literacy rate of 100%, is the best performing OIC member country (Figure 2.2) followed by Azerbaijan (99.9%), Tajikistan (99.9%), Kazakhstan (99.9%) and Turkmenistan (99.8%). Chad, with a rate of 30.8%



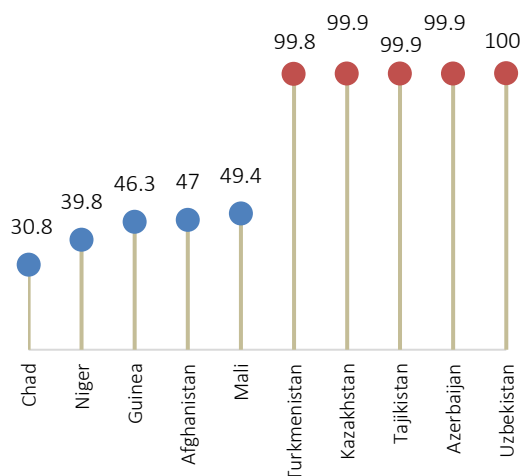
is the country with the lowest youth literacy within the OIC community. It is followed by Niger (39.8%), Guinea (46.3%), Afghanistan (47.0%) and Mali (49.4%).

**Figure 2.1:** Youth Literacy Rates, 2008-2018\*



Source: World Bank Education Statistics and UNESCO UIS Data Centre. \* The weighted averages calculated by using the latest available data for each group during the period 2008-2018.

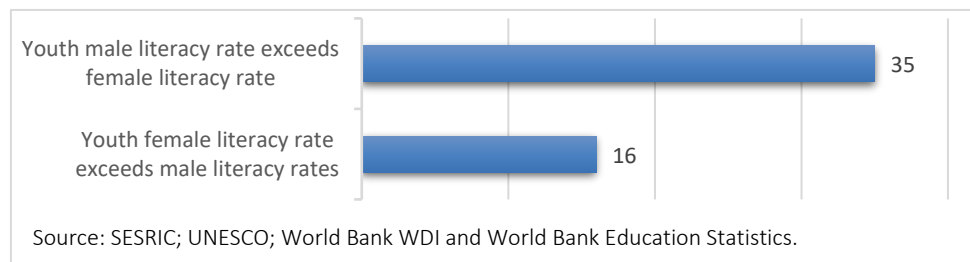
**Figure 2.2:** Highest and Lowest Youth Literacy Rates (%) in OIC Member States 2008-2018\*



Source: World Bank Education Statistics and UNESCO UIS Data Centre

On average, the gap between young male and female literacy rates is persistent in many OIC Member States (Figure 2.3). In 16 OIC Member states, the gap is in favour of youth female population where the discrepancy between the literacy rate of male and female young population is zero or negative. However, in 35 OIC Member States this gap is positive that means the average literacy rate among young male population exceeds the literacy rate of female young population. At the individual country level, the highest gap is seen in Afghanistan where male youth literacy rate is 61.9% while female youth literacy rate is 32.1% over the period 2008-2018. 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. Therefore, many OIC Member States not only need to take action to reduce the illiteracy rate among youth but also to increase gender equality in access to education.

**Figure 2.3:** Number of OIC Member States According to the Gap between Male and Female Youth Literacy Rates, 2008-2018\*



Source: SESRIC; UNESCO; World Bank WDI and World Bank Education Statistics.



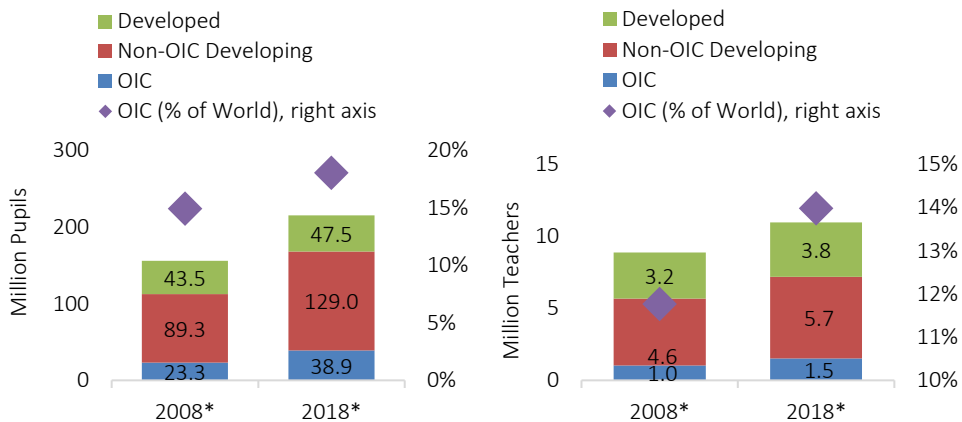


### 2.1.2 Participation in Education

Post-secondary or tertiary education provides students with opportunities to gain advanced knowledge and skills either immediately after secondary school or later on in their lives. Since tertiary education is voluntary, changes in total tertiary school enrolments reflect fluctuations in the perceived availability and value of tertiary education as well as the size of the traditional tertiary-school-age population. Figure 2.4 shows the total numbers of enrolled students and teaching staff in tertiary schools. Based on the most recent data available in each period, the total number of tertiary school students in the OIC Member States increased from 23.3 million to 38.9 million between 2008 and 2018. An increase in tertiary school graduates results in a more qualified and highly skilled workforce which proactively contributes to countries' economic development and competitive advantage.

The increase in tertiary education is a promising development for the OIC Member States. Similarly, the number of teaching staff employed in tertiary schools of OIC Member States increased steadily over the past decade – reaching 1.5 million in 2018. It is also observed that the shares of OIC Member States in total world tertiary school students and teaching staff have been on the rise (Figure 2.4). In 2018, tertiary school students in the Member States were 18.1% of those in the world, compared to 14.9% in 2008. In a similar vein, the share of the Member States in total tertiary school teaching staff in the world increased from 11.8% in 2008 to 14% in 2018.

**Figure 2.4:** Total Enrolment and Teaching Staff in Tertiary Schools



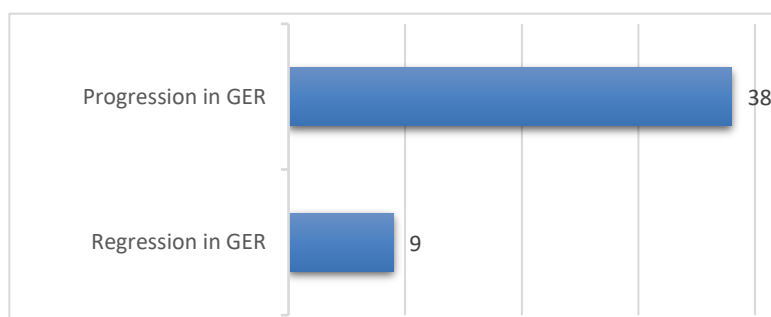
Source: SESRIC; UNESCO; World Bank WDI and World Bank Education Statistics.

\* Or latest five years

At the individual country level, 38 OIC Member States achieved to record an increase in tertiary school gross enrolment rates (GER) over the period 2008-2018 (Figure 2.5). Only 9 out of 47 OIC Member States with available data registered a decline in GER during the same period. Among member countries, Turkey achieved remarkable success by increasing its GER

more than twofold from 40.2% to 103.7% between 2008 and 2018. Similarly, Saudi Arabia achieved to improve its GER from 30.7% to 68.9% in the same period.

**Figure 2.5:** Number of OIC Member States in terms of Progression or Regression in Tertiary School GER, 2008-2018\*



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

## 2.2 Educational Resources, Teaching Conditions and Learning Outcomes

Educational resources are an important part of basic education. Literacy, participation, or progression of youth highly depends on the quality of resources allocated for education. In this regard, this sub-section focuses on various indicators that are related to educational resources. The section also provides an assessment of the availability of teachers per student and international student mobility in the OIC Member States.

### 2.2.1 Government Expenditures on Education

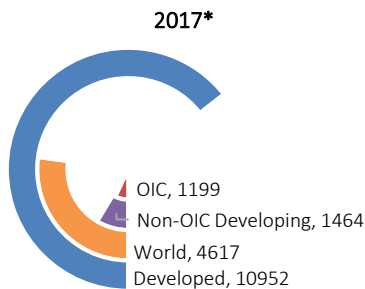
According to the latest available statistics provided by the World Bank and UNESCO, governments around the world spent on average 4.9% of their GDP on education. The situation in OIC Member States is not optimistic as the average government spending on education accounted for only 3.9% of their GDP, which is comparably lower than the averages of the non-OIC developing countries and developed countries (SESRIC, 2019a). A micro-level assessment of governments' financial contribution to the education sector can be done by measuring the quantity spent by the government per student. This approach focuses directly on the level of government spending on education regardless of the size expenditures of the government.

According to the latest data, government expenditures on tertiary level education per student show great discrepancies across country groups (Figure 2.6). The relative gap between the OIC Member States and developed countries is narrow compared to other education levels (primary and secondary). The OIC Member States, on average, spend \$1,199 while developed countries spend around \$10,952. In other words, developed countries, on average, spend around 9 times more at the tertiary level compared to the average of the OIC Member States.



The average per pupil expenditure in OIC Member States is significantly lower than the world average of \$4,617 in 2017. Lack of investment in tertiary education has natural consequences on youth and therefore the stock of human capital and skilled labour force of these economies and negative implications on economic growth and development.

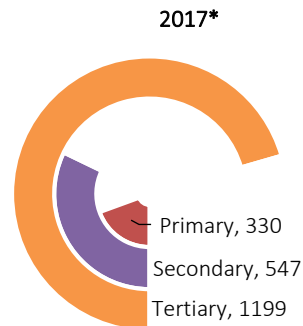
**Figure 2.6:** Government Expenditures on Tertiary Education per Student



Source: SESRIC staff calculation based on World Bank, WDI Database.

\*Weighted averages for the data 2017 or latest year available after 2008 for 30 OIC, 36 developed and 57 non-OIC developing countries.

**Figure 2.7:** Distribution of Government Expenditures on Education per Student, OIC

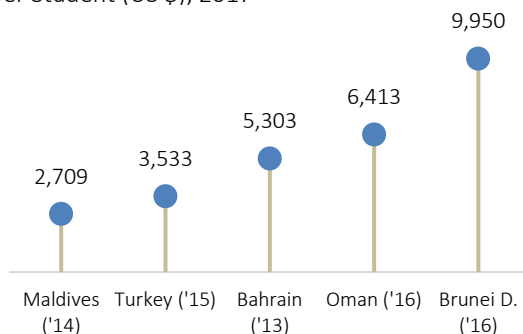


Source: SESRIC staff calculation based on World Bank, WDI Database.

\*2017 or latest year available after 2008

At the OIC level, distribution of government expenditures on education per student varies across education levels. On average, OIC Member States spend greater amounts for students

**Figure 2.8:** Top OIC Member States by Government Expenditures on Tertiary Education per Student (US \$), 2017\*



Source: World Bank, WDI Database.

\*2017 or latest year available after 2008.

at the tertiary level (\$1,199), and lower amounts for students at the primary level (\$330) (Figure 2.7). However, developed countries spend almost an equal amount for students at all levels of education. It is important to point out that there are also regional discrepancies amongst OIC Member States. Those found in Sub-Saharan region have lower rates of government spending on education. Also important is the element of private-public sector funding. As more countries in the world are building bridges between their educational public spending and the private sector funding, OIC

Member States tend to lack this element. This is particularly the case for tertiary education (SESRIC, 2016). The linkages between the private and public sector in the OIC Member States in relation to education is limited and requires greater attention.

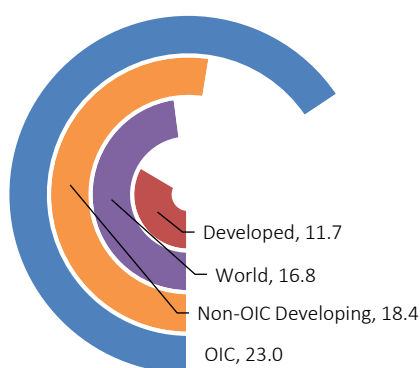
Among the OIC Member States with available data, Brunei Darussalam has the highest government expenditure on education per pupil at the tertiary level (\$9,950), followed by Oman (\$6,413) and Bahrain (\$5,303) (Figure 2.8).

### 2.2.2 Student – Teacher Ratios

Student–teacher ratio refers to the number of students enrolled in a school per the number of teachers employed at that institution. The high student-teacher ratio usually indicates funding problems of schools or school systems. There are 39.1 million tertiary level students in 43 OIC Member States for which data are available in 2017.

This number is lower than the 46.1 million students enrolled in 37 developed countries. However, student-teacher ratio at the tertiary level is the highest in OIC Member States with a ratio of 23 (Figure 2.9). This ratio is significantly lower in non-OIC developing countries (18.4) and much lower in developed countries (11.7), reflecting a greater number of academicians and instructors at the tertiary level per student. The higher ratios in OIC Member States demonstrate that the number of teachers entering the education sector is not sufficient to match the growth rate of tertiary level students. There is a need to enhance the quality of education by decreasing the average number of students per teacher.

**Figure 2.9:** Student – Teacher Ratios at Tertiary Schools, 2017\*



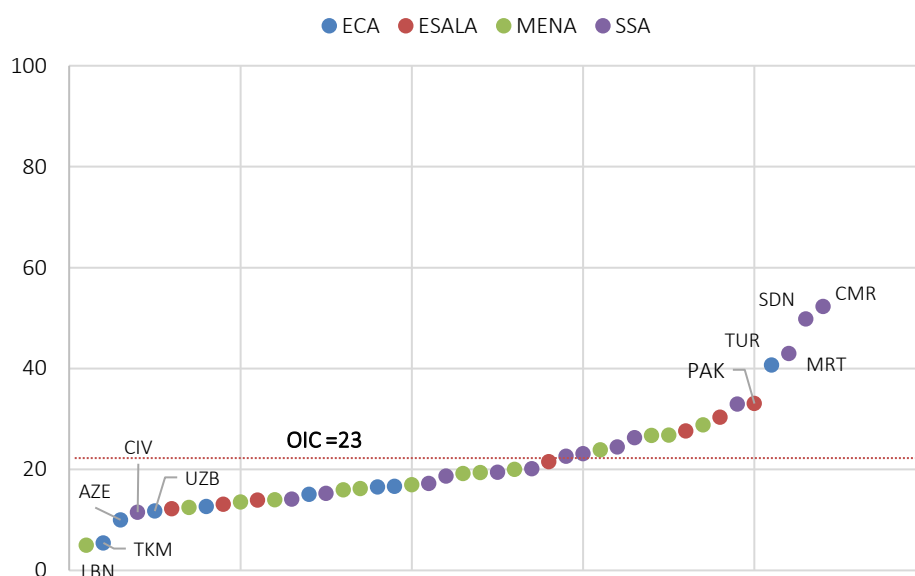
Source: SESRIC staff calculation, World Bank Education Statistics. Weighted averages for 43 OIC, 34 developed and 70 non-OIC developing countries by using data for 2017 or the latest year available after 2008. World average is for the year 2017.

Overall, the average performance of the OIC Member States showed improvements but was still in need of significant advances to catch up and compete with the other country groups. In terms of student-teacher ratios, individual OIC Member States exhibited great variations over a wide scale. On the one hand, 5 OIC Member States had student-teacher ratios less than that of the developed countries average of 11.7 students per teacher (Figure 2.10). The OIC Member States such as Lebanon (5.0), Turkmenistan (5.4), Azerbaijan (10.0), Côte d'Ivoire (11.5), and Uzbekistan (11.7) had the lowest tertiary teacher-student ratio.



On the other hand, an instructor on average taught as high as 52.3 tertiary level students in Cameroon, 49.8 students in Sudan and 43 students in Mauritania. According to the latest statistics available, Cameroon had the highest student-teacher ratio in the world. Even in a more developed country like Turkey, the ratio was as high as 40.7, reflecting the high gap in the number of instructors at the higher level of education (Figure 2.10). In terms of teacher-student ratios, OIC Member States overall are showing progress individually but as a group, there is still a need to formulate policies that will serve to decrease the student-teacher ratio. Without investing in decreasing the teacher-student ratio, achieving quality education at any level is difficult and not likely.

**Figure 2.10:** OIC Member States with the Highest and Lowest Student – Teacher Ratios in Tertiary Schools, 2017\*



Source: World Bank Education Statistics.

\*2017 or the latest year available after 2008.

**Box 2.1. Teacher Training Education (TTE) Project- Uganda**

Access to education has increased in Uganda thanks to the Universal Primary Education (UPE 1997) and the Universal Post-Primary Education and Training (UPPET 2007) reforms. This has led to the expansion of existing schools and the establishment of more primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. However, due to the massive influx of students in existing schools, there is a growing concern about the declining quality of education. To reach a high quality of education, the Government of Uganda launched a project entitled Teacher Training Education (TTE). The project is jointly executed by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the Enabel, the Belgian development agency.

The TTE Project aims to strengthen the professional competencies of teacher trainers and future teachers graduating from the National Teachers' Colleges (NTCs) in Uganda. The project has three components: institutional development (to strengthen the colleges and management systems); infrastructure (to rehabilitate, expand and equip the college facilities); and pedagogy (to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the colleges and partner secondary schools).

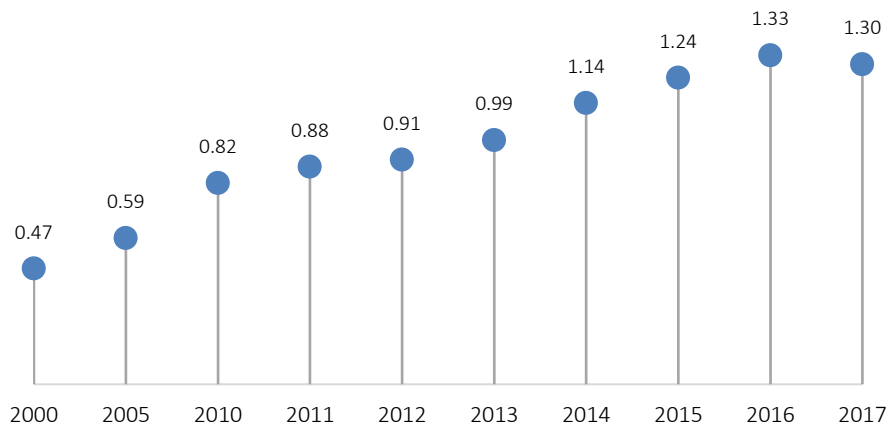
The first phase of the project was initiated in 2011-2016 and focused on improving the teaching and practice-oriented learning environment of the Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) of teachers/instructors, health tutors and secondary school teachers in Uganda.

Source: The Ministry of Education and Sports, The Republic of Uganda, 2019

**2.2.3 International Student Mobility**

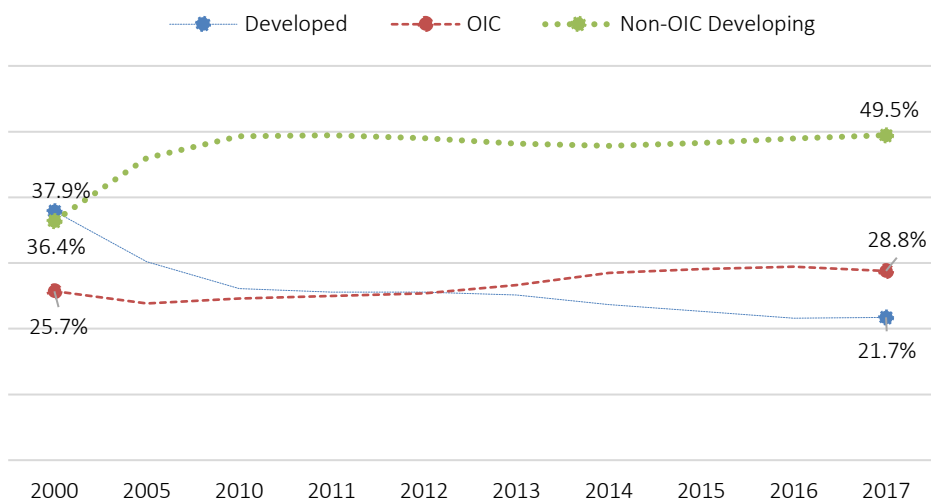
According to the UNESCO UIS database, in 2017 more than 4.5 million students went abroad to study, which is up from 2.5 million in 2005 and 3.3 million in 2010. The OIC Member States are starting to become popular destinations for tertiary education due to the significant investments and reforms in the education sector, which led to an increase in the quality of education and created opportunities for both local and international students (SESRIC, 2019a). However, there is still a sizeable number of OIC youth choosing to study abroad. As depicted in Figure 2.11, the number of students going abroad for tertiary education from the OIC Member States continuously increased over the period between 2000 and 2016. It reached its highest level in 2016 with 1.33 million students, but it slightly fell to 1.30 million in 2017. The main reasons for substantial increases are the growing number of youth and higher economic growth in the Member States that formed opportunities for students to pursue their education at international institutions.



**Figure 2.11:** Outbound Students Mobility in OIC (Millions)

Source: World Bank Education Statistics and UNESCO UIS Database

In the year 2000, OIC Member States were accounting for 25.7% of all international outbound students, but this rate slightly decreased to 24.6% in 2010. Since then, their shares have been slowly increasing to reach 28.8% in 2017 (Figure 2.12). The non-OIC developing countries, driven mainly by China, increased their share from 36.4% in 2000 to 49.5% in 2017. The share of outbound student mobility from developed countries has sizably decreased from 37.9% to 21.7% during the same period.

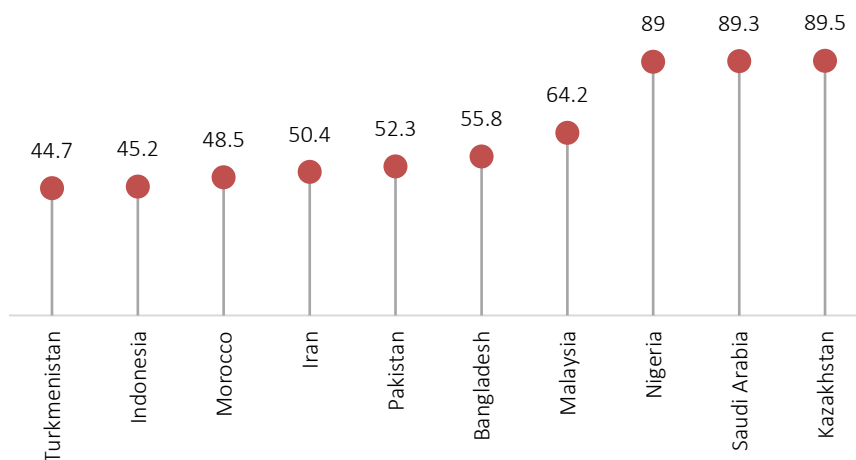
**Figure 2.12:** Share in Outbound Students Mobility

Source: World Bank Education Statistics and UNESCO UIS Database



At the individual country level, Kazakhstan (89.5 thousand), Saudi Arabia (89.3 thousand), Nigeria (89.1 thousand), Malaysia (64.2 thousand) and Bangladesh (55.8 thousand) were the top five student outbound countries within the OIC group, accounting for 30% of all outgoing students in the OIC (Figure 2.13).

**Figure 2.13:** Top OIC Member States by Outbound Students Mobility (Thousands), 2017



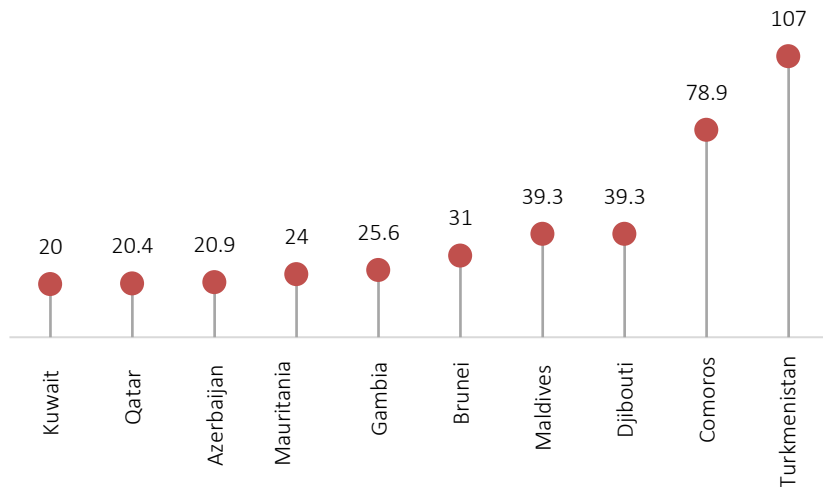
Source: World Bank Education Statistics and UNESCO UIS Database

The main destinations for students in the top five countries and from the majority of the other OIC Member States were to countries with developed education sectors, including the US, UK and Europe. The largest increase in the number of outbound students in the OIC during 2010-2017 was observed in Kazakhstan with an increase of 50 thousand, followed by Saudi Arabia (47 thousand) and Nigeria (37 thousand).

Outbound Mobility Rate (OMR) refers to the share of students studying abroad to the total number of students enrolled in the country. According to the latest available data, there are noteworthy observations about the OMR in the OIC Member States. Turkmenistan with an OMR of 107 has the highest rate within the OIC Member States, which shows that greater numbers of tertiary level students are studying abroad than within the country (Figure 2.16). The rate in Comoros is also considerably high with a rate of 78.9. This rate is as low as 0.6 in Indonesia and 0.7 in Turkey.





**Figure 2.14:** Top OIC Member States by Outbound Mobility Rate

Source: World Bank Education Statistics and UNESCO UIS Database

### 2.3 Concluding Remarks

Notwithstanding the educational achievements made by the OIC Member States over the last few decades, 17.7% of youth in the OIC Member States are still illiterate, lacking basic numerical and reading skills; accordingly, subject to reduced likelihoods of successfully attracting decent jobs. With many youths lacking even primary-level education, persistently high levels of youth unemployment are likely to threaten social inclusion, cohesion and stability. There are many reasons why youth are dropping out of school, including among others, income poverty, gender related issues, disability, conflict, and war. Perceived low market returns to education also discourage people from continuing their education. For the OIC Member States to develop successfully their economies and societies youth education must be carefully planned and effective policies should be formulated to provide young people with the quality education that can prepare them to productively partake in the labour market.

According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, among 20 Member States that responded to the survey, 12 countries have a policy, programme or an initiative on promotion of student exchange programmes with foreign educational institutions. Eight OIC Member States indicated in the survey that they do not have any policy, programme or initiative for student exchange. When it comes to raising awareness, 18 out of 20 OIC Member States responded positively to having educational awareness raising for youth. There are also policies, programmes and initiatives on technical and vocational education to prepare youth for the labour market in 17 out of 20 countries. By using the OIC Youth Strategy, as a framework,

exchanging such policies and practices among the OIC Member States would likely enhance intra-OIC cooperation in the area of youth education.

Moreover, allocating more financial resources, focusing on the quality of education, and encouraging youth to invest in new skills would help to equip youth with necessary knowledge and information in line with the needs of the job market. Lastly, education policies to eliminate barriers in access to education of vulnerable groups of youth migrants, youth with disabilities and young women are important to increase to improve education outcomes for youth in many OIC Member States.



# CHAPTER 3

## Employment and Entrepreneurship

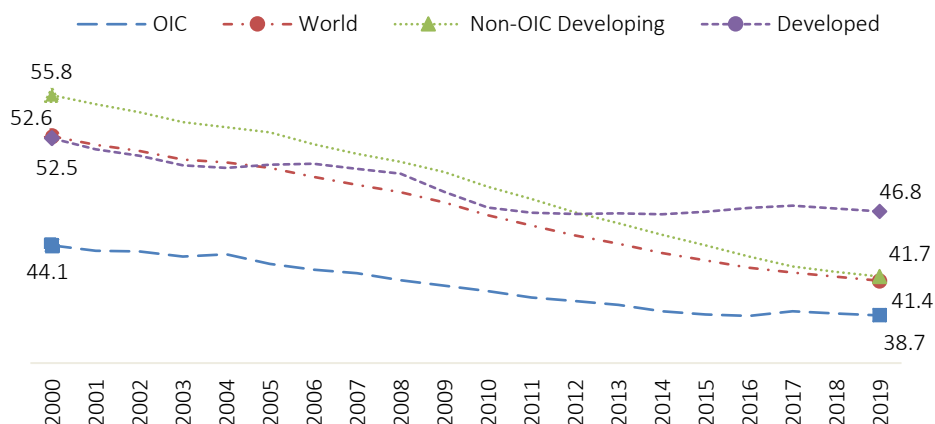
Youth play a vital role in the long-term economic development of societies. Around 18 % of the total population in the OIC Member States is made up of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 (in 2020). Such a high share of youth puts many OIC Member States in a unique position to harness the economic potentials of young people that could facilitate many OIC Member States in reaching several targets stated in the SDGs. Against this background, this chapter discusses the major challenges faced by youth in the area of employment and entrepreneurship and assesses the performance of OIC Member States on major indicators on the labour market (e.g. labour force participation, unemployment etc.). It concludes with policy recommendations on how to improve the economic well-being of youth in the OIC Member States.

### 3.1 Labour Force Participation of Youth

Labour force participation rates of youth reflect the proportion of people aged 15-24 who engage actively in the labour market, either by working (employed) or searching for a job (unemployed). It provides an indication of the relative size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services. According to ILO estimates, over 20% of all young persons in the world were not active participants in the labour market in 2018 (Gammarano, 2019). This finding is significant because youth 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.

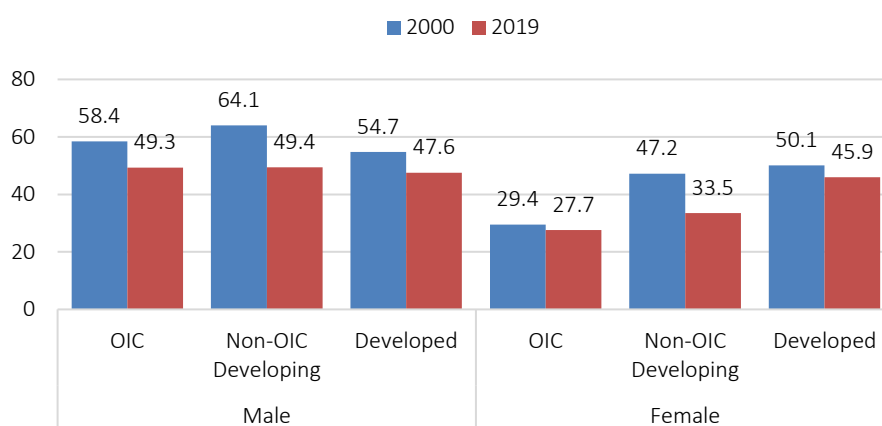
As depicted in Figure 3.1, a declining trend is observed in youth labour force participation rates (LFPR) in all country groups. Globally, in the past two decades, LFPR for youth declined from 52% in 2000 to 41.4% in 2019. The OIC Member States also experienced a decline in youth LFPR from 44.1% in 2000 to 38.7% in 2019. Similarly, youth LFPR decreased in developed countries from 52.5% to 46.8% and in non-OIC developing countries went down from 55.8 % to 41.7% during the same period. The negative trend can partly be explained by the rising participation of youth in technical and vocational education programmes and longer years spent in education institutions.



**Figure 3.1:** Youth Labour Force Participation Rate (%), 2000-2019

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on modelled estimates from UN's World Population Prospects (2019 Edition) and ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)

Gender disaggregated data reveals additional insights. On average, youth LFPR among the female population decreased from 29.4% in 2000 to 27.7% in 2019 in the OIC Member States (Figure 3.2). Yet, it remains significantly below the averages of other country groups. Youth LFPR among the male population also showed a declining trend in all country groups during the period under consideration. On average, it decreased from 58.4% in 2000 to 49.3% in 2019 in the OIC Member States. The average youth LFPR among the male population (49.3%) of the OIC Member States exceeded the average of developed countries (47.6%) in 2019.

**Figure 3.2:** Youth Labour Force Participation Rate by Gender (%)

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UN's World Population Prospects (2019 Edition) and ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)



Participation rates of young men and women are affected by institutional factors such as norms and preferences (e.g. youth's mobility, value of female youth's work, discrimination based on age/experience); economic factors (e.g. comparison of the net earnings with benefits of unpaid work); and social and institutional factors (e.g. age, gender, employable skills) (Gammarano, 2019). Furthermore, when youth participate in the labour force, they may go into relatively less regulated sectors such as the agricultural or services sectors in some OIC Member States. According to the most recent data available in the ILOSTAT Database, 36% of youth work in the services sector in the UAE followed by Brunei Darussalam (25%). In agriculture intensive economies such as Pakistan, Uganda, Mozambique, and Mali – the number of young men and women working in the agricultural sector far outnumbered those in services or industry. For instance, the share of youth employment in the agricultural sector exceeded 35% in Mozambique.

Another factor that discourages youth to be active in the labour force is the existing gender pay gap. In broad terms, the gender pay gap shows the remuneration differences and inequalities between women and men. There are several interrelated factors extending the gender pay gap such as part-time work, unpaid work, care responsibilities, occupational segregation, social norms, implicit biases, discrimination, and weak labour market institutions. Amongst these factors, discrimination against women is the most significant factor for higher gender wage gaps (ILO, 2017). According to the SESRIC (2018), even when women do the same work as men or perform equal value of work, they tend to be paid less in many of the OIC Member States. In line with these findings, in the OIC Youth Survey 2019, 18 OIC Member States out of 20 considered the gender pay gap amongst youth as a challenge. The prevailing high youth unemployment rates (selected by 14 countries out of 21) and existing informalities in economies (selected by 11 countries out of 21) are amongst the leading factors that result in gender pay gap in the OIC Member States. Six OIC Member States mentioned in the Survey that culture, prejudices, and biases are another important set of factors that lead to gender pay gap.

### 3.2 Youth Unemployment

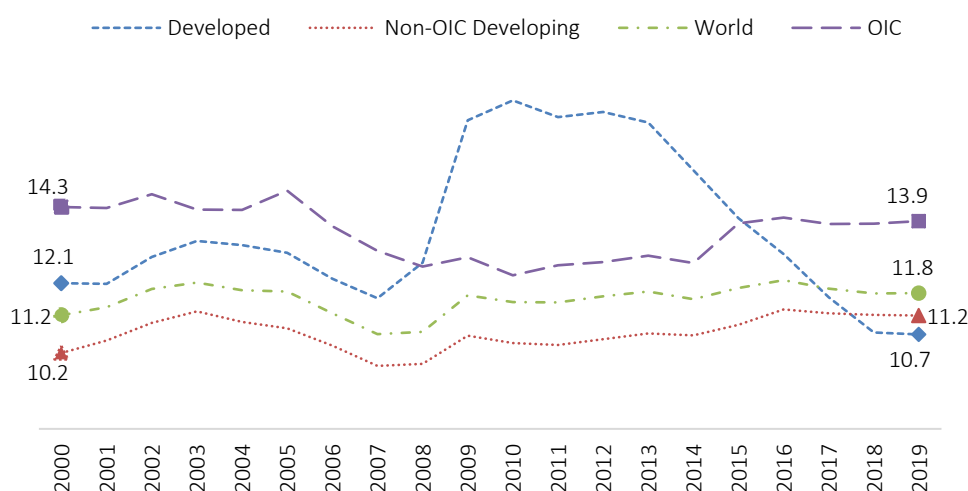
Youth unemployment, in any form, can cause severe strain on a country's economy and society. It negatively affects the productivity of the labour market, government expenditure, and growth. Youth unemployment is a global challenge for economic development. According to ILO, "the annual growth rate of youth employment has been negative since 2008, meaning that the number of employed young persons in the world has been decreasing since 2008 and youth employment is shrinking" (Gammarano, 2019, p. 5). In the OIC Member States, youth unemployment stagnated below 15% between 2000 and 2019 (Figure 3.3). As of 2019, the average youth unemployment rate in the OIC Member States was 13.9% compared to 10.7% in developed countries, and 11.2% in non-OIC developing countries. At the individual country level, Niger (0.4%) and Qatar (0.6%) had the lowest youth unemployment rates in 2019. On



the contrary, the highest youth unemployment rate was recorded in Palestine (45.9%), followed by Libya (42%) and Jordan (36.6%) in the same year.

Several factors may explain the high unemployment rates seen among youth in the OIC Member States. First, youth are more vulnerable than adults are in unfavourable economic times. Second, they may have a harder time finding employment due to the lack of labour market information and job search experience. Finally, the high share of informal economy in some of the OIC Member States tends to reduce job opportunities available for youth in the formal economy. Other factors may be related to bias against youth, sociocultural norms, lack of the first experience and mismatched skills to the labour market amongst others.

**Figure 3.3:** Youth Unemployment Rate (%), 2000-2019



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on modelled estimates from ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)

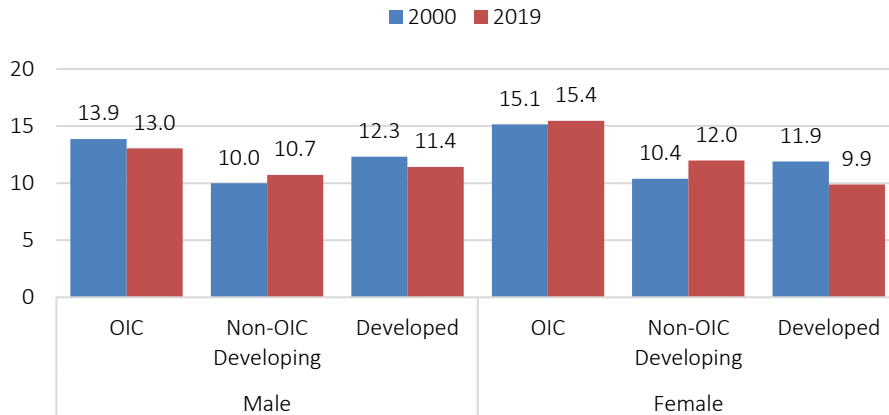
Youth unemployment data, when disaggregated for gender, reveal that the female youth unemployment rate in OIC Member States increased from 15.1% in 2000 to 15.4% in 2019 (Figure 3.4). As of 2019, it was 12% in non-OIC developing countries and 9.9% in developed countries. On average, the male unemployment rate among youth decreased from 13.9% in 2000 to 13% in 2019 in the OIC Member States. These numbers show that female youth population is the most disadvantaged group in terms of employment opportunities in many OIC Member States.

In line with these findings, 17 OIC Member States out of 20 stated in the OIC Youth Survey 2019 that they see the discrimination between the employment of young women and men as a challenge in their respective countries. According to the Survey, one of the main factors that cause discrimination between employment of young women and men in OIC Member States is the employers' perceived risks of pregnancy, maternity leave and job-performance which 9 countries out of 20 mentioned as a great or the greatest impact factor. Culture, prejudices, biases and the lack of legal and regulatory protection mechanisms to prevent discrimination



are also cited amongst the main reasons behind the prevailing gap between the employment of young women and men in OIC Member States.

**Figure 3.4:** Youth Unemployment Rate by Gender (%)



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)

Not only securing a job for youth in the market is challenging in the OIC Member States, but also the entrepreneurial environment for young people is not enabling because of the hurdles ranging from institutional and cultural to social and economic barriers. The underutilization of youth's entrepreneurial potential often translates into monetary and non-monetary losses that are detrimental to the overall development of OIC Member States. Young entrepreneurs are often affected by factors such as low human capital development opportunities, sectoral concentration in informal industries, limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure for enterprises, lack of policy and legal frameworks that encourage and protect young entrepreneurs, and cultural barriers including discrimination based on age and other roles for either males or females.

### 3.3 Youth Employability

According to the ILO, youth employability refers to “portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available to secure and retain decent work, to progress within the enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions” (Brewer, 2013). These competencies and qualifications include formal and informal skills such as education, teamwork, problem-solving, technological knowledge, communication skills, and more.

For employers, employable skills in young people indicate their ability to perform effectively in the workplace, keeping up with technological advances and changing needs of the organization. According to Burnett and Jayaram (2012) predicted that by 2020 the world would be facing a shortage of 85 million highly skilled or technically competent labour force.

**Box 3.1. Key Barriers Affecting School-to-Work Transition**

According to the Background Paper on 'Preparing Youth for the Transition to Work' (Master Card Foundation, 2019), successful transition of youth from school-to-work can be obstructed by various factors such as education outcomes, significant costs associated with the process of finding a job, limited access to finance, lack of trust, and weak personal and professional networks.

Furthermore, women face distinct disadvantages in the job market based on seven major factors: skills and education, capital, networks, time and family formation, occupational choice, employer bias, and safety.

There are also major differences between secondary educated youth living in rural and urban areas based on networks, geographical barriers, job search costs, and availability of jobs in various employment sectors.

Source: Master Card Foundation, (2019)

In the OIC Member States, the mismatch between educational training (including employable skills) and needs of the labour market is a significant economic challenge affecting youth. For example, seven OIC Member States named this mismatch as the greatest economic challenge to youth, and nine OIC Member States mentioned it as a great economic challenge in the OIC Youth Survey 2019. This mismatch partly arises from a lack of employable skills and a lack of training and skills development initiatives for youth. It is also a consequence of education systems that produce graduates whose skills, knowledge, and competencies are inadequate or obsolete, or not attuned with the developments in the labour market.

Given the high youth unemployment and inactivity rates across the OIC Member States, improving youth's employability through skills development is crucial in an increasingly globalized world. Employable skills are important to young people that are new to the labour market, existing employees, and employers because they allow young job seekers and entrepreneurs to improve their likelihood of finding suitable employment, earn decent wages, and navigate their future careers in fluctuating labour markets.

### 3.4 Youth and Entrepreneurship

Given the limited job opportunities available for the youth bulge in many OIC Member States and the developing world, entrepreneurship emerges as a viable option that has the potential to activate the economic power of youth by enabling them to generate a decent income, provide self-motivation and source of motivation for economic inclusion. Young people are innovative and creative in problem solving and solution finding (DFID–CSO Youth Working Group, 2010). Kew et al. (2013) show that globally, young people are 1.6 times more likely than older adults to become entrepreneurs. Such skills of youth tend to motivate them to become entrepreneurs. A recent study of Deloitte (2015) supports this finding with a survey



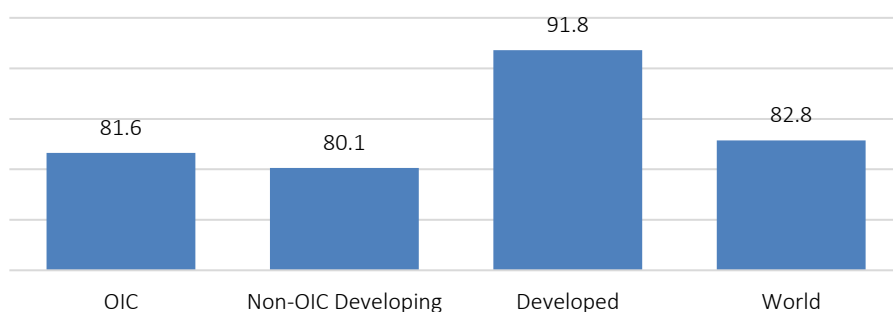


of 7,800 youth from 29 countries and indicates that 70 % see themselves working independently at some point. Entrepreneurship has the capacity to provide many young people with real employment possibilities and opportunities (UN, 2016). Entrepreneurship can also provide young people with valuable skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, and leadership.

In many developing countries, a number of factors put youth entrepreneurs into a disadvantageous position compared to adults such as they start their enterprises with lower levels of initial capital; they tend to operate from homes or streets (lack of access to space); they have limited market information and business network (Kew et al., 2013). Poor infrastructure, unfavourable legal and regulatory frameworks, informal economy, and corruption are also downsizing the potential developmental impacts of youth entrepreneurs in many developing countries (Chigunta, 2002). In this regard, the country context and the existing entrepreneurial ecosystem matters and could influence the impact of youth entrepreneurs on sustainable development.

A well-developed entrepreneurial and business ecosystem promotes and facilitates entrepreneurship of young people. The World Bank's Doing Business Index developed to measure regulations directly affecting businesses in ten main dimensions from trade to electricity. In a scale of 0 (worst)-100 (best), OIC Member States, on average, obtained a score of 81.6 where the developed countries' score was measured at 91.8 in 2018 (Figure 3.5). In other words, doing business in the OIC Member States, on average, was more difficult than developed countries. There were some OIC sub-regions such as SSA and ESALA regions obtained lower scores than the world average of 82.8 that reflect major challenges related to infrastructure, finance, and regulations. According to SESRIC (2018), gender disparities exist in favour of male entrepreneurs where female entrepreneurs tend to overcome additional procedures compared to their male counterparts.

**Figure 3.5:** Ease of Doing Business Index in 2018



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Bank WDI

Overall, entrepreneurs in the OIC Member States, on average, find a relatively less favourable environment for starting and expanding their businesses compared to the average of the world. Existing gender disparities, age-based discrimination and limited experience in the markets make the life of youth entrepreneurs' business life more difficult stemming from such

as barriers in access to credit and finance and complicated registration procedures in a good number of OIC Member States.

### Box 3.2. Young Business Hub Platform

Young Business Hub Platform (YBH) is a joint initiative of the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) that aims at supporting the culture of start-ups and SMEs with a view to creating job opportunities for youth in the OIC region. Individuals and teams from the OIC Member States registered their start-ups for an opportunity to pitch their initiatives and secure mentorship and financial support. Under the YBH, the Young Business Hub Entrepreneurship Investment Summit was organized by ICYF in cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization Investment and Technology Promotion Office in Bahrain (UNIDO ITPO), in partnership with the Union of Arab Chambers. During the Young Business Hub Entrepreneurship Investment Summit, 54 start-ups from 26 different OIC Member States got the opportunity to meet with the investors and present their projects.

Source: [www.youngbusinesshub.org](http://www.youngbusinesshub.org)

## 3.5 Social Safety Policies on Youth

According to the World Bank (2001), social protection refers to “policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people’s exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks, such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age”. Around the world, only 29% of people have social security – including full range of benefits for children, families, and seniors (Ortiz, 2017). For youth, social safety and protection are of specific importance because they are three times more likely to be unemployed as compared to adults (ILO, 2017). Youth are overrepresented in vulnerable employment sectors, such as the informal sector. Their transition from youth to adulthood is also ridden by challenges related to leaving home and school, accessing skills training or further education. Therefore, young people are exceptionally vulnerable to risks that can be mitigated by effective social safety programs.

In the OIC Member States, multi-dimensional poverty is a major economic challenge affecting young people. According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, seven OIC Member States identified poverty as the greatest and nine OIC Member states as a great economic challenge affecting youth. Combined with high unemployment rates and low transition rates, social protection is critical for young people’s access to employment, reduction of poverty, access to education and skills development, and more (Domingo-Palacpac, 2016). For example, social assistance programs such as those that provide stipends or allowances and scholarships for secondary and tertiary students can assist in improving young people’s access to education services thus assist their employment opportunities in the future. Social health assistance programs targeting poor households can improve young individuals’ access to affordable healthcare.



Labour market programs can also aid youth's access to skills development and job search programs that can improve their employability in the formal sector (Domingo-Palacpac, 2016). Lastly, extending unemployment benefits to youth can also improve their income security (UN DESA, 2018) enabling youth to use their time to develop their personal and professional skills.

### 3.6 Economic Challenges and Youth Migration

Economic reasons such as unemployment or lack of decent wages are among major determinants of youth migration. Youth migration affects economic development as well. In this regard, there is a two-way relationship between migration and development. According to Taran (2018), over 90% of migration today – regardless of the reason – is closely connected to employment and economic activity. The ILO (2018) reports that out of 277 million people living outside their countries of birth or origin approximately 60% (164 million) were migrant workers in 2017.

In a similar vein, approximately 27 million young people emigrated from their home countries in search of better economic opportunities in 2013 – making up approximately 12% of all migrants (UN DESA, 2018). The UN figures reveal that the highest share of youth in all migrants is in the least developed countries, highlighting the economic pull of migration for youth from least developed economies in search of opportunities that will enable them to provide for themselves and their families back home.

The OIC Youth Survey 2019 reveals that the top three leading economic factors that motivate youth to migrate from their home countries is the unemployment problem (17 OIC Member States out of 20), better employment opportunities available abroad (17 OIC Member States out of 20), and underdeveloped social security systems in home countries (12 OIC Member States out of 20). Other economic factors such as the existence of informal economy, mismatch of skills in the labour market, and discrimination based on age play a role in motivating youth to migrate from the economic aspect, according to the Survey. Amongst developing countries, including many OIC Member States, ILO (2019) finds that the highest propensity for youth migration is seen in Sub-Saharan Africa; where 43% of young migrants expressed that they would leave their countries to migrate abroad. The propensity to migrate is compounded by a lack of financial resources and political instability.

Young migrants face several challenges at their destination countries such as isolation, exclusion, discrimination, and insecurity. In particular, the issue of 'brain drain' (loss of skilled and educated youth) has long-term impacts on the country's economy and development. In this context, both home and host countries need to develop effective policies to overcome challenges led by youth migration. Youth migration is expected to increase across the world (Taran, 2018). Hence, OIC Member States are also expected to experience an increase in youth migration – regardless of their status as a host country, country of origin, or transit country.

Against this background, it is crucial for the OIC Member States to be aware of the challenges and opportunities associated with youth migration to mitigate the impacts in a timely manner



at the economic front. The majority of the respondent OIC Member States (13 out of 20) stated that they have already designed specific policies, programmes or initiatives to cope with youth migration in their respective countries (OIC Youth Survey, 2019). In this regard, other OIC Member States are also recommended to develop policies and programmes with a view to integrating youth migrants into their economies effectively and limiting youth brain drain by providing a diverse array of economic opportunities in their countries of origin.

### **3.7 Concluding Remarks**

The labour market conditions for youth in many OIC Member States are not exceptionally promising where high unemployment, low labour force participation and underutilized entrepreneurship skills form a set of challenges for youth. Current and prospective challenges on youth employment and entrepreneurship ecosystem in a number of OIC Member States require a set of comprehensive actions to address them. Most of the OIC Member States have realized the importance of youth for their development. According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, the majority of respondent OIC Member States stated that they have specific policies, programmes or initiatives designed for improving the overall economic situation of youth and enhancing their economic participation.

According to the Survey, 19 OIC Member States out of 22 utilize some policies to encourage youth employment, 20 OIC Member States out of 22 have specific technical and vocational training programmes for youth, 12 OIC Member States out of 21 develop policies/initiatives to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), and six OIC Member States out of 22 implement policies and programmes to improve the social security situation of youth.

Many OIC Member States have several best practices and success stories in the employment of youth and fostering youth entrepreneurship. Adopted strategy documents such as the OIC Youth Strategy, OIC Labour Market Strategy, and OIC 2025 Programme of Action also include a set of concrete policy recommendations to improve the youth employment. Therefore, it is of importance to enhancing intra-OIC cooperation in this important domain.

The causes of youth unemployment may vary across the OIC Member States. Nevertheless, insufficient job creation and skill mismatch seem to be amongst the most common root causes. Therefore, policies to promote job creation and improve skill match need to be prioritized. In addition, improving the quality of labour market institutions has the potential to facilitate youths' transition to better jobs. To mitigate effectively the economic challenges faced by some vulnerable groups such as young women and young migrants, OIC Member States need to establish laws, policies, and practices to cope with discrimination at the labour market.



# CHAPTER 4

## Health and Well-Being

Health is a major driver of socio-economic progress that fosters human development and alleviates poverty. Moreover, a healthy young person may contribute to economic development largely because they tend to live longer and stay more productive over the span of their life. In this regard, there exists a direct linkage between the improvement of the health and well-being of youth and the achievement of sustainable development. In particular, Sustainable Development Goal 3 refers to health and well-being and aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Against this background, this section evaluates the state of health and well-being of youth in the OIC Member States, provides a wide-range of comparative analysis, and identifies some major issues that require immediate attention both at the national and intra-OIC cooperation levels to improve health services in the OIC Member States.

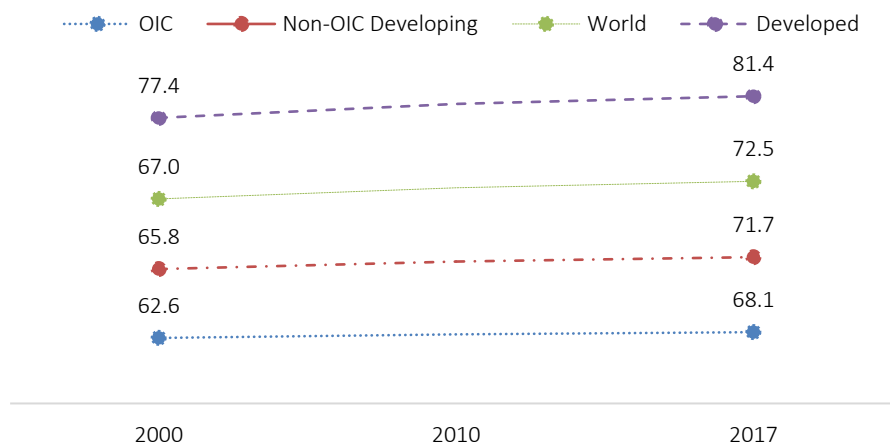
### 4.1 Life Expectancy at Birth

Life expectancy at birth (LEB) is an important indicator of the overall health status of people living in a country and the quality of health care services they are receiving. It refers to the average number of years that a new-born is expected to live if health and living conditions at the time of birth remained at the same levels. The state of poverty and undernourishment, access to clean water and sanitation, availability of primary health care services and immunization coverage are the factors that affect LEB. Limited life expectancy points out the lack of health services or their poor quality that is not at world standards. This indicator is important for youth since their education plans, career prospects, life dreams and even retirement plans depend upon it.

Figure 4.1 displays the life expectancy rates between 2000 and 2017 across the globe. On average, the OIC Member States as a group witnessed an improvement in the life expectancy at birth between 2000 and 2017 where the LEB rose from 62.6 years in 2000 to 68.1 years in 2017. In the same period, the LEB increased from 65.8 to 71.7 in non-OIC developing countries. Over this period, the worldwide average LEB climbed from 67 to 72.5. The average LEB in developed countries reached 81.4, which was the highest LEB among all groups in 2017. Despite major improvements seen in the LEB, OIC Member States still lag behind the averages of non-OIC developing and developed countries as well as the world average.



Figure 4.1: Life Expectancy at Birth (2000-2017)



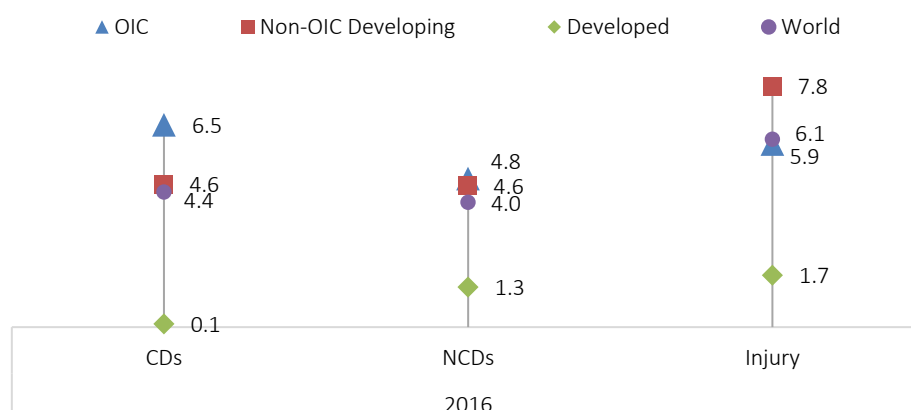
Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Bank WDI

## 4.2 Causes of Death

Causes of death for youth can be affected particularly by the development level of a country. As countries develop over time, they can invest more in fighting against easily preventable Communicable Diseases (CDs), and therefore their inhabitants including youth do not usually die from such diseases. More developed countries tend to suffer more from Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, obesity and physical inactivity that threaten their young population (SESRIC, 2019b).

Figure 4.2 displays the causes of the death of youth across country groups in 2016. According to the latest estimates, injuries were the major cause of death among youth worldwide. In 2016, 6.1% of all youth deaths in the world could be attributed to injuries while CDs caused 4.4% of all youth deaths. At the global level, on average, NCDs were the least important death-causing factor with 4% of all youth losing their lives stemming from NCDs. In the OIC Member States, injuries caused 5.9% of all youth deaths in the same year. The contribution of CDs to death among youth was 6.5% in 2016 while NCDs were responsible for 4.8% of all deaths in the OIC Member States. It becomes clear that CDs, on average, seem to be the leading cause of death that poses a threat to the health and well-being of young people in the OIC Member States.



**Figure 4.2: Major Causes of Death (ages 15-29) (% of total deaths) (2016)**

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Health Organization Data Repository

### 4.3 Risk Factors

Undernutrition, insufficient physical activity, and obesity are the risk factors that affect youth the most. They are preventable and therefore policymakers in the OIC Member States need to design policies to eliminate these factors. The OIC Youth Strategy points out these risk factors and provides policy options to diminish the negative impacts of these risk factors on youth's health. Despite recording significant progress over the last two decades, millions of youth in the OIC Member States still have to cope with under-nutrition and malnutrition due to poverty, lack of access to foods and protein sources as well as limited parental knowledge on nutrition. The latest estimates show that about 31% of under-five children in the OIC Member States were stunted in 2010-2018 compared to 27% in other developing countries and in the world (SESRIC, 2019b).

On the other hand, childhood overweightness and obesity are on the rise across the globe especially in the developing world including a number of OIC Member States, usually continuing during youth and adulthood. Obesity leads to adverse metabolic effects on blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides, and insulin resistance. In the OIC Member States, on average, among 18+ population the prevalence of obesity increased from 15.2% in 2010 to 17.5% in 2016 (SESRIC, 2019b). In addition, insufficient physical activity has a negative impact on the well-being of both adult and young population. In the OIC Member States, on average, the prevalence of insufficient physical activity among 18+ population was 28.8%, which exceeded the world average of 28.2% (SESRIC, 2019b). The common reasons behind physical inactivity in urban areas are violence, high-density traffic, low air quality, pollution, and lack of parks, limited sidewalks and the absence of sports/recreation facilities.

**Box.4.1: Healthy Future with Healthy Youth – Turkey**

In 2014, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Turkey in collaboration with the Ministry of Health launched a project named “Healthy Future with Healthy Youth”. Within the scope of this project, more than 300 thousand university students from 350 dormitories under the Ministry of Youth and Sports voluntarily underwent medical screening on an eye, tooth, and skin basis. The aim of the project is to improve the health and well-being of youth. Equally important, increasing the health screening, health literacy and health service demand were also amongst the targets of this project.

Within the scope of the project, 18 thousand students staying in these dormitories received information about the eye, skin and dental diseases and underwent health screening. According to the results of health screening, if necessary, young people were directed to the relevant health institutions. In addition, related information on nutrition, physical activity and hygiene were provided in consultancy services.

The pilot studies started in nine cities of Turkey, namely Ankara, Istanbul, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Trabzon, Antalya, Izmir, Balıkesir and Tekirdağ. Following the pilot health studies, the project was implemented in other cities of Turkey.

Source: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Health, 2014

## 4.4 Dependencies and Addictions

Harmful use of substances among young people is influenced by external factors. According to the UN (2018b), these factors can be categorised as personal, micro and macro. Factors at the personal level include behavioural, mental health, and neurological developments as well as gene variations resulting from social influences. The micro level factors consist of parental and family functioning, schools, and peer influences. At the macro level, socioeconomic and physical environment can render youth vulnerable to substance use.

Factors leading to substance use among youth vary between individuals, and not all young people are equally vulnerable to substance use. A single factor alone is not sufficient to lead to the use of substances and, in many instances, these influences change over time. However, early mental and behavioural health problems, poverty, lack of opportunities, isolation, lack of parental involvement and social support, negative peer influences and poorly equipped schools are more common among youth who develop problems with substance use.

Dependencies and addictions have multiple direct effects on youth. The likelihood of unemployment, physical health problems, dysfunctional social relationships, suicidal tendencies, mental illness, and even lower life expectancy is increased by substance use in adolescence. In the most serious cases, harmful use of drugs can lead to a cycle in which damaged socioeconomic standing and inability to develop relationships feed substance use.





#### 4.4.1 Alcohol

Alcohol is a risk factor for several diseases that affect millions of people across the world. Globally, 3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol; this stands for 5.3% of all deaths, according to the WHO estimates. Beyond health consequences, use of alcohol brings significant social and economic losses to individuals and society. However, there is limited data on alcohol consumption among youth in OIC Member States where only 26.1% of them having national surveys on youth alcohol consumption compared to 67% in non-OIC developing countries, and 100% in developed countries (SESRI, 2016). It can be assumed that the rate of alcohol consumption among youth in the 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 Islam. The consumption of alcohol is also usually associated with a strongly negative social stigma in many OIC Member States.

Although there is limited data on alcohol consumption among youth in the OIC Member States, some information on treatment programmes on alcohol consumption is available. According to the WHO, 5 OIC Member States (Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) out of 46 had treatment programmes for children and adolescents with alcohol use disorders in 2014.

#### 4.4.2 Drugs

Surveys on drug use among the general population show that the extent of drug use among young people remains higher than that among older people. In addition, most research suggests that early (12–14 years old) to late (15–17 years old) adolescence is a critical risk period for the initiation of drug use and that drug use may peak among young people aged 18–25 years. (UN, 2018b). Drug use varies across countries and depends on social and economic circumstances. Nevertheless, young people living in extreme conditions tend to use drugs to cope with their difficult circumstances (UN, 2018b). Moreover, due to poverty and lack of social and economic opportunities, young people engage in the cultivation, production, and trafficking of drugs.

Due to religious and social reasons, the use of illicit drugs among youth in the OIC Member States is less frequent when compared with many other developing and developed countries. Despite this fact, the OIC Member States must keep a watchful eye on the use of drugs among youth. Most of them host 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. This concern is not misplaced and the tramadol case in Egypt and Gaza, and the Bonzai case in Turkey justify such concerns (Fawzui, 2011). According to the WHO, 5 OIC Member States (Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) out of 46 had treatment programmes for children and adolescents with drug use disorders in 2014.



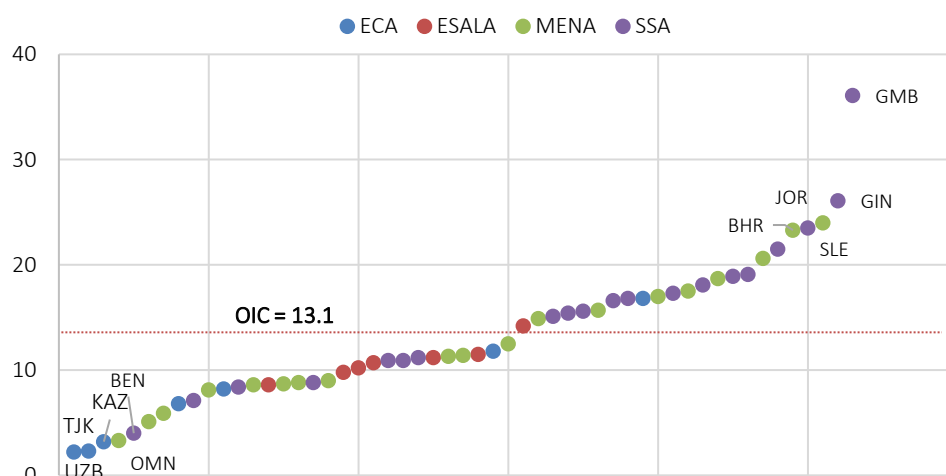
### 4.4.3 Tobacco

The WHO declares that tobacco kills up to half of its users. There are more than 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, of which at least 250 are known to be harmful and more than 50 are known to cause cancer. It is estimated that tobacco kills more than 8 million people each year (SESRIC, 2019b). In addition to deaths, tobacco use has other drawbacks. Since tobacco users die prematurely, their families are deprived of income, the cost of health care rises, and economic development is hindered. Moreover, tobacco can also be deadly for non-smokers: second-hand tobacco smoke contributes to heart disease, cancer, and other illnesses.

On average, in 2017, tobacco products used among youth in the OIC Member States was 13.1%, which is lower than the world average of 16.7% (Figure 4.3). Among the tobacco products used, the current cigarette smoking among youth in the OIC Member States, on average, was 7.4% which is also below the world average of 10.4% in 2017 (Figure 4.4).

The use of tobacco products among youth is not homogenous among the OIC Member States as depicted in Figure 4.3. Among 53 OIC Member States, which data are available for, Gambia has the highest tobacco use rate among youth (36.1%), followed by Guinea (26.1%), Jordan (24%), Sierra Leone (23.5%) and Bahrain (23.3%). The lowest rate of tobacco use among youth is recorded in Uzbekistan (2.2%), followed by Tajikistan (2.3%), Kazakhstan (3.2%), Oman (3.3%) and Benin (4%).

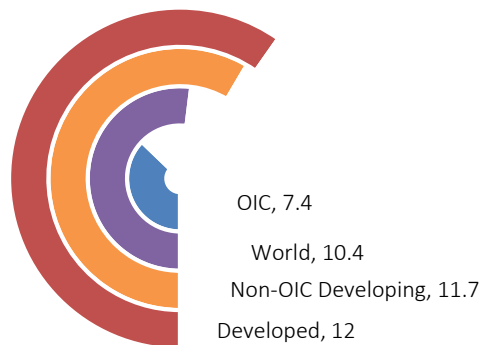
**Figure 4.3:** Current Tobacco Use Among Youth in OIC Member States, 2017\*



Source: World Health Organization Data Repository

\*Most recent data available



**Figure 4.4:** Current Cigarette Smoking among Youth, 2017

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Health Organization Data Repository

#### 4.4.4 Technology

While new technology tools (i.e. internet, smartphones, 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 modern technology tools may lead to addictions that resemble the behaviour associated with drug and alcohol use (Byun et al., 2008).

In a number of OIC Member States, several studies exist about youth addiction on technology. Othman and Lee (2017) found that technology/internet addiction among Malaysian youth tend to result in depression. Aktepe et al. (2013) showed that the prevalence of possible Internet addiction was found to be 14% among adolescents in Turkey by using a city level dataset. They also show that internet addiction is linked with low levels of loneliness. Hashem and Smith (2010) showed 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. In a similar vein, Mellouli et al. (2018) also showed that poor control of internet usage is highly prevalent among college students in Tunisia.

The challenge posed by these recent technology tools such as internet and social media for the 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 partnership among educational institutions, parents and youth that will result in healthy technology related habits.

## 4.5 Reproductive Health

Reproductive health of youth is critical for their physical and mental health status. The lack of proper knowledge on reproductive health leads to important consequences such as the early marriage or sexually transmitted diseases among youth. In this context, looking at major indicators on reproductive health would provide additional insights on how to improve the well-being of youth in the OIC Member States.

### 4.5.1 Age at First Marriage

Age at first marriage (AFM) differs across countries due to culture, socio-economic development level, local customs as well as climate, which affects the adolescent development. AFM tends to go up along with increased urbanization, industrialization, and educational enrolment. AFM has serious implications for young women. Marriages at young ages may lead to health problems for men and women who are not ready for marriage both mentally and physically. Unhealthy couples form unhealthy families and society. In the light of most recent statistics, SESRIC (2018) displayed that the OIC Member States has a relatively lower AFM for the female population (23.1) compared to the world average (24.9). Moreover, the age gap between couples at first marriage is high (4.5 years) in the OIC Member States, where the world average gap is 3.7 years. A wider age gap between couples may bear problems such as limited cohesion that may reduce the happiness and well-being of individuals.

### 4.5.2 Child Marriage

Child marriage is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18 and common in many parts of the world. There are several economic, structural, and social factors contributing to child marriage. Poverty, protection of girls, family honour, paying a lower dowry, lack of educational opportunities, sense of tradition and social obligation, and the provision of stability during unstable social periods are some of the main factors behind child marriage (UNICEF, 2018).

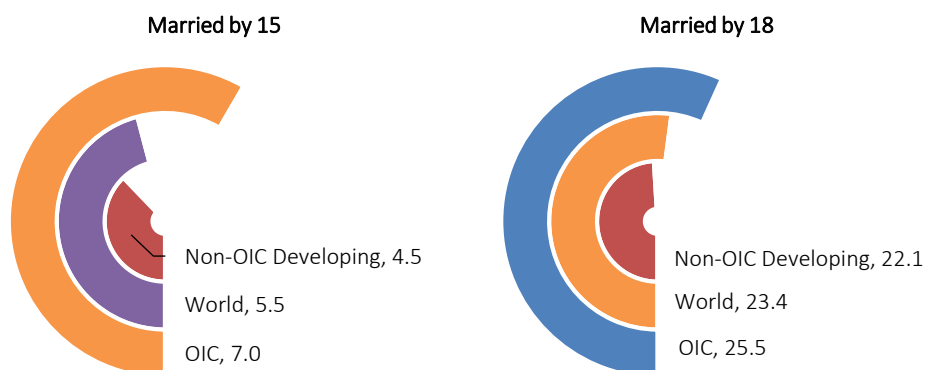
Child marriage, particularly, puts young girls' health and well-being at serious risk. Marriage is mostly followed by pregnancy, even when the girls are not physically or mentally prepared. In the worst case, pregnancy and birth complications in early age are likely to cause death among adolescent girls aged 15 to 19. Furthermore, due to the heavy burden of household responsibilities, girls are forced to drop out of school.

Figure 4.5 displays the prevalence of child marriage (both for marriages before 15 and 18 years) across country groups between 2010 and 2017. The OIC Member States has the highest child marriage prevalence in both groups where 7% of all marriages are being exercised before 15 years old and 25.5% of all marriages are being performed before 18 years old. The global average of the prevalence of marriages before 15 years old is 5.5% and for marriages before 18 years old, the average is 23.4%. In non-OIC developing countries, child marriage is



less common than the OIC Member States where their average is 4.5% and 22.1%, respectively for marriages before 15 and 18 years old.

**Figure 4.5:** Child Marriage (% of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18) (2010-2017\*)



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UNICEF Global Databases 2018, based on DHS, MICS and other nationally representative surveys

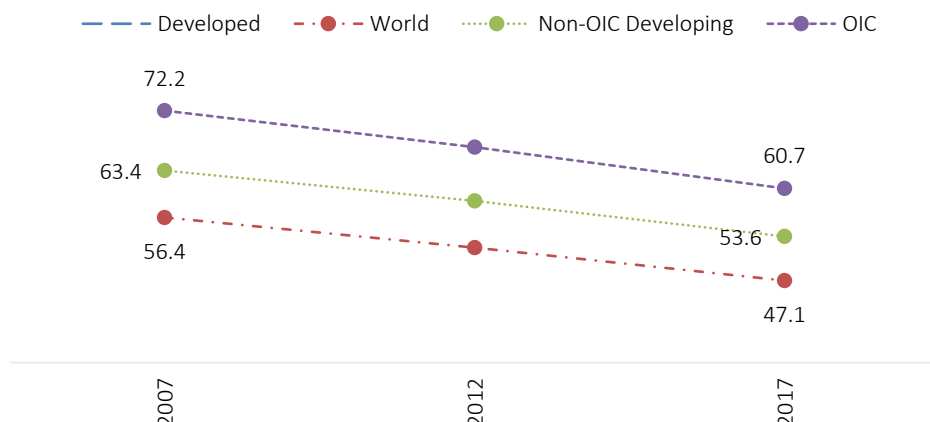
\* Data refers to the most recent year available during the period specified.

#### 4.5.3 Adolescent Fertility Rate

Early pregnancy is a topic of concern, particularly because of its highly damaging effects on health, and consequently education and employment prospects of adolescent girls. In many parts of the developing world, especially in rural areas, girls marry shortly after puberty and are expected to begin having children at once. Commonly, young girls who become pregnant are pressured or forced to drop out of school. Studies found that there is a negative correlation between the level of education and the age of giving birth. Moreover, young women in rural areas have much higher fertility than those in an urban environment (UN, 2018a).

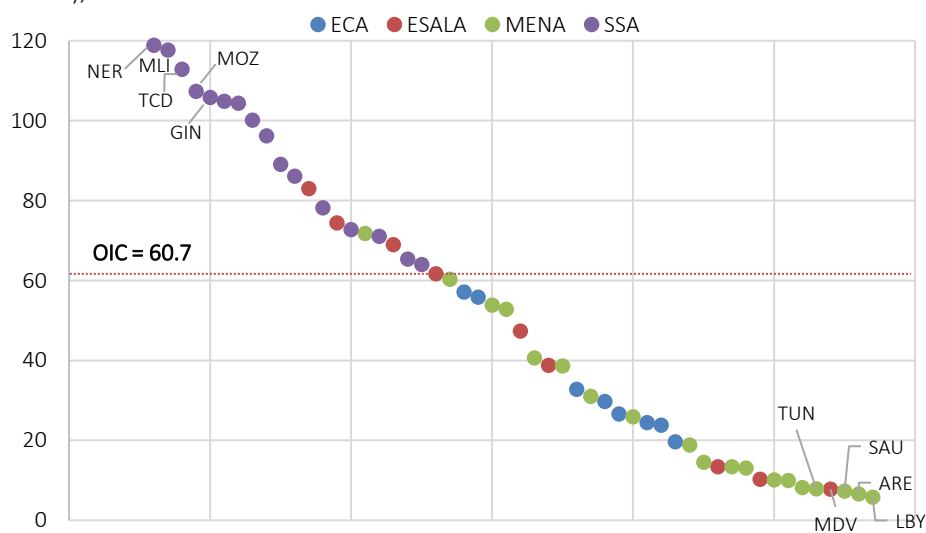
Furthermore, early childbearing may have several risks in terms of health. Babies of mothers aged 20 or below are likely to be born premature, have low body weight and more likely to die in the first year of life. Regarding adolescent mothers, poor health and complications during pregnancy and delivery are threatening their health (SESRIC, 2017). Pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death amongst adolescent girls aged between 15 and 19 in low-income countries. In addition, complications linked to pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading cause of death for 15-19-year-old girls globally (WHO, 2014).

Figure 4.6 displays adolescent fertility rate (AFR) which reflects the number of births (per 1,000 women) aged between 15 and 19 years. On average, AFR decreased from 72.2 in 2007 to 60.7 in 2017 in the OIC Member States. Yet, it is still higher than the global average of 47.1 recorded in 2017. In this regard, on average young women in the OIC Member States are under a higher fertility pressure that prevents them from investing in their self-development.

**Figure 4.6:** Adolescent Fertility Rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19), 2000-2017

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Bank, Gender Statistics

In the OIC Member States, AFR varies across regions. Among the OIC sub-regions, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of adolescent fertility, followed by ESALA, ECA, and MENA. At the individual country level, there is a huge gap between the countries with the highest and lowest rates. Niger has the highest AFR (186.5), followed by Mali (169.1), Chad (161.1), Mozambique (148.6), and Guinea (135.3). On the other side of the spectrum, AFR is lowest in Libya (5.8) among the OIC Member States (Figure 4.7).

**Figure 4.7:** Adolescent Fertility Rate in OIC Member States (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19), 2017

Source: World Bank, Gender Statistics

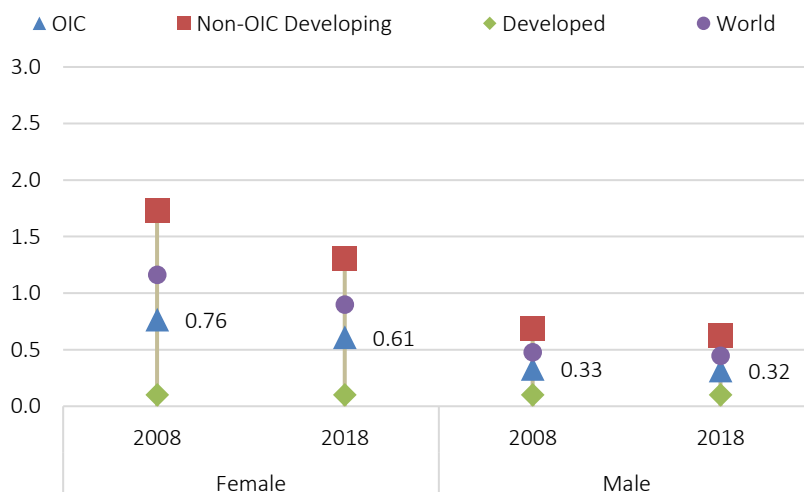


#### 4.5.4 HIV/AIDS

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) targets the immune system and weakens people's surveillance and defence systems against infections and some types of cancer. The most advanced stage of HIV infection is Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which can take from 2 to 15 years to develop depending on the individual. AIDS is defined by the development of certain cancers, infections, or other severe clinical manifestations (SESRIC, 2019b). HIV can be transmitted via the exchange of a variety of body fluids from infected individuals, such as blood, breast milk, semen, and vaginal secretions (SESRIC, 2019b). According to the WHO (2019a), 1.7 million people were newly infected with HIV in 2018 and around 38 million people living with HIV in the world.

The prevalence of HIV among youth (ages 15-24) in the world slightly decreased for both sexes between 2008 and 2018 (Figure 4.8). In 2018, the worldwide average prevalence rate was measured as 0.9% for young women and 0.4% for young men. The prevalence rate in the OIC Member States (45 countries for which data are available), on average, is on the decline. The rate in the OIC went down from 0.76% in 2008 to 0.61% in 2018 for young women and slightly changed for young men from 0.33% to 0.32%. In the OIC sub-regions, the prevalence of HIV was concentrated especially in the SSA for all age groups. Among the OIC sub-regions, the lowest HIV cases were recorded in SA where only 0.1% of all population was diagnosed with HIV (SESRIC, 2019b).

**Figure 4.8:** Prevalence of HIV, (% of population aged 15-24) (2008-2018)

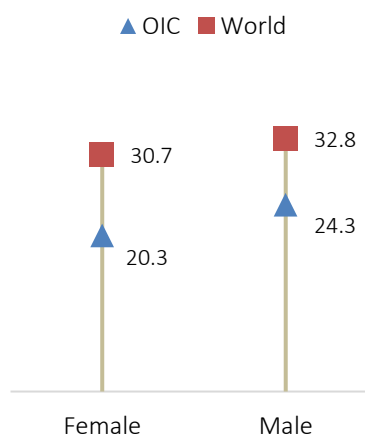


Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Bank Health Nutrition and Population Statistics

Youth populations in several OIC Member States do not have the required knowledge on reproductive health and preventive measures that in turn make them vulnerable to communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS. In the OIC Member States, on average, only 20.3% of young women and 24.3% of young men have comprehensive, corrective knowledge of HIV (Figure 4.9). However, the world average for the female young population is 30.7% and male young population is 32.8%, which are higher than the OIC averages.

Young people need to know how to protect themselves from HIV infection and must have the means to do so. Better access to HIV testing and counselling and stronger subsequent links to HIV treatment services for those who test HIV positive are also needed.

**Figure 4.9:** Percent of young people (aged 15-24) with comprehensive, correct knowledge of HIV, 2018\*



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

\*Most recent data available

## 4.6 Mental Health

Mental health is of the essence for the well-being and effective functioning of individuals. It refers to the ability to think, learn, and understand one's emotions and the reactions of others. Physical, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, and other interrelated factors play a role in constituting a state of balance, which is essential for mental health. In addition, physical health and mental health are interconnected.

Youth are at greater risk of a range of mental-health conditions as they transit 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). Half of all mental health disorders in adulthood start by the age of 14, but most cases go unrecognized and untreated, with dire consequences for mental health throughout life (WHO, 2018).

Violence, poverty, humiliation and feeling devalued can increase the risk of developing mental health problems.

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

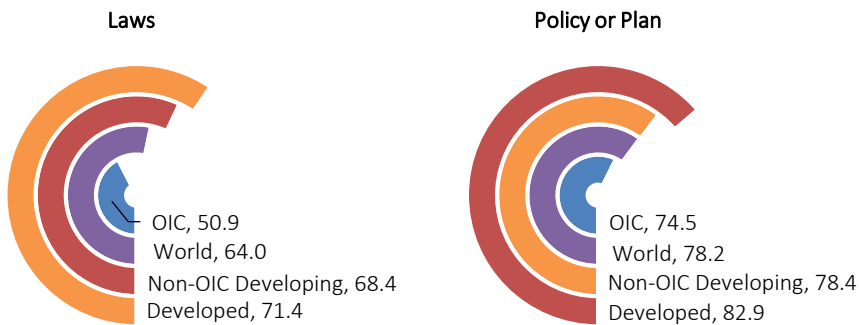
An increasing number of OIC Member States are developing policies on mental health. According to the WHO, in 50.9% of OIC Member States, a stand-alone law for mental health existed in 2017 (Figure 4.10). This percentage falls short from the average of the world (64%). In the non-OIC developing group, 68.4% of countries have a law on mental health and this percentage increases to 71.4% in the developed country group. Similarly, mental health policy





or plan is available in 74.5% of OIC Member States compared to 78.4% in non-OIC developing countries and 82.9% in developed countries (Figure 4.10). When it comes specifically to the youth mental health issue, the results of the OIC Youth Survey 2019 provide additional insights. 14 out of 20 OIC Member States, who responded to the survey, indicated that they have specific policies, programmes or initiatives to improve youth mental health.

**Figure 4.10:** Availability of Stand-alone Mental Health Laws, Policies or Plans, 2017\*

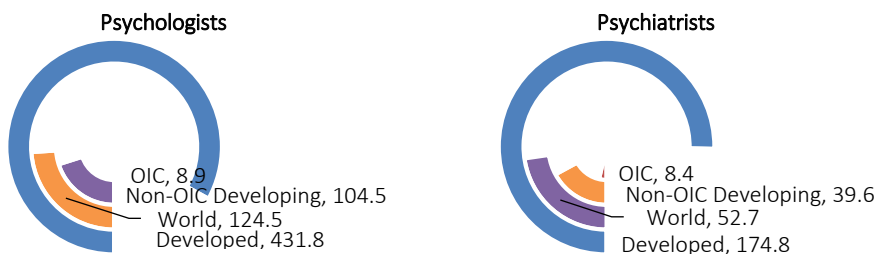


Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Health Organization Data Repository

\*Most recent data available

The numbers of psychologists and psychiatrists working in the mental health sector are shown in Figure 4.11 for the period 2013-2017. The number of psychologists (per million population) was 8.9 in the OIC Member States, which is significantly lower than the world average of 124.5. On average in the developed countries group, there are 431.8 psychologists per million population. In terms of the number of psychiatrists (per million population), the average of the OIC Member States is found to be lower (8.4) than that available in non-OIC developing countries (39.6). Both in terms of the number of psychologists and psychiatrists, the averages of the OIC Member States are lagging behind the world averages. All the presented figures from the WHO and the OIC Youth Survey 2019 reveal that OIC Member States have much room to improve the state of mental health of youth through developing policies and allocating more resources.

**Figure 4.11:** Number of Mental Health Staff (per million population), (2013-2017\*)



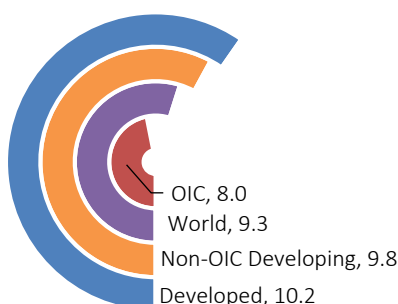
Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Health Organization Data Repository

\*Most recent data available in the specified period

### 4.6.2 Mental Health of Youth and Suicide

Every year, 800,000 people die by suicide. Suicide was the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds globally in 2016 (WHO, 2019). Suicide is common in all regions of the globe. Yet, 79% of suicides happen in low- and middle-income countries. Mental disorders (in particular, depression and alcohol use disorders) are the main cause of suicides but moments of crises lead to suicides as well. In addition, the experience of loss, loneliness, discrimination, a relationship break-up, financial problems, chronic pain and illness, violence, abuse, and conflict or other humanitarian emergencies can trigger suicide as well. Suicide has a damaging impact on families, friends, colleagues, communities, and societies.

**Figure 4.12:** Crude Suicide Rates (per 100 000 population) (19-25 years), 2016



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on World Health Organization Data Repository

Figure 4.12 presents the crude suicide rates per 100,000 population ages 19-25 in 2016. On average, OIC Member States have a crude suicide rate of eight, which is the lowest among all country groups. The world average suicide rate is 9.3. Developed countries suffer the most from suicides with an average suicide rate of 10.2.

### 4.6.3 Mental Health of Youth and Conflicts

The weak state of mental health policies, human resources, and services in the OIC Member States leaves youth with little

chance at rehabilitation and social integration. This, in turn, leads to structural behavioural risks such as substance use, hazardous behaviour, 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).

In addition to violence and crime, war and conflicts are other factors that threaten the mental health of youth in the OIC Member States. Betancourt and Khan (2008) showed that war and conflicts are characterized by the loss of security, unpredictability and the lack of structure in daily life in which essential services and institutions, such as schools and hospitals are often damaged or purposely destroyed.

In particular, 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 (Fegert et al., 2018; Attanayake et al. 2009). In particular, acute exposure to violence can lead to chronic mental illness, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Kadir et al. (2019) also show that sexual violence during armed conflicts affects youth to a higher extent by leading to an increase in toxic stress that affects their mental health. In many cases, mental



health problems amongst children and adults may persist a long time after the conflict ends such as in the form of depression and mental health development problems (Ornert, 2019).

According to SESRIC (2019), more 60% of all conflicts in the world occur in OIC Member States, of which the overwhelming majority are internal conflicts. In this context, thousands of youth living in a number of OIC Member States face some form of conflict that affects their mental health and well-being.

## 4.7 Concluding Remarks

The OIC Member States have recorded progress over the years to ensure healthy lives and promoting the well-being of their populations including youth. As a result, life expectancy at birth has increased while child and maternal mortality rates are on the decline (SESRIC, 2019b). Despite such recorded progress in major health indicators, the OIC Member States as a group still need to exert more efforts to improve the health and well-being of youth. Limited knowledge on reproductive health, ineffective policies to prevent youth from addictions, and insufficient investment allocated to youth health related services are a few examples that OIC Member States need to take further steps on. In this regard, the existing strategy documents at the OIC cooperation level including the OIC 2025 Programme of Action, the OIC Strategic Health Programme of Action (OIC-SHPA) 2014-2023 and the OIC Youth Strategy provide concrete policy recommendations and guidance on how to improve the health and well-being of youth by benefiting from the potentials of intra-OIC cooperation.

Moreover, the OIC Member States are very rich in terms of policies regarding the health and well-being of youth. The vast majority of respondent OIC Member States mentioned that they have specific policies, programmes or initiatives designed for improving youth mental health (14 out of 20 countries), youth physical health (17 out of 20 countries) and fighting with addictions (13 out of 20 countries) (OIC Youth Survey, 2019). 12 respondent OIC Member States out of 19 indicated that they have some capacity building programmes to improve the knowledge and capabilities of public institutions/officials on youth health and well-being in their respective countries. Even 10 out of 20 respondent OIC Member States indicated that their policies contain several best practices in the domain of health and well-being. Those OIC Member States with best practices reported in the OIC Youth Survey 2019 include Maldives, Niger, Uganda, Gambia, Tunisia, Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, Burkina Faso and Turkey. In this regard, such best practices, success stories and rich experience of various OIC Member States constitute a great potential for enhancing intra-OIC cooperation in this area such as through exchanging of experiences and best practices and organizing joint capacity building programmes. In order to ensure such effective cooperation, it is of importance to further cooperation among the OIC Member States, relevant OIC institutions and the OIC General Secretariat.



# CHAPTER 5

## Social Participation

Nearly 85% of the world's youth currently reside in developing countries with a significant number in the OIC Member States (Krauss, 2018). The OIC Member States together account for the 28% of young population in the world that will climb up to 31% in 2030. They differ in their approach and efforts on youth participation. While some OIC Member States have made noteworthy progress in executing inclusive policies for youth participation, others have negated their opinions and views altogether. Due to various cultural, political, economic, and social issues, youth participation in the OIC Member States is lower than in other country groups. Some of these reasons include political turmoil, conflict, traditional practices and amongst others limited avenues supplying youth platforms for expression and participation. Against this background, this chapter examines the social participation of youth in various fields. It aims to describe the state of youth and identify the major challenges hindering the productive participation of youth in the family, politics, technological platforms and civic life while also exploring the consequences of limited youth participation such as migration and violence.

### 5.1 Political, Civic and Voluntary Participation of Youth

Although half of the world's population is below 30 years old, young people are not at the centre of decision making in politics, economics, social and cultural platforms. Globally, less than 6% of parliamentarians are under the age of 35 (UNDP, 2016). Voter turnouts among young people aged 18-25 continue to be lower than other age groups (Ember, 2018). In addition, about 66% of countries around the globe do not consult youth when making decisions on the family, education, social and political life amongst others. Although youth in many developed countries find greater platforms to take part and express their opinions and views, most of them tend to become less politically engaged and have limited willingness to take an active part in society. Developed countries are trying to implement different strategies to incentivize youth participation in various aspects of daily life. For example, Box 5.1 highlights the efforts of the European Youth Regional Network in trying to make youth become active partners and stakeholders of both the present and future.

Over the last few decades, political and civic awareness amongst youth has improved in the OIC Member States. However, engagement of youth in formal political processes and decision-making mechanisms has been affected by many factors such as economic instability, conflict, migration, popular uprisings, and mass displacement (SESRI, 2017).



**Box 5.1: Youth Regional Network of Assembly of European Regions**

To increase the participation of youth in all aspects of life but particularly in the political and civic engagement sphere, Youth Regional network advocated its signing members of the Assembly of European Regions to act in accordance with the below items.

- Regional governments shall support the establishment and development of youth platforms and initiatives.
- Regional governments shall involve youth platforms and initiatives in their decision-making processes.
- The elections of the youth representatives shall be transparent, simple and democratic.
- Regional governments are encouraged to provide youth platforms and initiatives with necessary and adequate resources, such as human, technical and financial resources, independent from co-funding.
- The responsible authorities shall ensure the opportunity for youth initiatives to inform the public about their organization and activities.
- The Assembly of European Regions shall encourage and support the cooperation between youth platforms, within the framework of the Youth Regional Network.

Source: Strasbourg Declaration on Youth Participation, 2012.

This has contributed to an increasing number of young people to become disengaged and cynical towards governments and political institutions. A similar case is true for civic participation and voluntary engagement of youth. The culmination of low mistrust for political structures and economic instability combined with limited civic and voluntary participation impedes the development of youth themselves as well as the political, economic, and social development of OIC Member States. According to the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) Index 2016, OIC Member States, on average, lagged significantly behind other country groups in relation to political participation. The OIC Member states as a group are rated 4.4 out of 10 in political participation. In the same category, non-OIC developing countries obtain a score of 6.1 whereas the world average is 5.7 (SESRI, 2017). It can be inferred that the youth participation rate in the OIC Member States, on average, are even lower because conventionally youth participation falls behind the average of society. When asked about elected representatives in national assemblies or senates of OIC Member States, 13 countries out of 20 responded positively to having young representatives. Moreover, the OIC Youth Survey 2019 inquired about Member States quota schemes; 11 out of 20 countries stated that they have a quota scheme for young people to encourage their participation in policymaking.

On the other hand, OIC Member States showed a gradual increase in political participation from 4.5 in 2006 to 4.6 in 2014. However, in 2016 OIC Member states recorded its lowest political participation rate, showing an important decrease from its peak of 4.6 in 2014. From a long-term perspective, the political participation rate in OIC Member States deteriorated between 2006 and 2016 (SESRI, 2017). In this regard, there is a serious need to address the



political, civic and voluntary participation of youth in OIC Member States. Without addressing such issues, OIC Member States will face significant consequences such as reduced economic productivity, de-legitimatization of the state, ineffective governance, and social disintegration.

## 5.2 Youth, Family and Culture

The sensible and constructive social participation of youth involves healthy family structures and cultural reinforcements. However, the participation of youth in families and in cultural commemorations is increasingly being broken down by the advancements and dissemination in technology, which also brings global images of the role of youth participation in culture and family. The participation of youth in the family institution and culture is one aspect of youth participation: the other aspect is the effect of parents and cultural norms on the participation of youth in different segments of the society. Therefore, it is important to examine the process of globalization and its impact on youth participation in the family and culture as well as the role of families and cultural codes that may impede youth interest and will to participate. For example, a study undertaken with 976 young people from South Wales found that relationship with parents and grandparents were important for the participation of youth (Muddiman et al., 2018). Moreover, the study suggested that family is far more of an important factor in developing young people's propensity for active participation in society than is commonly assumed (Muddiman et al., 2018).

One key factor to consider in youth participation is globalization processes. Both in the world and in OIC Member States youth have been amongst the most affected by globalization. The values, perspective and interests of youth are changing. However, the exact nature of this change is yet to be understood. Broadly speaking, across the OIC Member States, there is a limited understanding of the emerging youths' cultural transformations, political approaches and sociological tendencies. Historically, the OIC Member States of countries have been marked by communitarian and family centred societies where active participation of the youth was not only a necessary but also awarding. One key outcome of globalization has been the disintegration of the old lifestyles and the spread of new values. For example, youth have been torn between individualism, consumerism and career-oriented values, and the traditional values of communitarianism, sharing and caring. In this respect, the breaking down of so-called traditional values affects youth participation negatively by creating self-centred apathetic youth.

As mentioned earlier, there is also the influence of families and culture on youth's social participation. The growing disengagement and disintegration of families in the world and increasingly in the OIC Member States brings detrimental impacts on youth interest, ability, and desire to take productively part in various aspects of society. Violence in families or traditional cultural norms degrading youth's participation can have negative outcomes for national youth participation rates. Hence, OIC Member States need to pay more attention to



the changing values of youth as well as provide care to the way in which family institution and cultural norms impede youth social participation.

### 5.3 Youth and Technology

In line with the growing transformation of youth participation in the political, civic, and voluntary areas combined with globalization, changing family structures and culture associate with new forms of social youth participation through digital platforms. Youth around the world and in many OIC Member States have become actively engaged in online activities. Although technology and its relation to youth participation is still a debated issue, it cannot be denied that digital and online platforms can have either a negative or a positive impact on youth participation.

#### Box 5.2: Youth and Technology - 3 Ways Youth Have Changed the World

- **Robot-assisted participation**- Badia is a messaging robot designed to shorten the communication gap between government authorities and citizens. Montassar, a 25-year-old architect and university professor in Tunisia, developed it.
- **RecLen** – Recycling the Smart Way is a project developed by Khalil, a 23-year-old electrical and computer engineer, that aims to help Lebanese residents sort their waste through a mobile and web platform. This project will help reduce the high levels of pollution in Lebanon resulting from improper waste management and inspire “green thinking” within the community.
- **Enterprising Solutions** - Hayfa Sdiri, a 19-year-old blogger in Tunis is the founder of Entr@crush, a new type of online platform for Tunisian youth who have entrepreneurial ideas, to network with like-minded people, donors and entrepreneurs. She describes it as especially useful for women entrepreneurs found outside of major cities.

Source: UNDP Youth and Technology, 2018

Technological advancements have allowed youth to become more aware, diversified, and able to engage instantly over digital platforms with other youth from all around the world. These online activities have offline consequences on political and social participation (Boulianne and Theocharis, 2018). The debate is about the quality and validity of youth’s online participation and its impact on offline activities. Like the rest of the world, youth in OIC Member States are bombarded with information online and participation usually takes different forms such as blogging, reacting to news stories, joining hashtags, and commenting on posts. The traditional approach of actively being involved in decision making, community life and face-to-face engagement has been replaced with youth making occasional engagements through their desktops, laptops, or smart phones.



The new and rapidly enhancing technological engagement platforms have contributed to greater number of online youth participants but it has also contributed to apathy and decreasing desire to participate in the traditional sense. Therefore, OIC Member States need to realize the double-edged sword of technology. E-participation mechanisms can enable youth across OIC Member States to partake increasingly in various forms of political, civic, and social participation efficiently and actively, if they are properly structured. However, it is also important to note that digital platforms can contribute to the increasing numbers of youth to become inactive participants. Thus, OIC Member States while advocating healthy youth online participation need to also pay attention and consider some potential negative consequences of youth participating online.

## 5.4 Youth Participation and Violence

The discussions in the above sub-sections focussed on different mediums where youth can participate and the current situation. However, limited youth participation also has other consequences for youth behaviour, actions and world perspective. Increased social participation such as in the forms of political engagement and civic involvement helps youth to become development enablers in their societies. However, when avenues of participation are limited or not enough, youth may turn to different forms of violence that could harm their self-development as well as the development of societies. In instances where youth feel that the existent political and social structures are, marginalizing them, violence can provide them with an opportunity to have a voice, express themselves, and make an impact.

Youth that are negated from participation outlets may find themselves in a vulnerable situation and more prone to joining different violent organisations. A 2019 report by UNDP highlights the importance of youth in countering extremism by advocating that the participation of young people in decision-making and social life proactively assists youth to become productive members of their communities and societies.

It is also important to mention the relationship between violence and participation. Conflict and violence by family members, the state apparatuses and other public servants can also lead to apathy and unwillingness to participate by youth. In the OIC Member States, where more than 60% of conflicts around the world take place, the social participation of youth is affected negatively by such conditions (SESRIC, 2019). Therefore, OIC Member States need to not only increase their youth social participation to prevent youth violence, but they also need to create safe and healthy conditions for youth to be able to participate.

## 5.5 Social Participation and Migration

Today, there are more than 258 million international migrants of which 11% are below the age of 24 (IOM, 2019). There are a number of motivations for youth migration. Economic reasons such as unemployment, better career opportunities and higher salaries most commonly dominate the explanations for youth migrating from the OIC Member States.





However, social participation including economic productivity but also political involvement, community engagement and civic participation also affects youth decision to migrate.

In this context, three important aspects of social participation and migration are important. First, limited outlets for youth to participate may force them to look for new avenues in other countries due to political or social restrictions in their home countries. Second, youth are commonly negated from the discussion on migration; they are not part of the decision-making process about policies and programme for migration in both home and host countries. Finally, the social participation of youth that have migrated is another aspect that needs to be considered.

In the same manner that youth participation serves as an intervening variable in youth violence, the availability of platforms for the social participation of youth also has an influence on migration trends. With numerous ongoing conflicts in a number of OIC Member States, youth cannot always find the stability and conditions to live productive and active lives. As conflicts trigger forced migration and displacement, youth cannot stay immune from the negative outcomes of these factors. When youth feel they cannot contribute or are not taken into consideration, they resort to finding new opportunities in other countries. Although many OIC Member States have made noteworthy progress in formulating policies for youth participation, there still exist some Member States with limited resources, outlets and policies to involve youth in the various aspects of society. According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, amongst the 20 Member States that responded to the survey, 10 countries indicated limited opportunities for political participation as a social factor motivating youth to migrate. Moreover, 11 countries out of 20 indicated that limited opportunities for civic participation to an extent also motivate youth migration. Finally, the OIC Youth Survey indicates that six countries classify conflict and war as a motivational factor for migration.

Moreover, most often migration policies do not fully take the needs of youth into consideration; this is because youth are not involved in migration policy discussion. In the OIC Member States where youth migration tends to be higher than in other country groups, it is vital to listen to youth and plan migration policies accordingly. While discussing youth migration, the issues on integration and social exclusion naturally emerge. Youth migrate for better opportunities but often find themselves in conditions that are detrimental to their social participation. They may be excluded from social participation due to language barriers, xenophobic policies, or societal tendencies and amongst others discrimination based on ethnicity or religion. Hence, OIC Member States need to develop social participation policies to limit migration, which can cause economic and social negativities for them. They also need to include youth in policy making to understand their issues, challenges and reasons for migration. Finally, OIC Member States need to coordinate with host countries to enable the social participation and inclusion of their migrant populations in the host country.



## 5.6 Concluding Remarks

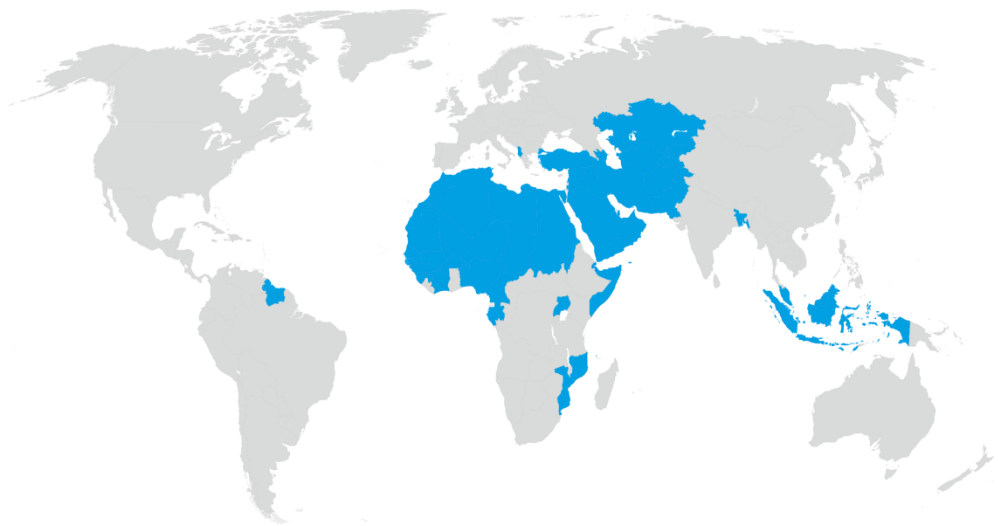
The social participation of youth in the OIC Member States is lagging behind other country groups. To enable the constructive and productive involvement of youth in all aspects of society, OIC Member States need to allocate financial resources and formulate policies to enable youth participation in the political, civic and voluntary fields. Moreover, there needs to be an understanding of the influence of the family institution and culture norms on the participation of youth. Policies to enhance healthy families and advocating the positive elements of culture will enhance youth interest and desire to partake in society. Technological platforms need to be carefully paid attention to as they can become both a gift and a curse. Educational policies and digital platforms that provide youth with valid information and ways to participate need to be initiated by the OIC Member States. Conflict, violence and migration are interrelated elements that are exacerbated by the limitations in social participation. Therefore, OIC Member States to decrease violence, extremism, radicalism, and migration amongst youth need to provide avenues for them to participate actively in decision-making processes, community life and society. As OIC Youth Survey 2019, many OIC Member States have already such policies.

Among 20 Member States that responded to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, 15 countries have a government institution dedicated to youth, 16 countries have a national level policy or strategy, 17 countries have non-governmental organisation for youth, 9 countries have a policy or programme for youth participation in the political decision-making process and 14 countries have mechanisms or special incentives for youth to participate in civic life. A noteworthy result of the OIC Youth Survey that requires attention is that only 5 out of 20 countries responded to having a research institute particularly focussed on youth. However, when asked about national youth centres for the social integration and participation of youth, 15 out of 20 countries responded positively. Finally, the OIC Youth Survey results show that 17 countries out of 20 have policies programmes or initiatives to encourage and empower youth voluntarism. 15 of them have youth centres designated for youth to volunteer and 16 of them have awareness raising campaigns to promote voluntarism amongst youth. Private and public sector partnership gained the least positive answer with only seven out of 20 countries stating that they have such a partnership to encourage youth participation while 13 of them do not have such policies or programmes.



# Part II

## Enhancing Economic Participation of Youth



Youth are a heterogeneous group, and their life experiences, cultural background, education, social group and economic status can be very different depending on where they live. As a result, their potential contribution to the socio-economic development of their societies may differ across countries and regions. Nevertheless, young men and women are key drivers for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Societies will be more cohesive and resilient when young people are engaged and empowered.

The constructive role for development is impossible without empowering them economically. Economic empowerment involves both the ability to succeed and advance financially, and the power to make and act on economic decisions (DFID-CSO Youth Working Group, 2010). To succeed and advance economically, young people need to be part of economic activities in a country. To take part in such activities, they need the skills and resources to compete in markets and access to economic institutions (OECD, 2018). Not providing necessary education and resources for their health and well-being for youth usually results in the exclusion of youth from economic activities. OECD (2016) illustrates that the exclusion of young people from a fair share of the economic progress has resulted in rising levels of income inequality and higher poverty rates in this group in several OECD countries. When young people excluded from job opportunities and economic activities, they may turn to violence, extremism, and crime, as they can feel alienated from society (SESRIC, 2017; UN, 2016).

Economic participation of youth is important for any nation where young people have immense potential to generate income, bring innovation and foster development. Young people can be part of economic activities in three main ways as an employee, entrepreneur, and trainee/apprentice. In all three forms of engagement in economic activities, one of the key motivation factors is to generate income and benefit for a company, institution, and/or the individual. In addition to income generation, some other factors can also play a role such as the joy of working, building up self-esteem, career development, and gaining experience amongst others that could motivate youth to be active in economic activities.

Many international and regional institutions recognized the importance of enhancing economic participation of youth for development, and therefore they included this area into their strategy documents such as the UN 2030 Youth Strategy, the African Union Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009-2018), the OECD Action Plan for Youth, the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, and the OIC Youth Strategy.

Against this background, Part II looks at the state of economic inactivity and the major root causes of low economic participation of youth in the OIC Member States. Moreover, it provides some success stories from OIC Member States. Finally, Part II concludes with specific policy recommendations on enhancing the economic participation of youth.



# CHAPTER 6

## Economic Inactivity among Youth

When youth unemployment is persistent and there are limited opportunities for youth entrepreneurs, some segments of young people may prefer staying inactive. Some factors like sickness and/or disability, lack of education, unavailability of suitable jobs, and unwillingness to work may lead youth to be inactive (SESRIC, 2018). Factors that influence the decision of young people to be active or inactive economically in a country can be grouped as economic factors, social factors, and demographic factors (SESRIC, 2018).

Important levels of accumulated wealth in a nation can reduce the participation of youth in economic activities because wealthier people simply have less need to work for a living. In developed countries, it may be one of the reasons behind economic inactivity seen among youth. The lack of future hope and salary levels below subsistence levels (i.e. lack of decent income) are amongst major economic factors that could discourage youth to be economically inactive both in developed or developing economies.

Social factors such as age-based discrimination, gender-based discrimination, social norms and prejudices may also discourage youth to be active in the economic activities of a country. The lack of protection and prevention mechanisms including rules and regulations on such discriminative practices in the labour market would tend to increase the inactive portion of the young population. At the same time, certain cultural and social norms may lead young people to become inactive. For instance, young girls in some OIC Member States may find it difficult to be active due to certain gender biases such as viewing work outside the home as forbidden for females or rigid biases that pressure young females to resort to inactivity. Similar norms can also affect young males. Certain expectations and norms may force young males to feel overly pressured and again resort to inactivity.

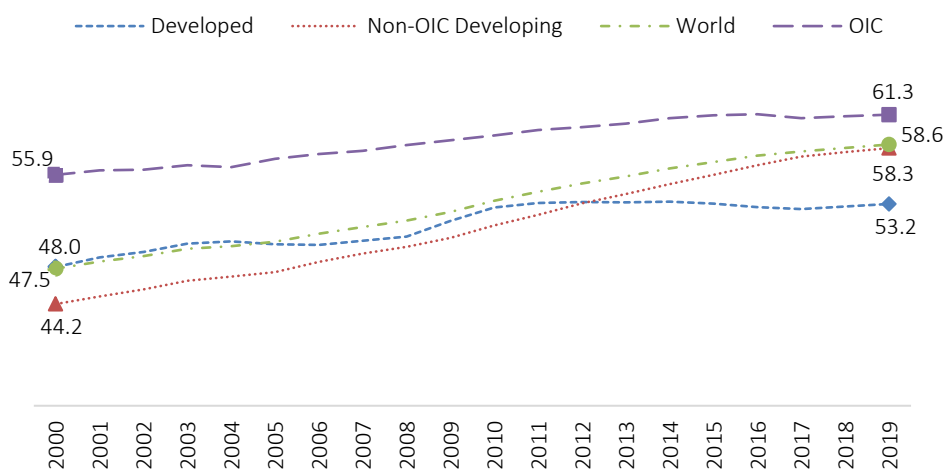
Finally, demographic factors do influence the economic participation of youth. For instance, changes in the share of working age population or retirement age can influence the labour force participation of youth. A huge influx of migrants may also change the labour market dynamics and discourage youth to be active in the economy as the wage levels tend to go down due to an increase in labour supply.



## 6.1 Youth Inactivity Rate

The youth inactivity rate is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age young population (ages 15-24) that is not engaged actively in the labour market, by either working or looking for work. The rate of inactive youth increased gradually between 2000 and 2019 in all country groups (Figure 6.1). The global youth inactivity rate was 58.6% in 2019 while 61.3% of youth in OIC Member States, on average, chose to remain out of the labour force. In developed and non-OIC developing countries, this rate was 53.4% and 58.6%, respectively in the same year.

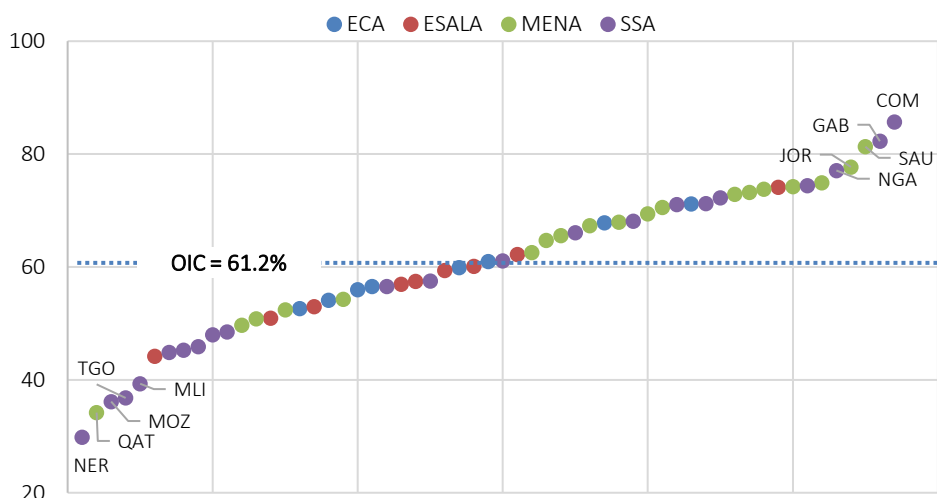
**Figure 6.1:** Youth Inactivity Rate (%), 2000-2019



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on modelled estimates from UN's World Population Prospects (2019 Edition) and ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)

At the individual country level, youth inactivity rates were the lowest in the OIC Member States of Niger (29.8%), Qatar (34.2%), Mozambique (36.1%), and Mali (36.7%) (Figure 6.2). On the other side of the spectrum, the highest share of inactive youth was in Comoros (85.6%), Gabon (82.2%), Saudi Arabia (81.3%), and Jordan (77.7%). These countries may have experienced increased rates of youth inactivity due to a combination of reasons such as youth's high enrolment in education, cultural norms, and unwillingness to take part in the labour market, and an influx of young migrants.



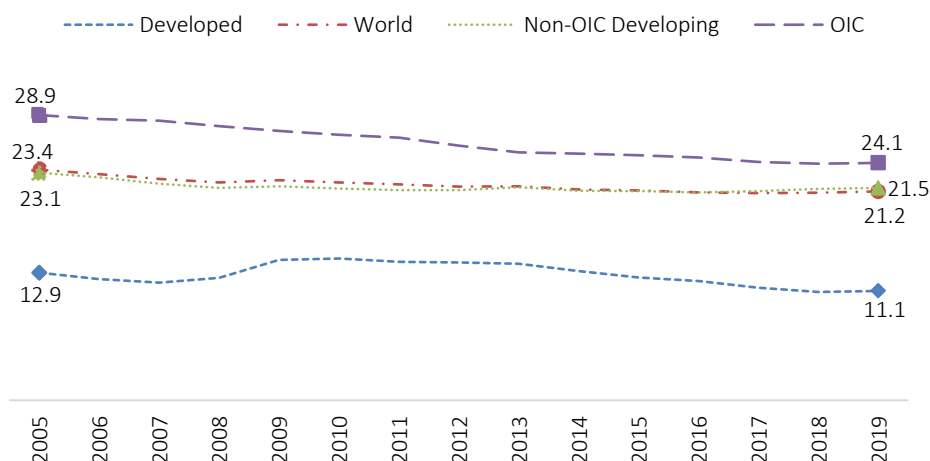
**Figure 6.2:** Youth Inactivity Rate in OIC Member Countries (%), 2019

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)

## 6.2 Youth Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET)

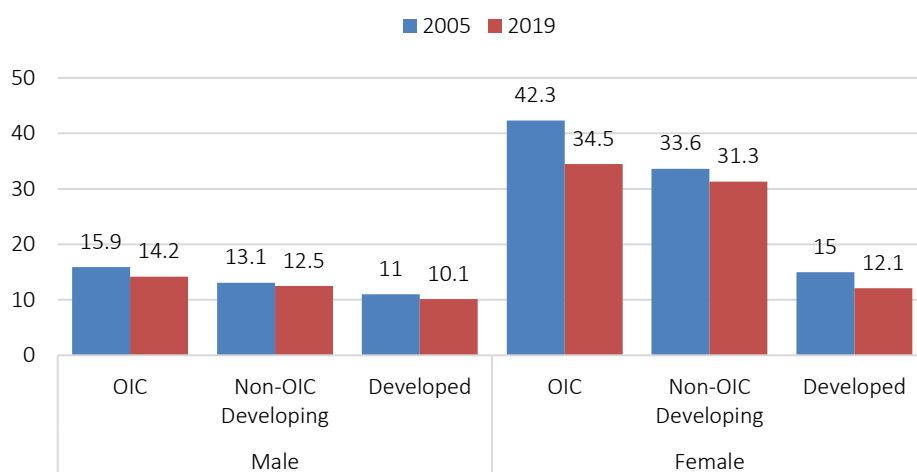
Youth typically display lower labour market attachment and higher unemployment rates due to their ongoing engagement in full-time education. When the overall employment prospects deteriorate in a market, young people tend to respond by further reducing their attachment to the labour market and increasing their time in education. However, youth that are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) are of special concern because it indicates shortcomings in youth's access to labour markets, training and education. The gravity of youth NEET is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to reduce the proportion of youth NEET substantially.

Even as youth NEET rates have declined around the world (from 23.4% in 2005 to 21.2% in 2019), youth NEET is still a cause for concern in developing regions, including many OIC Member States (Figure 6.3). In the OIC Member States, 24.1% of youth was not in employment, education, or training in 2019, a proportion that is higher than any other country group. There are also serious gaps in NEET rates between young women and men in all country groups. On average approximately 34.5% of young women are neither economically active nor were in education or training in 2019 in the OIC Member States (Figure 6.4). In comparison, only 14.2% of young men face an analogous situation in the OIC Member States. In other words, more than one third of young women were in neither employment, education nor training in 2019.

**Figure 6.3:** Youth NEET\* Rate (%), 2005-2020

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UN's World Population Prospects (2019 Edition) and ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)

\*NEET: Not in employment, education, or training

**Figure 6.4:** Youth NEET Rate by Gender (%)

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UN's World Population Prospects (2019 Edition) and ILOSTAT (2018 Data Update)

### 6.3 Understanding Root Causes of Low Economic Participation of Youth

Many different causes contribute to the low economic participation of youth in the OIC Member States. It is important to note that a single all-encompassing root cause by itself does not lead to low economic participation. Rather, it is a combination of several factors that come





together to produce limited economic participation or inactivity amongst young people in the OIC Member States. These root causes can be grouped into four key areas: education and skills development, economic challenges, health and wellbeing and social participation. This subsection utilizes the findings reported in *Part I of this Report* and *the OIC Youth Survey 2019* to outline the major challenges in the OIC Member States that is contributing to low economic participation of youth.

### 6.3.1 Education and Skills Development Challenges Affecting Youth

Despite the improvements, the OIC Member States still face challenges that hinder the education and skills development of their youth. In many parts of the world, including many OIC Member States, children and youth leave school without fully acquiring the 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 in a number of the OIC Member States. Inadequate levels of education and lack of required skills make it especially difficult for youth to find jobs in the labour market. In addition to its impact on the economic development and productive capacity of OIC Member States, long-term unemployment among youth may trigger major social problems within affected communities including exclusion, deviance, radicalism, violent extremism, and substance abuse amongst others.

According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, out of the 20 Member States who responded to the survey, 16 of them reported the “mismatch between educational and skills development and the needs of the labour market” as a major challenge. Limited university-private sector cooperation and quality of higher education are the next major challenges reported by the OIC Member States. Standards of teaching and teacher education were also reported as a critical challenge for the OIC Member States. Although accreditation and qualification are a big challenge for youth education in the OIC Member States, it was reported as a low-level challenge. The top two challenges pointed out by the OIC Member States relate to the relationship between education and employment. The high youth unemployment in many OIC Member States combined with rising trends of post-secondary education poses an important challenge for the economic development of OIC Member States.

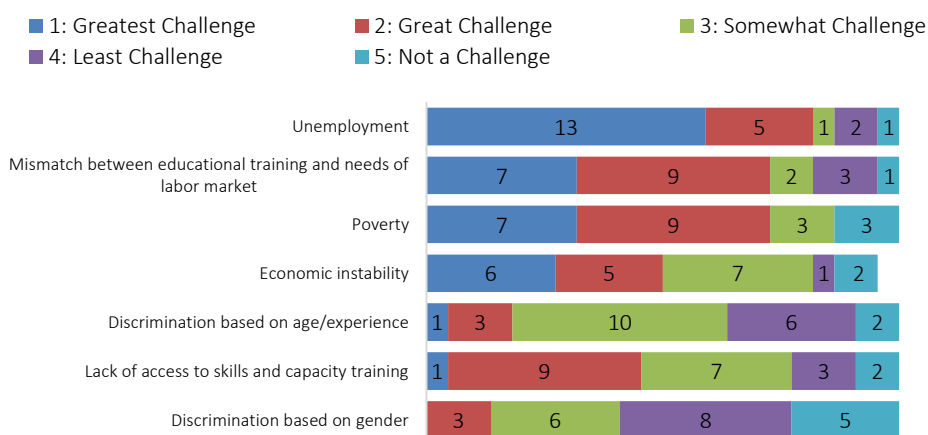
### 6.3.2 Economic Challenges Affecting Youth

There are significant obstacles to harnessing the potential of young populations for economic growth including, but not limited to, economic instability, conflict, high youth unemployment, lack of education and employable skills, inaccessibility to capital and markets, and poverty. Most of these factors were discussed thoroughly in Part I. The findings of the OIC Youth Survey 2019 also provide additional evidence on these issues. In the OIC Youth Survey 2019, many OIC Member States also acknowledged major economic challenges faced by youth. Unemployment (13 out of 22), mismatch of skills (7 out of 22), poverty (7 out of 22), and economic instability (6 out of 21) were mentioned as the greatest economic challenges faced by youth in their respective countries (Figure 6.5).



Informal employment in the labour market of some OIC Member States and many developing countries emerge as a challenge for youth as such, as they earn less; tend to face sexual harassment, violence and restrictions on their rights. Although informal employment poses risks for adults and youth, youth tend to suffer more from the risk of poverty and marginalization within the informal economy since they have relatively limited knowledge about their rights. In this context, informal employment is an economic factor that discourages many young men and women to be economically active in the market.

**Figure 6.5: Economic Challenges Affecting Youth in OIC Member Countries**



Source: OIC Youth Survey 2019

The OIC Youth Strategy highlights employment and entrepreneurship as two fields of action in the economy that requires a coordinated cross-sectoral effort to improve the economic well-being of youth. It is a fact that economic challenges faced by youth are closely linked with several factors such as education and training policies, infrastructure quality and effectiveness of governance. Therefore, addressing all these challenges requires a more integrated approach. In this regard, the OIC Youth Strategy calls for ensuring effective cooperation with various international, regional, and national stakeholders from different sectors as well as intra-OIC cooperation amongst member countries.

Some of these challenges have already received comprehensive policy responses at the OIC level in the form of key strategic frameworks targeting youth. For instance, the OIC 2025 Programme of Action (2016) addresses various issues experienced by youth in the OIC Member States ranging from employment, education, and health to youth migration and human rights. Similarly, the OIC Labour Market Strategy (2018) has dedicated sections on youth (Strategic Goals 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 5.1 and 5.3) to help mitigate the impacts of economic challenges that have traditionally resulted in negative outcomes such as youth unemployment and youth migration.



### 6.3.3 Health and Well-Being Challenges Affecting Youth

Provision of health services for youth is critical for the future of society. Lack of comprehensive health services or inadequate quality of such services may affect both physical and mental health of youth. When youth are not healthy and well, their economic contribution and participation stay limited.

SESRIC (2019b) found that limited availability of human resources and health workers as well as insufficient public spending on health are among the key challenges that reduce the effectiveness of health systems in many OIC Member States. In addition to some major challenges related to health systems, OIC Member States also have some specific challenges that affect the health and well-being of their youth.

The OIC Youth Survey 2019 helps to identify such challenges affecting the health and well-being of youth in the OIC Member States. 20 OIC Member States stated that insufficient social security schemes and drug abuse are two leading challenges affecting youth. 4 out of 20 OIC Member States mentioned these challenges as the greatest. Three out of 20 OIC Member States also perceive violence and conflict as the greatest challenge. The lack of access to quality health care affects the health and well-being of youth largely in 8 OIC Member States. Conversely, cultural norms and values and family relations have lower impact on the health and well-being of youth in the OIC Member States.

These challenges altogether affect the main health outcomes for young people as such by limiting their physical and mental capacities to cope with health risk factors and reducing the likelihood of living as healthy members of their respective societies in a number of OIC Member States.

### 6.3.4 Social Participation Challenges Affecting Youth

The social participation of youth is important for the economic, political and societal development of OIC Member States. Over the last few decades, OIC Member States have made noteworthy progress on involving youth in different platforms of participation. However, on average, social participation of youth in many OIC Member States still lags behind other country groups stemming from a number of challenges. In societies where participation of youth stays limited into social and civic life, it is less likely for youth to reach and reflect their full economic potentials.

The OIC Youth Survey 2019 inquired about the social participation challenges of youth; eight out of 20 Member States highlighted economic reasons as the greatest challenge. Moreover, violence and conflict along with “not enough policies to promote youth participation” were mentioned by three Member States as the greatest challenge. In the category of greatest challenge, youth apathy, cultural norms and values, and lack of awareness received the lowest number of responses. This signifies that an important challenge affecting social participation of youth for the Member States that responded to the survey is economically rooted.



One important aspect of participation is voluntarism. The OIC Youth Survey 2019 also looked at the main challenges hindering youth voluntarism. Nine out of 20 Member States indicated ‘insufficient budget allocation’ as the greatest challenge. This item far outnumbers all the other items in the category of greatest challenge. Lack of youth will, and limited institutional capacity were mentioned by two OIC Member States each. However, limited institutional capacity was mentioned by eight countries out of 20 in the category of greatest challenge. This indicates that budgetary and institutional limitations negatively influence youth participation in the group of respondent countries.

The OIC Youth Survey 2019 reveals that a number of OIC Member States have already exerted some major efforts to overcome these challenges. 16 OIC Member States mentioned that they have a national level policy or strategy on youth. Moreover, 15 OIC Member States out of 20 responded that they have government institutions particularly for youth. Finally, 17 OIC Member States specified that they have NGOs that represent youth.

As indicated in the OIC Youth Survey, social participation and economic challenges are interrelated and intersectional. Challenges such as conflict, migration, youth apathy and limited availability of social platforms for expressions of views contribute to low-economic participation of youth. At the same time, low-economic participation increases the likelihood of young people’s inactivity. In this regard, policies that aim to enhance the economic participation of youth should include a dimension to foster social participation of youth as these two factors reinforce each other.



# CHAPTER 7

## Success Stories from OIC Member States

Enhancing economic participation of youth is socially and economically beneficial for individuals, their families, and societies. As recognition of the importance of this fact, many OIC Member States have exerted efforts and developed several initiatives to ensure increased economic participation of youth. According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, 15 respondent OIC Member States out of 21 stated that they have best practices in the area of promoting employment and entrepreneurship of youth in their respective countries.

Such policies, practices, and initiatives are instrumental in encouraging youth participation in economic activities and entrepreneurial environment. This chapter presents selected initiatives from three OIC Member States located in three OIC geographical regions (Asia, Africa, and Arab) that contributed to them in addressing challenges faced by youth in the area of promoting employment and encouraged them to take part in economic activities. The selected success stories reflect a diverse set of successful initiatives and policies existing in the OIC Member States. These initiatives included such as programmes aiming to ease youth entrepreneurs' access to finance, upgrading their skills and knowledge in doing business, and creating more business and employment opportunities for youth by ensuring national level coordination.

### 7.1 The Bumiputera Youth Entrepreneurship (TUBE) Programme of Malaysia

Small and medium businesses are the backbone of a country's economy while entrepreneurship is the panacea to the economic transformation and employment. In light of this, one of the country's development strategies that have been given priority and emphasis is the development of entrepreneurship among Bumiputera youths who will form the next generation of the nation's corporate leadership. This strategy is supported by the National Malaysian Youth Policy, which aims at empowering youths to fulfil their potential through entrepreneurship, education and skills training, as well as sports and volunteerism; in order to facilitate the realisation of the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) initiatives and agenda. The Bumiputera Youth Entrepreneurship (TUBE) Programme implemented by SME Corp. Malaysia has been identified as one of the key national entrepreneurship programmes in accomplishing the objectives of TN50. TUBE aims to foster the entrepreneurial spirit among youths, enabling a paradigm shift from being a job seeker to becoming a business owner; and establishing resilience among youths in managing their own businesses.



The TUBE Programme is conducted boot camp-style, designed to prepare aspiring entrepreneurs among Bumiputera youths via the mental perseverance and physical endurance approach in facing the reality of the business world. The Programme consists of three phases of training.

Since its inception in 2014, the Bumiputera Youth Entrepreneurship (TUBE) programme has successfully produced 1,436 young Bumiputera entrepreneurs of which 1,425 (99.2%) registered their businesses with Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM). In addition, the Programme has created 3,862 job opportunities with total cumulative sales of RM38.6 million thus far. In view of its outstanding achievement, starting from 2017, TUBE has been upgraded and transformed into 'Mega TUBE'. This will involve greater participation from youths and strategic partners nationwide. In total, the Programme is expected to produce more than 12,000 youth entrepreneurs by 2020.

The involvement of various parties has successfully enhanced to strengthen the training modules, which would enable the youth entrepreneurs to meet multiple challenges of the future digital economy dominated by the use of technology, innovation and creativity.<sup>2</sup>

## 7.2 Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) of the Gambia

Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) of Gambia addresses the economic root causes of irregular migration by supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship. The YEP takes a market-led approach and sets out to strengthen existing youth development systems, structures and services to create employment opportunities. It aims to scale up skills among youth in the workforce in response to market demands. The project offers possibilities for youths interested in moving into the commercial agriculture, service business or tourism sectors. YEP focuses on vocational training, support for micro and small-sized enterprises, and creates new jobs in selected sectors through value addition and market linkages.

The YEP has five main pillars: skills upgrading through technical and vocational training programmes; promotion of entrepreneurship among youth through business skills training and support programmes; improved compliance of Gambian products to international standards and market requirements; improved Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) productive capacities and activate market linkages; and foster strategic direction and national ownership for job-centered growth.

YEP was launched with a total budget of EUR 11 million and a timeframe of 2017-2021. The project started in January 2017 and initiated by the European Union, International Trade Centre, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Gambia.

By the third quarter of 2019, YEP reached 260,663 youth in Gambia. Moreover, 1835 individuals were trained and 521 MSMEs along with 2424 entrepreneurs were supported

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<sup>2</sup> More information can be found at:  
[http://www.smecorp.gov.my/images/SMEAR/Chapter\\_5\\_MegaTUBE.pdf](http://www.smecorp.gov.my/images/SMEAR/Chapter_5_MegaTUBE.pdf)



within the scope of the YEP. Multi-stakeholder involvement, engagement of prominent international institutions, the strong support from the national authorities of Gambia, and identification of key performance indicators to track the achievements of YEP is among the leading causes of the success story.<sup>3</sup>

### 7.3 Youth Empowerment Project in Kuwait

Youth Empowerment in Kuwait project comes in response to Kuwait's key development challenges and reflecting the priorities of the Kuwaiti Government in increasing the empowerment and building the capacities of its youth. As youth constitute a significant portion of the population, such demographics present an enormous opportunity among other challenges, it is a daunting task to encourage all youth to integrate into the labour market, encourage them to be active in the economic activities and to meet their training or social security needs. The National Youth Project was initiated in 2012, to engage youth as key participants in youth development. In 2013, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait established the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs (MoSYA). With technical support from UNDP, MoSYA prepared the "National Framework for Youth Engagement and Empowerment", which was endorsed by the Council of Ministers of the State of Kuwait in 2013 and was adopted by the Ministry as their three-year youth empowerment strategy plan. This plan aims to enhance the capacities, skills and capabilities of young people through addressing their needs, promoting positive outcomes, and providing integrated coordinated, targeted and measurable initiatives necessary for the holistic development of all young people. The desired outcome and vision is "towards youth that are proud of their nation's authentic values, creators, initiators and partners in the sustainable development of the nation". The plan is built on four pillars: 1. National competitiveness: focusing on priorities like education, employment, productivity, skills, and entrepreneurship; 2. Social cohesion: focusing on priorities like health, inclusion, well-being, and sports; 3. Leadership and voice: focusing on priorities like participation and democratization; 4. Creativity: focusing on priorities like innovation, talent, creativity, culture, and digitization.

A considerable number of young Kuwaiti men and women benefited from various programmes offered within the scope of the project and became economically active in the market later on. One of the key success factors of the Youth Empowerment Project in Kuwait is its holistic and inclusive approach that included various sectors and stakeholders at the national level. Moreover, various national stakeholders of Kuwait including the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs (MoSYA) and Youth Public Authority (YPA)

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<sup>3</sup> More information can be found at: <https://www.yep.gm/about>



worked in cooperation. Involvement of international partners such as the UNDP also contributed to the success.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Box 7.1: Efforts of the OIC and the OIC Youth Strategy**

Given the dynamic and young populations of OIC Member States, youth related issues emerge as one of the main priority areas of policy makers. Many OIC Member States have programs and policies to improve the economic and social well-being of youth at the national level. At the OIC cooperation level, it is also important to have a common guiding framework that would enable the OIC Member States to engage with peer support mechanisms, utilizing tools and instruments to respond to national youth needs by fully benefiting from the potentials of intra-OIC cooperation.

The Fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM), held on 17-19 April 2018 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, adopted the OIC Youth Strategy. Moreover, it was endorsed by the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held on 5-6 May 2018 in Dhaka, People's Republic of Bangladesh. This marked an important milestone for the youth living in OIC Member States as the Strategy identifies key challenges faced by youth and presents policy actions as well as mechanisms to address these challenges in a systematic and coordinated way.

These objectives of the OIC Youth Strategy cut across Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and constitutes the necessary steps towards achieving the SDGs, especially in regards to Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 8 (Good Jobs and Economic Growth), Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), Goal 16 (Peace and Justice), and Goal 17 (Partnership for the Goals). Moreover, the objectives of the OIC Youth Strategy are also in line with the OIC 2025 Programme of Action and would contribute to the implementation of the Programme, in particular on Goal 2.2 (Counter-terrorism, Extremism, Extremism leading to terrorism, Radicalization, Sectarianism, & Islamophobia); Goal 2.6 (Poverty Alleviation); Goal 2.9 (Employment, Infrastructure and Industrialization); Goal 2.11 (Education); and Goal 2.13 (Advancement and Empowerment of Women, Family Welfare, and Social Security).

The OIC Youth Strategy puts a special emphasis on the economic empowerment of youth (OIC, 2018). Out of 11 priority areas of the OIC Youth Strategy, two of them namely 'youth employment' and 'entrepreneurship' are directly related to enhancing economic participation of youth in the OIC Member States. Under these two areas, eight major policy options and 24 detailed action points were listed for the consideration of policy makers in the OIC Member States. This reflects the importance assigned to the topic of enhancing the economic participation of youth in the OIC Youth Strategy.

<sup>4</sup> More information can be found at:

<https://www.kw.undp.org/content/dam/kuwait/img/YouthEmpowermentinKuwait/Youth%20Empowerment%20in%20Kuwait%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>





# CHAPTER 8

## Policy Recommendations on Enhancing Youth's Economic Participation

The findings in Part II reveal that enhancing economic participation of youth is critically important for the OIC Member States in achieving sustainable development. Without full and effective participation of youth in economic activities, many OIC Member States are likely to stay below their potentials. Moreover, youth who are not involved in economic activities tend to face various challenges in ensuring their well-being such as they may not benefit from public health programmes or unemployment benefits. In this regard, the following policy recommendations would provide guidance for policy makers at the national and OIC cooperation level on how to enhance the economic participation of youth.

**Developing a national coordination mechanism:** As youth policies have several dimensions, ensuring cross-sectorial cooperation at the national level is important to identify major challenges faced by youth at the economic front and develop necessary policies to address them. In this regard, a national coordination mechanism would play a key role with the participation of representatives such as from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry Education, Ministry of Development, and Ministry Social Policies. Equally important such a coordination mechanism should also include the voice of the private sector and representatives of civil society organisations (e.g. youth associations). In this way, all national stakeholders could sit together and discuss openly on how to enhance the economic participation of youth to develop a roadmap and policy recommendations.

**Improving the dialogue between the private and public sector:** Neither the private sector nor the public sector could address challenges faced by youth on the economic front alone. It is essential to improve the dialogue between the private and public sector such as to understand concerns of the private sector on youth employment. In this regard, representatives from the private and public sector should meet to better understand each other and study possible implications of new policies such as aiming at increasing youth employment. In the OIC Youth Survey 2019, 17 OIC Member States out of 22 mentioned that 'policies to improve cooperation between public and private sector' is important in enhancing economic participation of youth.

**Considering employment quota schemes for youth:** Employment quota schemes for youth are a tool that OIC Member States could benefit from to reduce youth unemployment. According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, 11 OIC Member States out of 22 mentioned that implementing



some form of 'quotas for youth employment' in different sectors would be a suitable policy option.

**Organizing awareness-raising campaigns:** A high economic inactivity rate seen among youth is not the desired outcome for any country. In this regard, public awareness-raising campaigns would play a key role in increasing knowledge and information of members of the society about the importance of the topic. Moreover, these campaigns would help parents, family members, private sector and community leaders on how to communicate with economically inactive youth and encourage them to take some actions for their future. In the OIC Youth Survey 2019, 13 OIC Member States out of 22 indicated that 'having awareness raising campaigns' to encourage youth to be active in the economy is a viable policy option.

**Increasing access to capital:** In many developing and the OIC Member States, limited access to capital emerges as a key barrier that prevents youth to start their businesses. In this regard, taking concrete actions and facilitating access to capital particularly for young men and women have enormous potential to enhance the economic participation of them. Available instruments in Islamic finance and microfinance schemes would play a positive role in improving the access of youth to credit and capital in many OIC Member States.

**Fostering an enabling youth entrepreneurship ecosystem:** Young entrepreneurs are utilizing their own time, labour and ideas to bring a change. The prevailing youth entrepreneurship ecosystem would play a role either to encourage or discourage youth entrepreneurs. Many OIC Member States need to improve their ecosystem to make it more enabling for youth such as through eliminating time consuming and costly bureaucratic procedures to register a company, get electricity, or complete customs procedures. In addition to the elimination of such hurdles, OIC Member States could also consider providing some financial and nonfinancial incentives to encourage youth entrepreneurs to revitalize the ecosystem. Finally, it is also vital to cope with the informal economy that informalities in an economy creates several uncertainties and ultimately hinders competition.

**Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships:** Empowering young people and supporting the development of their personal capabilities and feelings of self-worth and confidence are very important. Traineeships and apprenticeships contribute self-development of youth significantly and allow them to gain hands on experience. In this context, OIC Member States need to promote traineeships and apprenticeships by developing the legal framework and regulations on such programmes.

**Organizing targeted education courses and vocational education and training (VET) programmes:** Targeted education courses and vocational education and training (VET) programmes would help youth to equip him/herself with new skills or learn a profession that is demanded in the labour market. Such courses and programmes tend to increase the employability of youth by reducing the possibility of skills mismatch. In this regard, such courses and programmes are important that could help OIC Member States to reduce the number of youth neither in education nor in training (NEET), improve skills-match and foster



employment of youth. The OIC Youth Survey 2019 revealed that ‘targeted education programmes to meet the needs of the labour market’ is a preferred policy option for 20 OIC Member States out of 22 that would contribute improving the economic situation of youth. In a similar vein, programmes ‘designed to develop skills of youth’ is selected by most of the respondent OIC Member States (17 out of 22) as a policy option. Nevertheless, each OIC country depending on the level of development and sectoral specialization need to develop tailored VET programmes to respond to the needs of youth. For instance, in the OIC Youth Survey 2019, most of the OIC Member States located in Sub-Saharan Africa including Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Nigeria, and Mauritania mentioned that VET programmes in the area of ‘agriculture and agribusiness’ are very important for youth. Therefore, courses and programmes targeting youth need to be developed after a needs-assessment study in order to respond to the needs and expectations of youth and the market more effectively.

**Developing business development services for youth entrepreneurs:** Youth entrepreneurs have limited knowledge of markets and are less experienced in business operations. In the take-off process, they need some professional counselling and mentorship to overcome such challenges. In this regard, OIC Member States need to develop some programmes specifically addressing youth entrepreneurs in order to allow them such as explore their inherited skills, strengths and weaknesses. In the OIC Youth Survey 2019, OIC Member States like Tunisia, Nigeria, Morocco, Qatar, Uganda, and Niger underscored the importance of specific programs designed to develop ‘entrepreneurship skills’ of youth.

**Improving education curriculums on entrepreneurship:** The existing education curriculum’s in many OIC Member States need to be updated in order to highlight the importance and value of entrepreneurship. Moreover, the quality of education on available courses needs to be improved to better match the needs of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. It should be ensured that all youth (such as living rural locations, young women and youth with disabilities) have access to the updated education curriculums.

**Enhancing intra-OIC cooperation and implementing the OIC Youth Strategy:** The OIC Member States have taken several steps in enhancing economic participation of youth at the national level. Such national level initiatives and policies constitute a great potential for intra-OIC cooperation, if used properly. For instance, OIC Member States are rich in term of best practices in the area of promoting employment and entrepreneurship of youth. In the OIC Youth Survey 2019, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Maldives, Turkey, Uganda, Gambia, Tunisia, Mauritania, Morocco, Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali mentioned that they have such best practices. In this regard, by benefiting from the framework of the OIC Youth Strategy, it is important to exchange and share such best practices among the OIC Member States. According to the OIC Youth Survey 2019, out of 18 respondent countries, 11 of them indicated that they have taken some action toward the implementation of the Strategy. In terms of eleven areas of intervention identified in the OIC Youth Strategy, OIC



Member States mostly took actions in the areas of entrepreneurship (11 out of 12 respondent countries) followed by youth employment (10 out of 12 respondent countries).

Some OIC Member States have not taken any action yet toward the implementation of the Strategy because they (12 OIC Member States out of 18) need guidance and support for the effective implementation of the OIC Youth Strategy. In this context, more guidance, familiarization and awareness-raising events need to be organized by the OIC General Secretariat and relevant OIC institutions in order to better inform policy makers and stakeholders in the OIC Member States about the Strategy. In terms of modalities, 15 OIC Member States out of 19 mentioned that 'regional and sub-regional workshops to share best practices and exchange views' are the most preferred tool. Another highly preferred mechanism (12 countries out of 19) is to 'organize training programmes with a view to increasing national capacities' on the Strategy. In short, the results of the OIC Youth Survey 2019 pointed out that there is a positive momentum towards the implementation of the OIC Youth Strategy. Nevertheless, more efforts need to be exerted by the OIC Member States in cooperation with the OIC General Secretariat and relevant OIC institutions to better implement the Strategy. In particular, efforts towards the implementation of the OIC Youth Strategy such as ranging from organizing familiarization and information sessions to holding training and capacity building programmes would help 'enhancing economic participation of youth' in several ways such as encouraging them to pursue their business plans as being entrepreneurs or gaining new skills for needs of the job-market.



# APPENDICES

**Appendix I:** OIC Youth Survey 2019: Questions

**Appendix II:** Country Classifications

**Appendix III:** Geographical Classification of OIC Member States



## Appendix I: OIC Youth Survey 2019

### OIC Youth Survey 2019

Survey Conducted by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat and Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF)

Survey Dates: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019 – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Target Population: 56 OIC Member States

Survey Response Rate: 39.3% - 22 OIC Member States

#### Survey Description:

The OIC Youth Survey was designed to gather information regarding the various aspects of youth in the OIC Member States. The youth survey is utilized in the State of Youth in OIC Member States Report 2020 to highlight the strengths, weaknesses and good examples of youth. The survey provided an opportunity to track the progress of Member States in terms of their policies toward youth in their respective countries and was able to provide recommendations that are specific and targeted according to the survey responses to improve the situation of youth across the OIC region. The survey questions area available in three official languages of the OIC: <https://www.sesric.org/oic-youth-survey.php>

#### Survey Thematic Areas:

- (I) Employment and Entrepreneurship
- (II) Education and Skills Development
- (III) Health and Well-Being
- (IV) Social Participation
- (V) OIC Youth Strategy and Intra-OIC Cooperation

#### Respondent OIC Member States:

|                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Burkina Faso                   | Republic of Mali         |
| Federal Republic of Nigeria    | Republic of Niger        |
| Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan    | Republic of Senegal      |
| Islamic Republic of Mauritania | Republic of Sierra Leone |
| Islamic Republic of Pakistan   | Republic of Somalia      |
| Kingdom of Morocco             | Republic of The Gambia   |
| Kyrgyz Republic                | Republic of Tunisia      |
| Republic of Azerbaijan         | Republic of Turkey       |
| Republic of Guinea             | Republic of Uganda       |
| Republic of Lebanon            | State of Palestine       |
| Republic of Maldives           | State of Qatar           |



## Appendix II: Country Classifications

### OIC Member States (57):

|                   |                 |              |                      |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Afghanistan       | Gabon           | Maldives     | Sudan                |
| Albania           | Gambia          | Mali         | Suriname             |
| Algeria           | Guinea          | Mauritania   | Syria*               |
| Azerbaijan        | Guinea-Bissau   | Morocco      | Tajikistan           |
| Bahrain           | Guyana          | Mozambique   | Togo                 |
| Bangladesh        | Indonesia       | Niger        | Tunisia              |
| Benin             | Iran            | Nigeria      | Turkey               |
| Brunei Darussalam | Iraq            | Oman         | Turkmenistan         |
| Burkina Faso      | Jordan          | Pakistan     | Uganda               |
| Cameroon          | Kazakhstan      | Palestine    | United Arab Emirates |
| Chad              | Kuwait          | Qatar        | Uzbekistan           |
| Comoros           | Kyrgyz Republic | Saudi Arabia | Yemen                |
| Cote d'Ivoire     | Lebanon         | Senegal      |                      |
| Djibouti          | Libya           | Sierra Leone |                      |
| Egypt             | Malaysia        | Somalia      |                      |

\* OIC membership of Syria is currently suspended.

### Non-OIC Developing Countries:

|                        |                    |                  |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Angola                 | Dominica           | Madagascar       | São Tomé and Príncipe          |
| Antigua and Barbuda    | Dominican Republic | Malawi           | Serbia                         |
| Argentina              | Ecuador            | Marshall Islands | Seychelles                     |
| Armenia                | El Salvador        | Mauritius        | Solomon Islands                |
| The Bahamas            | Equatorial Guinea  | Mexico           | South Africa                   |
| Barbados               | Eritrea            | Micronesia       | South Sudan                    |
| Belarus                | Ethiopia           | Moldova          | Sri Lanka                      |
| Belize                 | Fiji               | Mongolia         | St. Kitts and Nevis            |
| Bhutan                 | Georgia            | Montenegro       | St. Lucia                      |
| Bolivia                | Ghana              | Myanmar          | St. Vincent and the Grenadines |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Grenada            | Namibia          | Swaziland                      |
| Botswana               | Guatemala          | Nauru            | Tanzania                       |
| Brazil                 | Haiti              | Nepal            | Thailand                       |
| Bulgaria               | Honduras           | Nicaragua        | Timor-Leste                    |
| Burundi                | Hungary            | Palau            | Tonga                          |



|                                  |               |                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Cabo Verde                       | India         | Papua New Guinea | Trinidad and Tobago |
| Cambodia                         | Jamaica       | Paraguay         | Tuvalu              |
| Central African Republic         | Kenya         | Peru             | Ukraine             |
| Chile                            | Kiribati      | Philippines      | Uruguay             |
| China                            | Kosovo        | Poland           | Vanuatu             |
| Colombia                         | Lao P.D.R.    | Romania          | Venezuela           |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | Lesotho       | Russia           | Vietnam             |
| Republic of Congo                | Liberia       | Rwanda           | Zambia              |
| Costa Rica                       | FYR Macedonia | Samoa            | Zimbabwe            |
| Croatia                          | Panama        |                  |                     |

#### Developed Countries\*\* (39):

|                |             |             |                 |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Australia      | Germany     | Lithuania   | Singapore       |
| Austria        | Greece      | Luxembourg  | Slovak Republic |
| Belgium        | Hong Kong   | Macao SAR   | Slovenia        |
| Canada         | Iceland     | Malta       | Spain           |
| Cyprus         | Ireland     | Netherlands | Sweden          |
| Czech Republic | Israel      | New Zealand | Switzerland     |
| Denmark        | Italy       | Norway      | Taiwan          |
| Estonia        | Japan       | Portugal    | United Kingdom  |
| Finland        | Korea, Rep. | Puerto Rico | United States   |
| France         | Latvia      | San Marino  |                 |

\*\* Based on the list of advanced countries classified by the IMF.





### Appendix III: Geographical Classification of OIC Member States

#### Sub-Saharan Africa (21): OIC-SSA

|               |               |              |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Benin         | Gambia        | Nigeria      |
| Burkina Faso  | Guinea        | Senegal      |
| Cameroon      | Guinea-Bissau | Sierra Leone |
| Chad          | Mali          | Somalia      |
| Comoros       | Mauritania    | Sudan        |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Mozambique    | Togo         |
| Gabon         | Niger         | Uganda       |

#### Middle East and North Africa (19): OIC-MENA

|          |           |                      |
|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| Algeria  | Kuwait    | Saudi Arabia         |
| Bahrain  | Lebanon   | Syria*               |
| Djibouti | Libya     | Tunisia              |
| Egypt    | Morocco   | United Arab Emirates |
| Iraq     | Oman      | Yemen                |
| Iran     | Palestine |                      |
| Jordan   | Qatar     |                      |

\* OIC membership of Syria is currently suspended.

#### East and South Asia and Latin America (9): OIC-ESALA

|                   |           |          |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| Afghanistan       | Guyana    | Maldives |
| Bangladesh        | Indonesia | Pakistan |
| Brunei Darussalam | Malaysia  | Suriname |

#### Europe and Central Asia (8): OIC-ECA

|            |            |              |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| Albania    | Kyrgyzstan | Turkmenistan |
| Azerbaijan | Tajikistan | Uzbekistan   |
| Kazakhstan | Turkey     |              |



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