



**2014 - 2015**

**Model Arab League**

**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**Special Council on Arab Youth**

**[ncusar.org/modelarableague](http://ncusar.org/modelarableague)**

National  
Council  
on US-  
Arab  
Relations



Original draft by Molly Glibbery, Chair of the Special Council on Arab Youth at the 2015 National University Model Arab League, with contributions from the dedicated staff and volunteers at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Esteemed Delegates,

It is an honor to welcome you as delegates for the Special Council on Arab Youth. My name is Molly Glibbery, and I will be serving as the Special Council Chair for the 2015 National University Model Arab League Conference. I am a senior majoring in music therapy at Converse College, and I have been a member of the Converse College MAL team since my freshman year. I have learned and continue to learn so much from my experience with Model Arab League. I hope that whether you are a first time debater or a MAL veteran, that you will experience the same growth during your time with Model Arab League this year.

As stated earlier, this year's focus for the rotating Special Council is Arab Youth. This broad focus matches the broad spectrum of topics associated with this population within Arab society. As in any culture, the training and opportunities presented to today's youth in member states can and will dictate the future of the MENA region. This is particularly so in the MENA region as over 100 million people fit in the MENA region youth demographic. If provided with the right opportunities and utilized to its greatest potential, this Arab youth bulge could promise to expand the MENA region in ways never previously considered. It is your task to consider how the youth bulge could best be utilized to ensure a secure future for the MENA region in the midst of conflict.

Regards,

Molly Glibbery  
Chair, Special Council on Arab Youth

## **Topic I: Creating opportunities for Arab youth to peacefully participate in governmental, civil society, and political processes**

### **I. Introduction to Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

The “creation” of opportunities as specified in the language of Topic 1 denotes the formation and establishment of new avenues in which Arab youth may participate. Although youth have pushed for more outlets for participation in government and society in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, it is vital for the Special Council to revisit such ideas to reevaluate and renovate them for effectiveness and relevancy. As these processes are undertaken, the Council should pay special attention to the adverb “peacefully” in the topic, since any volatile outcome will only serve to hinder this delicate demographic. “Governmental” and “political” processes will be easily defined by the Council, but opportunities in the “civil society” sector span a broader spectrum.

People aged 15-24 years old make up over 20% of the population in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. When this age range is expanded to include 15-29 year olds, the proportion increases to 28%. Approximately 60% of the population in the Arab world is under the age of 25.<sup>1</sup> The youth of the MENA region are growing in both number and influence as this ‘youth bulge’ initially led the way in the ‘Arab Spring.’ This has added new dimensions to Arab regional politics as the youth cohort seeks a role in shaping the future of their respective countries and the region.

Currently, there is great dissatisfaction among young people with the status quo of the Arab world. When questioned in a survey just within the last year, 70% of respondents under the age of 30 said they wanted to leave the MENA region and find work elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Based on surveys conducted prior to and following the ‘Arab Spring,’ several common areas of discontentment among Arab youth can be identified. A major factor of discontentment is high unemployment rates among Arab youth. The unemployment rate for youth is the highest of any region at 23.2%.<sup>3</sup> Another factor of discontent connected to high unemployment is the lack of jobs commensurate with the higher education levels that Arab youth are achieving today. In fact, Arabs who have attained degrees are often less likely to find work than those who have not.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the lack of outlets for freedom of expression has left this demographic frustrated at being unable to openly vocalize political and social beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “Arab Countries Youth Population Projection.” Children and Youth in History, n.d. Web. 05 Sept. 2014. <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/424>>.

<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, Michael, and Amaney Jamal. “The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities.” *Middle East Law and Governance* 4.1 (2012): 168-88. Web. 5 Sept. 2014.

<sup>3</sup> “Youth Unemployment in Arab Region Is Highest in the World: International Labour Organization.” *Al Arabiya*. Al Arabiya News Channel, 6 Feb. 2013. Web. 05 Sept. 2014. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/02/06/264749.html>>.

<sup>4</sup> Mulderig, M. Chloe. “Adulthood Denied: Youth Dissatisfaction and the Arab Spring.” The Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future. Boston University, Oct. 2011. Web. 5 Sept. 2014.

<<http://www.bu.edu/~fpardee/files/2011%2F10%2F21-IIB.pdf>>.

<sup>5</sup> Hoffman, Michael, and Amaney Jamal. “The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities.” *Middle East Law and Governance* 4.1 (2012): 168-88. Web. 5 Sept. 2014.

## B. History of Topic in the Arab World

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest of the government confiscating his vegetable cart.<sup>6</sup> This single act of protest led to the revolution known as the Arab Spring as people around the country who understood Bouazizi's frustration began to protest on a large scale. Less than a month after Bouazizi's self-immolation, the people of Tunisia had overthrown President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali.<sup>7</sup> Shortly thereafter, protests and rebellions took root in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and other countries throughout the region.<sup>8</sup> The Arab Spring had gained a full following, and the leaders of its revolutions, particularly in Tunisia and Egypt, were young people. Since these early days, many of these movements ended in violence and the rolling back of initial progress, the resulting situation even being deemed the 'Arab Winter' or worse.

Much of the current civil unrest in the Arab world can be traced back to the discontentment that was a catalyst for the Arab Spring. Since the Arab Spring, Arab youth have been increasingly more politically involved than any other demographic.<sup>9</sup> Though it seems that Arab youth are more engaged than older generations, young people are also often in need of education and engagement in the political field. For instance, when surveyed, only 38% of Tunisian youth respondents were able to identify that an upcoming election in their country was purposed to choose representatives to write a constitution.<sup>10</sup> In addition, young people are only minimally represented in government positions in the Arab world; this feeds into the sense of political powerlessness that many Arab youth feel.

This lack of representation certainly has a negative impact on Arab youth, and one that may be deadly. Extremist groups within the MENA region, such as Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, and Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL), can appeal to youths who have lingering frustrations with their political climates and the lack of a relevant outlet in which to express themselves. For instance, a United States Institute of Peace study found that these organizations, namely Al-Qaeda, does not necessarily have to recruit youths; its "ideology" and "brand" attracts Arab youth that are looking for an outlet, lack a sense of political identity, or are searching for personal development.<sup>11</sup> Receiving recruits of this nature has granted Al-Qaeda a stronger hold on Arab League states such as Yemen and Somalia, especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.<sup>12</sup> This type of youth political

---

<sup>6</sup> Fisher, Marc. "In Tunisia, Act of One Fruit Vendor Sparks Wave of Revolution through Arab World." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 26 Mar. 2011. Web. 05 Sept. 2014. <[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-tunisia-act-of-one-fruit-vendor-sparks-wave-of-revolution-through-arab-world/2011/03/16/AFjfsueB\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-tunisia-act-of-one-fruit-vendor-sparks-wave-of-revolution-through-arab-world/2011/03/16/AFjfsueB_story.html)>.

<sup>7</sup> Chrisafis, Angelique, and Ian Black. "Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali Forced to Flee Tunisia as Protesters Claim Victory." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 15 Jan. 2011. Web. 05 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/14/tunisian-president-flees-country-protests>>.

<sup>8</sup> Abouzeid, Rania. "Bouazizi: The Man Who Set Himself and Tunisia on Fire." *Time*. Time Inc., 21 Jan. 2011. Web. 05 Sept. 2014. <<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0%2C9171%2C2044723%2C00.html>>.

<sup>9</sup> "Arab Youth : Civic Engagement and Economic Participation." *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*. UNESCO, 2011. Web. 9 Sept. 2014. <[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/pdf/YCE%20\\_EN.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/pdf/YCE%20_EN.pdf)>.

<sup>10</sup> Hoffman, Michael, and Amaney Jamal. "The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities." *Middle East Law and Governance* 4.1 (2012): 168-88. Web. 5 Sept. 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Venhaus, John M. "Why Youth Join Al-Qaeda." *United States Institute of Peace Special Report*. United States Institute of Peace, May 2010. Web. 9 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR236Venhaus.pdf>>.

<sup>12</sup> Hoffman, Bruce. "The Arab Spring and Its I | Combating Terrorism Center at West Point." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, 22 May 2012. Web. 09 Sept. 2014. <<https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-arab-spring-and-its-influence-on-al-qaida>>.

participation is obviously one that is highly detrimental to the League and to the entire youth demographic, but it cannot be overlooked by the Council.

### **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future**

The League of Arab States has not been absent from efforts to involve Arab youth in political dialogue and processes. From 2007-2009, the League hosted an annual Youth Forum to discuss international and regional migration while strengthening dialogue between European and Arab youth.<sup>13</sup> The Arab Spring also sparked international dialogue between Arab youth and the rest of the world. In August 2012, a symposium titled “Arab Spring: Youth Participation for the Promotion of Peace, Human Rights, and Fundamental Freedoms” was held by the European Commission and Council of Europe in partnership with the League and Arab youth organizations.<sup>14</sup> It included workshops to discuss potential solutions and movements for youth issues such as “active participation in democratic processes, equal access to quality education, including non-formal and informal learning and youth work, employment and social inclusion.”<sup>15</sup>

In addition, the UN Arab Youth Volunteering for A Better Future was a program created to connect Arab youth to volunteer opportunities in their society in order to encourage greater civil society engagement; countries that have participated in the program include Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen.<sup>16</sup> Though several avenues have been devised to engage youth in peaceful political participation, more outlets are still needed. In particular, solutions brought forth in this council should be focused on creating long-term programs within individual member states and in the League as a whole. Furthermore, solutions might look to also raise awareness of political issues and civil society for youth.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What separates the Arab youth cohort from other cohorts with regards to political views?
- How have these youth been involved with political and civil matters in your country?
- What opportunities for youth involvement in governmental affairs already exist in the region? For your country?
- What political, civil, and governmental issues are of greatest importance to the youth in your country?
- How well informed are 15-25 year olds in your state of political issues in their respective countries and within the region overall? How can awareness be raised?

---

<sup>13</sup> "Overall Aims and Objectives." League of Arab States Youth Forum 2009. League of Arab States, 2009. Web. 05 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.lasyouthforum.org/2009en/page.php?id=3>>.

<sup>14</sup> Executive Summary on “Arab Spring: Youth Participation for the Promotion of Peace, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”." *Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform*. Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Field of Youth, 2012. Web. 5 Sept. 2014. <[http://www.euromedp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Draft\\_Executive\\_summary\\_report\\_Tunis\\_conf.pdf](http://www.euromedp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Draft_Executive_summary_report_Tunis_conf.pdf)>.

<sup>15</sup> "EU-CoE Youth Policy Conference in Tunis: The Role of Young People in Arab Spring And (...)." EuroMed Youth Programme IV. Euro-Mediterranean Youth Programme, n.d. Web. 05 Sept. 2014. <<http://euromedyouth.net/EU-CoE-youth-policy-conference-in>>.

<sup>16</sup> Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future (n.d.): n. pag. UN Volunteers. United Nations, 2013. Web. 5 Sept. 2014. <[http://www.unv.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2013/resources/UNV\\_ArabYouthConsultationReport\\_reduced.pdf](http://www.unv.org/fileadmin/docdb/pdf/2013/resources/UNV_ArabYouthConsultationReport_reduced.pdf)>.

### **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- What could Arab youth gain from peacefully contributing to political processes?
- What kind of forums/platforms would be best to perpetuate youth participation in governmental affairs?
- What role should social media play in Arab youth movements?
- How will member states define “peaceful participation” in political affairs?
- Should youth platforms be completely separate from other platforms? Should they coordinate with other cohorts of the population?
- How would be country manage political dissent within the youth demographic?

### **IV. Resources to Review**

Young in the Arab World:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1723\\_youngarabworld/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1723_youngarabworld/)

The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities by Michael Hoffman and Amaney Jamal, Princeton University:

[http://mthoffma.mycpanel.princeton.edu/Hoffman\\_Jamal\\_MELG.pdf](http://mthoffma.mycpanel.princeton.edu/Hoffman_Jamal_MELG.pdf)

Social Media in the Arab World: the Impact on Youth, Women and Social Change:

[http://www.iemed.org/observatori-en/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/med.2012/mourtada%20salem\\_en.pdf](http://www.iemed.org/observatori-en/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/med.2012/mourtada%20salem_en.pdf)

Civil Society, Youth and the Arab Spring:

[http://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/150411/Chapter\\_13\\_-\\_Rama\\_Halaseh.pdf](http://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150411/Chapter_13_-_Rama_Halaseh.pdf)

League of Arab States Youth Forum:

<http://www.lasyouthforum.org/2009en/index.php>

Religion or Tradition: The Lack of Modernization in the Arab World:

<http://www.onlineresearchjournals.com/ijopagg/art/70.pdf>

## **Topic II: Investigating ways to encourage Arab youth to preserve their cultural heritage in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

### **I. Introduction to Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

The Arab Youth Survey conducted in April 2014 found that 46% of Arab youth wanted to distance themselves from tradition and instead “embrace modern values and beliefs.”<sup>17</sup> The survey also found that Arab youth were less influenced by their family and religion and more influenced by peers, media, and celebrities.<sup>18</sup> Of all modern influences, social media seems to have the largest clout, with 35% of youth stating that social media influences their ideology.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, Arab youth born between the years of 1977 and 1997 are being referred to as the Arab Digital Generation (ADG).<sup>20</sup> Booz & Company states that if anybody in the Arab culture wants to reach out to this population, even with regards to the more traditional parts of their culture, it must be done through technological means.<sup>21</sup> In the Arab world, there is an increased need to establish an Arab identity among next generation and to preserve the region’s cultural treasures. This might include musical traditions, culinary styles, historical sites, ancient and modern art, local customs, and many more aspects of culture.

To ‘investigate’ this matter alludes to researching past methods of cultural preservation, which may or may not be limited to the MENA region. If approaches are extracted from outside the MENA region, special attention must be paid to Arab culture through the lens of modernity—although Arab history and culture is ancient in nature, Topic 2 specifically asks for ways that adhere to norms of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The ‘encourage’ aspect of this topic implies that an incentive or additional motivation may be needed to convince Arab youth to preserve their cultural heritage.

#### **B. History of Topic in the Arab World**

With regard to the ADG, the youth of the Arab world cannot be talked about without concurrently discussing the ‘Arab Spring.’ Young people across the region learned about the protests through social media, and often, social media served as the platform to mobilize protests.<sup>22</sup> In addition, it has been observed that through social media and the Internet, young Arabs have been exposed to a wider range of ideas, entertainment forms, cultural norms from

---

<sup>17</sup> Al Khoori, Ayesha. "Traditions 'outdated' as Arab Youth Survey Finds Regions Young Embracing Modern Technologies | The National." *The National UAE*. Abu Dhabi Media, 7 Apr. 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014.

<<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/nearly-half-of-arab-youth-find-traditions-are-outdated-and-embrace-modern-technology>>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Sabbagh, Karim, Mohamad Mourad, Wassim Kabbara, Ramez Shehadi, and Hatem Samman. "Understanding the Arab Digital Generation." *Ideation Center Insight*. Booz & Company, 2012. Web. 8 Sept. 2014.

<[http://www.idal.com.lb/Content/uploads/Understanding\\_the\\_Arab\\_Digital\\_Generation.pdf](http://www.idal.com.lb/Content/uploads/Understanding_the_Arab_Digital_Generation.pdf)>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Wihbey, John. "The Arab Spring and the Internet: Research roundup." Journalists Resource RSS. Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 25 Sept. 2013. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://journalistsresource.org/studies/international/global-tech/research-arab-spring-internet-key-studies>>.

around the world, especially the West. Despite claims of ‘westernization’ in Arab culture as a result of technology, youth have mobilized through social media and pushed for more voices in the political sphere.<sup>23</sup>

Another aspect that begs attention is religion. The Arab Youth Survey did reveal that Arab youth still look to their families, communities, and religion as having major influence on their lives. Arab Youth have become “somewhat less religiously observant, though still deeply polarized between nationalists and devotees of political Islam.”<sup>24</sup>

Many outlets have capitalized on a globalized Arab youth while still promoting a local identity. Since 2003, a conglomerate of music, movie, and religious television channels named Rotana has worked with this idea. In its earlier days, the music channels played many contemporary music videos, but in between music videos, the video jockeys would recite Arabic poetry.<sup>25</sup> Further, Rotana promotes both international and Arab artists in its media, exposing youth to regional figures of their same heritage and celebrities of various backgrounds.<sup>26</sup>

### **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future**

Though Arab youth are trending towards modernity, there have been attempts to preserve and promote Arab cultural heritage. The Jeunesses Musicales International (JMI), the Cultural Movement EPILOGI of Limassol, and the Arab Academy of Music, which is associated with the League of Arab States, founded the Euro Arab Youth Music Center in 2005. The center allows European and Arab youth to learn musical skills from different parts of the world while also embracing regional music.<sup>27</sup>

Many member states have cultural centers or ministries of culture with programs designated to connect youths with their cultural backgrounds. For example, the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage was opened in Bahrain in 2012—a site with extensive activities such as supporting those states with UNESCO World Heritage Sites and acting as a place for Arab cultural experts to network and meet. It has been noted that this center has played an important role in preserving a national identity among Arab youth. There have also been instances where Arab youth were clearly influenced by Western culture but combined that influence with their own heritage. This has been seen in the extensive use of graffiti as a means of political activism; though youth use graffiti as a political protest, they still use their traditional Arabic language in their art.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Howard, Philip N. "The Arab Spring's Cascading Effects." Pacific Standard. N.p., 23 Feb. 2011. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.psmag.com/navigation/politics-and-law/the-cascading-effects-of-the-arab-spring-28575/>>.

<sup>24</sup> Cole, Juan. "Don't Count Out the Arab Youth." Foreign Policy In Focus. Institute for Policy Studies, 30 June 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://fpif.org/waiting-arab-summer/>>.

<sup>25</sup> Kraidy, Marwan M. "Youth, Media, and Culture in the Arab World." University of Pennsylvania, 1 Jan. 2008. Web. 8 Sept. 2014. <[http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1312&context=asc\\_papers](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1312&context=asc_papers)>.

<sup>26</sup> "Rotana.net." Rotana Media Group. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.rotana.net/en>>.

<sup>27</sup> "Euro-Med Youth Music Expo." EuroMed Youth Music Expo. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.eaymc.org/about/the-center/>>.

<sup>28</sup> Nicoarea, Georgiana. "Graffiti in the Arab World – Youth Identity between Tradition and Modernity." Academia.edu. University of Bucharest, n.d. Web. 8 Sept. 2014. <[http://www.academia.edu/3344904/Graffiti\\_in\\_the\\_Arab\\_World\\_-\\_Youth\\_identity\\_between\\_tradition\\_and\\_modernity](http://www.academia.edu/3344904/Graffiti_in_the_Arab_World_-_Youth_identity_between_tradition_and_modernity)>.

Effective solutions for the future will involve finding ways to actively preserve the Arab identity in the face of globalizing influences. There is a need to focus on mediums familiar to Arab youth, particularly that of technology, as a means of encouraging the preservation of cultural heritage. With the political and cultural storms sweeping the region, as well as raging wars, it is more important than ever to preserve Arab identity and encourage the next generation to be its guardians.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What defines cultural heritage in my country?
- What traditions are valuable to Arab youth today? How do youth in my state demonstrate pride in their cultural heritage?
- Why are Arab youth apparently turning away from their cultural heritage?
- Who/what has the greatest influence on Arab youth's preferences?
- How do Arab youth express themselves through the arts?
- What organizations and mechanisms exist to engage Arab youth with their heritage?

## **III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer**

- Can traditions of the past and trends of the present mix? If so, how?
- What role should technology play in solutions to the preservation of cultural heritage?
- What parts of Arab cultural heritage need to be preserved? What parts can give in to modern ideas?
- How can existing projects for cultural heritage preservation be strengthened?
- What new League-wide mechanisms can be implemented to help youth be proud and knowledgeable of their heritage?

## **IV. Resources to Review**

United Nations Culture and Youth Development:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-cultureasavector.pdf>

Asda'a Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey 2014:

<http://arabyouthsurvey.com/>

Graffiti in the Arab World – Youth identity between tradition and modernity by Georgiana Nicoarea:

[http://www.academia.edu/3344904/Graffiti\\_in\\_the\\_Arab\\_World\\_Youth\\_identity\\_between\\_tradition\\_and\\_modernity](http://www.academia.edu/3344904/Graffiti_in_the_Arab_World_Youth_identity_between_tradition_and_modernity)

Cultural Heritage and Development in the Arab World edited by Fekri Hassan, Aloisia de Trafford, Mohsen Youssef:

[http://www.bibalex.org/arf/en/gra1106 df\\_20081102\\_book.pdf](http://www.bibalex.org/arf/en/gra1106 df_20081102_book.pdf)

Negotiating Identity: New Perspectives on the Globalization and Identity Debate in the GCC by May Al-Dabbagh and Ghalia Gargani:

<http://www.dsg.ae/portals/0/WP11-04.pdf>

A Generation on the Move: Insights into the conditions, aspirations and activism of Arab youth:  
[http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Summary\\_Report\\_A\\_GENERATION\\_ON\\_THE\\_MOVE\\_AU  
B\\_IFI\\_UNICEF\\_MENARO\\_.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Summary_Report_A_GENERATION_ON_THE_MOVE_AU<br/>B_IFI_UNICEF_MENARO_.pdf)

Youth, Media and Culture in the Arab World by Marwan M. Kraidy:  
[http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1312&context=asc\\_papers](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1312&context=asc_papers)

### **Topic III: Evaluating means to create employment opportunities for and limit discrimination in the workplace against young Arab women**

#### **I. Introduction to Topic**

##### **A. General Background**

The demographic delineated by Topic 3 is highly specific and calls for its own set of parameters. At the same time, Topic 3 is twofold: delegates should not only focus on producing new employment opportunities for females, but they must also set standards for combatting discrimination against women within these new avenues. The call for “evaluation” in the topic indicates that delegates should analyze the effectiveness of any existing opportunities or those that are generated within the Council. Special Council members might consider solutions that both combat any existing discrimination while also adding in preventative measures.

To bring life to the problem, in many regions of the world women struggle to obtain the same employment rights as men. In the United States, women still earn only \$.77 for every \$1 a man earns.<sup>29</sup> In the MENA region, the unemployment rate for women between 23 and 29 is twice the unemployment rate for men in the same age demographic.<sup>30</sup>

Delegates should acknowledge, however, the sensitivity of this subject with regard to the diversity of thought and practice in various member states. The topic is clearly worded to show favor in better employment opportunities and less workplace discrimination for women, but different countries will have very different ideas on solutions and implementations. The Special Council will likely need to walk the fine line between meaningful resolutions and national sovereignty.

##### **B. History of Topic in the Arab World**

The Arab Charter of Human Rights, enacted in 2004, provides a broad outline of what women’s rights in society and the workplace should look like in the Arab world. Article 3, Clause 3 reads:

Men and women are equal in human dignity, in rights and in duties, within the framework of the positive discrimination established in favor of women by Islamic Shari’a and other divine laws, legislation and international instruments. Consequently, each State Party to the present Charter shall undertake all necessary measures to guarantee the effective equality between men and women.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Waber, Ben. "What Data Analytics Says About Gender Inequality in the Workplace." Bloomberg Business Week. Bloomberg, 30 Jan. 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-01-30/gender-inequality-in-the-workplace-what-data-analytics-says>>.

<sup>30</sup> Crabtree, Steve. "Two-Thirds of Young Arab Women Remain Out of Workforce." Gallup. Gallup, Inc, 2 Apr. 2012. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/153659/two-thirds-young-arab-women-remain-workforce.aspx>>.

<sup>31</sup> "Arab Charter on Human Rights." University of Minnesota Human Rights Library. University of Minnesota, n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instreet/loas2005.html>>.

In addition, Article 34, Clause 1 states that all citizens should have “the freedom to work and equality of opportunity without discrimination of any kind as to...sex...”<sup>32</sup> Clause 4 clarifies this further, stating “No distinction between men and women shall be made in the exercise of the right to benefit effectively from training, employment, protection of work, and equal pay for work of equal value and quality.”<sup>33</sup> Different interpretations of this agreement mean that not all women experience the same workers’ rights across the region.

Over the past few decades, great progress has been made to give young Arab women greater social justice in the form of higher literacy rates and lower fertility rates.<sup>34</sup> Though this would seem to translate into higher employment rates for young Arab women as access to education has increased while domestic obligations have decreased, only one out of every three Arab women is employed.<sup>35</sup>

Even while being employed or searching for a job, women have experienced great discrimination. In 2013, Nadereh Chamlou, a senior advisor to the chief economist for the Middle East and North Africa at the World Bank, conducted a survey with European companies that work in the Middle East. Though these companies stated that they would rather hire women over men for many positions because of superior merit and qualifications, their understanding of sharia law made them hesitate to hire female candidates.<sup>36</sup> In the past this has been attributed to the lower levels of education for women as compared to men. This, however, no longer holds merit as the number of Arab men and women graduating from college are at least equal, and Arab women have been found to do better in the sciences than Arab men.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, over 50% of all Arab science graduates are women; further, women constitute close to 60% of all graduates who focused their studies in math in the Arab states.<sup>38</sup>

Today, this gender discrimination has been attributed to many ideas, including religious beliefs which discourage men and women from working in the same workplace.<sup>39</sup> When Arab women do find work in the same place as men, they face sexual harassment that is often not legally regulated.<sup>40</sup> As a result, when women are employed, they take jobs in settings typically reserved

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> "Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere." The World Bank: Middle East and North Africa. The World Bank, n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0%2C%2CcontentMDK%3A20261828~pagePK%3A146736~piPK%3A146830~theSitePK%3A256299%2C00.html>>.

<sup>35</sup> Crabtree, Steve. "Two-Thirds of Young Arab Women Remain Out of Workforce." Gallup. Gallup, Inc, 2 Apr. 2012. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/153659/two-thirds-young-arab-women-remain-workforce.aspx>>.

<sup>36</sup> Aslan, Reza. "Women in the Workforce in the Arab World." Middle East Voices. Voice of America, 17 Apr. 2013. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://middleeastvoices.voanews.com/2013/04/insight-women-in-the-workforce-in-the-arab-world-48868/>>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> "Global Education Digest 2010: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World." UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The United Nations, 2010. Web. 8 Sept. 2014. <[http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/GED\\_2010\\_EN.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/GED_2010_EN.pdf)>.

<sup>39</sup> Ghaziri, Sophie. "Mind the Gap: Lack of Arab Women in the Workplace." Al Arabiya. Al Arabiya Network, 29 June 2013. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2013/06/29/Mind-the-gap-Lack-of-Arab-women-in-the-workplace.html>>.

<sup>40</sup> Fayyaz, Ali. "Discrimination against Women Widespread." Arab News. Arab News, 25 Oct. 2013. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.arabnews.com/news/468770>>.

for females, such as women's wear retail stores and agricultural labor.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, these jobs do not pay enough to help support a family, as many young Arab women hope to do.

### **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future**

Since 1989, the Global Fund for Women has worked in the Middle East and North Africa to support women's rights organizations which work for such things as gender equality in employment. In 2011, the grants provided by this organization generated legislation that guaranteed women's access to employment in several states, including Libya, Palestine, Tunisia, Yemen, Algeria, and Egypt.<sup>42</sup>

Within the League of Arab States, there are different interpretations of women's rights and as a result, differing ideas as to how discrimination should be addressed. In other words, the League of Arab States should consider solutions that address employment opportunities and barriers for women and also respect the sovereignty of each member state. This is a topic that is affected by social, economic, cultural, religious, and political considerations. Solutions should identify which of these aspects requires the most attention.

In addition, there are many issues that specifically affect young women seeking employment that must be considered, such as receiving education that will lead to a job, maternity leave, and family care outside of work. A major problem for many young people in the MENA region, particularly young women, is that there are few strong job opportunities to match the higher level of education they have.<sup>43</sup> Solutions may also consider the creation of new jobs for this increasingly more educated cohort of young Arab women. Finally, finding a solution to this problem requires delegates to have a strong knowledge of women's rights and family law in the MENA region, as this aligns with employment opportunities and present discrimination occurrences in the MENA region.

## **II. Questions to Consider in Your Research**

- What jobs do young Arab women occupy in the work force now?
- How has your country dealt with discrimination against young women in the workplace?
- What prevents Arab women in your country and the League of Arab States from obtaining work?
- What are current work conditions like for women in your country?
- Why does discrimination against young women in the workplace exist?
- Is it possible that women in your country hold more home-based jobs?

---

<sup>41</sup> Abdelali-Martini, Malika. "Empowering Women in the Rural Labor Force with a Focus on Agricultural Employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)." (n.d.): n. pag. UN Women. The United Nations, Sept. 2011. Web. 8 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/Martini-EP-9-EGM-RW-Sep-2011.pdf>>.

<sup>42</sup> "Investing in Women's Rights Movements in the Middle East and North Africa." Global Fund for Women, n.d. Web. 8 Sept. 2014. <<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/storage/documents/impact/gfw-middle-east-report.pdf>>.

<sup>43</sup> Aslan, Reza. "Women in the Workforce in the Arab World." Middle East Voices. Voice of America, 17 Apr. 2013. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://middleeastvoices.voanews.com/2013/04/insight-women-in-the-workforce-in-the-arab-world-48868/>>.

### III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What mediums could be used to eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace?
- How can young Arab women be more efficiently placed in the workplace?
- How can the League of Arab States take a unified front to combat problems women encounter in employment?
- How can the League of Arab States present new employment opportunities for young Arab women commensurate with their educational levels?
- What provisions should be made for those women who have families to tend to but also need/want to be in the work force?
- Should incentives be given to women who wish to start their own businesses?

### IV. Resources to Review

International Labour Organization Section on Gender:

<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/equality-and-discrimination/gender-equality/lang--en/index.htm>

All relevant conventions on the rights of women in the work place, including the Maternity Protection Convention , UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; the ones listed can be found here:

[http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/photo-slideshows/slideshows/WCMS\\_236336/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/photo-slideshows/slideshows/WCMS_236336/lang--en/index.htm)

The Arab Charter on Human Rights:

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38540.html>

Empowering Women in the Rural Labor Force with a Focus on Agricultural Employment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Expert paper prepared by: Malika Abdelali-Martini, The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Algeria:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/Martini-EP-9-EGM-RW-Sep-2011.pdf>

The Guardian: Women's rights country by country – interactive:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/ng-interactive/2014/feb/04/womens-rights-country-by-country-interactive>

Two-Thirds of Young Arab Women Remain Out of Workforce, young women's workforce participation remains low despite education gains by Steve Crabtree:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/153659/two-thirds-young-arab-women-remain-workforce.aspx>

Global Fund for Women: Investing in Women's Rights Movements in the Middle East and North Africa:

<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/storage/documents/impact/gfw-middle-east-report.pdf>

Rural women producers and cooperatives in conflicts settings in the Arab States by Simel Esim and Mansour Omeira. International Labour Organization, Regional Office for the Arab States, Lebanon:

[http://www.fao-ilo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fao\\_ilo/pdf/Papers/25\\_March/Esim\\_Fin.pdf](http://www.fao-ilo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fao_ilo/pdf/Papers/25_March/Esim_Fin.pdf)

## **Topic IV: Introducing programs in sports diplomacy that maintain Arab youth interest and involvement in the community while teaching positive social values particularly for children in refugee camps and in conflict zones**

### **I. Introduction to Topic**

#### **A. General Background**

The ‘introduction’ of a program signifies the advocacy for, and possible implementation of, new initiatives in sports diplomacy. Delegates must be mindful to the dual purposes of whatever solutions they create—programs should be enticing enough to draw participation and impactful enough to impart ‘positive’ traits. Topic 4 is precise in the locations of these sports diplomacy programs – refugee camps and conflict zones – yet it is still up to the Council to select areas in the MENA region that demand this need. Finally, delegates in the Council need to determine a model for the sports diplomacy they wish to instill. The model should be respectful, comprehensive, and easy to disperse.

An international organization that has supported the development of sports diplomacy worldwide is the United Nations Office of Sports for Development and Peace program (UNOSDP). The UN views sports as a “fundamental right for all.”<sup>44</sup> They combine the use of sports with other non-sports programs to encourage peaceful relations between groups and countries. It has been used as a tool to open dialogue and encourage reconciliation. Somalia and Sudan have participated in UNOSDP programs with noted success.

However, the UNOSDP notes that providing avenues of sports diplomacy in the midst of conflict can be incredibly difficult. When a base level of security is in question, engaging in sports across borders can be almost impossible. Despite this, the UNOSDP notes that sports can be used domestically as a means to provide temporary respite from the stressors of conflict, and once conflict has ceased, sport can be used to promote peace building.<sup>45</sup>

#### **B. History of Topic in the Arab World**

Sports diplomacy is a concept that is building momentum in the Arab world. During the 2012 London Olympics, the MENA region sent athletes from 17 countries to compete and a number of them were women.<sup>46</sup> Though not necessarily a diplomatic strategy, the high number of young Arab athletes taking part in this world event compared to years past brought positive attention to the MENA region. Prince Feisal bin Al Hussein of Jordan stated in response to the success of the 2012 Olympic Games that “Sports is a tool that teaches us to be part of a greater community to help children learn to look at each other as humans.”<sup>47</sup> He further notes that sports are

---

<sup>44</sup> "Why Sport?" UN Office of Sports for Development and Peace. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/sport>>.

<sup>45</sup> "Sport in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations." United Nations Sport for Development and Peace. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/unplayers/memberstates/pid/16007>>.

<sup>46</sup> Hanania, Ray. "Arab Pride Wins Big at the 2012 London Olympics." Creators.com. N.p., 2012. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.creators.com/opinion/ray-hanania/arab-pride-wins-big-at-the-2012-london-olympics.html>>.

<sup>47</sup> Bose, Mihir. "I Cannot See the Olympics Coming to the Arab World Any Time Soon" *The Independent*. Independent Digital News and Media, 10 Aug. 2012. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/olympics/news/i-cannot-see-the-olympics-coming-to-the-arab-world-any-time-soon-8031307.html>>.

changing from being viewed as a “luxury” to a necessary component in the development of identity in young people.<sup>48</sup>

Though there haven’t been any region-wide sports diplomacy programs within the Arab world, there have been a few programs that have been successfully implemented in refugee camps and conflict zones. At the Zataari refugee camp close to the Syrian Border, Jordanian soccer star Abeer Rantisi has been teaching women and girls in the camp how to play soccer, and other coaches have also been teaching the men and boys how to play. Rantisi stated that learning soccer has instilled self-confidence in these women and girls and enabled them to find a sense of emotional fortitude in the midst of their hardships.<sup>49</sup>

The Bedawi refugee camp for Palestinians in Lebanon also has an internally organized sports program. There are nine football clubs in the camp that allow for play for more than 1,000 children, youth, and adults in the camp. These football programs allow for safe play for children who would normally not be able to engage in play because of unstable environments.<sup>50</sup>

### **C. Finding a Solution to the Problem: Past, Present, and Future**

Besides the 2012 Olympics, there have been a few other instances in which organizations and even governmental bodies have sponsored sports diplomacy programs. For example, for many years, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United Kingdom have enjoyed close political ties. UAE ambassador to the UK Abdul Rahman Ghanim Al Mutaiwee attributes a lot of this success to the sport of horse racing, which is very popularity in both regions. UAE horse breeders have invested in horse racing in the UK, creating thousands of jobs; likewise, the UK has started to host more races focused on Arabian horses to encourage the UAE racing industry and spread the sport to the UK.<sup>51</sup> In 2011, a company in Qatar invested in the Spanish Magala soccer team. Indeed, both Qatari investors and Spanish entrepreneurs met over a soccer game to talk of the economic situations of either country.<sup>52</sup> Since 2012, Doha GOALS, has acted as a forum to encourage the collaboration of global leaders to speak of using sport as a means of economic development and as educational and social tools for youth.<sup>53</sup>

There is a growing need for support of sports programs within refugee camps and conflict zones. For example, ANERA, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of Palestinians throughout the Middle East, has worked with the Bedawi refugee camp and other refugee camps on sports improvement projects. These projects have included the renovation of playing fields and training of coaches.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Montague, James. "Syria Conflict: Kicking for Hope in Zaatari Refugee Camp." CNN. Cable News Network, 14 Mar. 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/03/14/sport/football/zaatari-refugee-camp/>>.

<sup>50</sup> "Lebanon Refugee Camp Sports Field Is Renovated." ANERA. N.p., 27 Mar. 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.anera.org/stories/sports-field-in-lebanon-refugee-camp-is-renovated/>>.

<sup>51</sup> Wilson, Leslie. "Al Mutaiwe'e Hails Success of 'sports Diplomacy'." Gulf News. Al Nisr Publishign, 10 Aug. 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://gulfnews.com/sport/horse-racing/al-mutaiwe-e-hails-success-of-sports-diplomacy-1.1370511>>.

<sup>52</sup> Duff, Alex, and Sharon Smyth. "Sheikhs Use Soccer Diplomacy as Arabs Return to Invest in Spanish Market." Bloomberg.com. Bloomberg, 10 Oct. 2011. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-10-10/sheikhs-use-soccer-diplomacy-as-arabs-return-to-invest-in-spanish-market.html>>.

<sup>53</sup> "About Doha Goals." Doha Goals. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.dohagoals.com/en/goal/about>>.

<sup>54</sup> Lebanon Refugee Camp Sports Field Is Renovated." ANERA. N.p., 27 Mar. 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.anera.org/stories/sports-field-in-lebanon-refugee-camp-is-renovated/>>.

However, the UNOSDP notes that while sports can be used to educate youth and benefit society, sports can also be a platform for producing violence and misunderstandings, especially in tense or cramped environments.<sup>55</sup> In addition, there is the issue of finding safe places to play sports. For example, at the Zataari refugee camp, public displays of women engaged in sport and fitness activities can be socially unacceptable; women must continually seek new spaces around the camp to play to allay criticism from certain sectors of society.<sup>56</sup> Solutions will consider sports that engage youth in an activity they enjoy while also providing long term lessons in communication, teamwork, peacekeeping, and other important values and ideals of society. In addition, solutions should differentiate between sports diplomacy within the region and on an international stage.

## II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What sports are common to countries within the Arab world and abroad?
- Has my country engaged in any sports diplomacy programs?
- Are there any current sports diplomacy programs that would be of interest to my country and to the Arab world at large?

## III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- Should allowances be made for Arab young women to compete and play in sports diplomacy programs?
- What measures need to be in place to ensure the safety of those participants in sports diplomacy programs who reside in refugee camps or conflict zones?
- How can sports be used in my country as a tool for conflict resolution and reconciliation?
- Where should these kinds of programs take place?

## V. Resources to Review

Sports for Development and Peace: The UN System in Action:  
<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/>

Sport as Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California:  
[http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdin\\_monitor\\_article/international\\_sport\\_as\\_public\\_diplomacy](http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdin_monitor_article/international_sport_as_public_diplomacy)

Sport and Diplomacy, Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, SOAS:  
<http://www.cisd.soas.ac.uk/research/sport-and-diplomacy,31583804>

United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace, Annual Report 2013:  
<http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/sport/shared/sport/Documents/Annual%20Report%202013/UNOSDP%20Annual%20Report%202013.pdf>

---

<sup>55</sup> "Why Sport?" UN Office of Sports for Development and Peace. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/sport>>.

<sup>56</sup> Montague, James. "Syria Conflict: Kicking for Hope in Zaatari Refugee Camp." CNN. Cable News Network, 14 Mar. 2014. Web. 08 Sept. 2014. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/03/14/sport/football/zaatari-refugee-camp/>>.

Sport and Politics, the British Council:

<http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~rosenl/sports%20Folder/Sport%20and%20Politics%20Kings%20and%20Countries.pdf>