



MYSEA PROJECT REPORT

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED NATIONAL DECENT WORK POLICY FOR YOUTH IN LEBANON

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ATSs	Agricultural Technical Schools
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
CIP	Consumer Price Index
DJY	Decent Jobs for Youth
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	The European Union
HDI	Human Development Index
HDS	Household Deprivation Score
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IoT	Internet of Things
ITC-ILO	International Training Centre of the International Labor Organization
LIMIS	Labor Market Information System
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MYSEA	Mediterranean Youth, NEETs, and Women advancing Skills, Employment and Awareness in the Blue and Green Economy
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
PNDWPY	Proposed National Decent Work Policy for Youth in Lebanon
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Businesses
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETNSF	Technical and Vocational Education and Training National Strategic Framework
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WB/IBRD	The World Bank/The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

GLOSSARY OF TERMS & DEFINITIONS

DECENT WORK

A term coined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999, is broadly defined as work that is done freely without coercion or force, in a safe work environment with fair procedures, workers' rights, social protection, and secure returns for work. The focus is on job quality and includes issues such as labour relations, hazardous work, workers' rights, gender gaps, and work-life balance, among others.

DIGITAL SKILLS

Are defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. They enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities at large.

EMPLOYABILITY

Portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work.

FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

The formal sector consists of the businesses, enterprises and economic activities that are monitored, protected and taxed by the government.

GREEN SKILLS

Skills are green when they help reducing negative environmental impact ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and economies.

GREEN COMPETENCIES

Are the technical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed in the workforce to develop and support sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes in business, industry and the community.

INFORMAL ECONOMY

Activities and income that are partially or fully outside government regulation, taxation, and observation. Informal employment involves work without formal contracts and protection of labor rights in line with national legislation and International Labor Standards.

LIFE SKILLS

Originally defined by the World Health Organization as a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT

Employment yielding sufficient returns to labor to permit the worker and her/his dependents an adequate level of consumption/income that satisfies their basic needs.

SOFT SKILLS

Term referring to intangible qualities, traits, habits, and attitudes applicable across various jobs, commonly known as transferable skills. The concept of transferability is debated due to individuals learning tasks in specific contexts, potentially limiting their universal application.

YOUTH & YOUNG

The World Bank defines youth as those aged 15 to 24; young adults as those aged 25 to 29. We are combining both in this proposed policy under the umbrella of youth 15-29.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lebanon's Human Development Index (HDI) declined from 2011 to 2021, reaching 0.706. The economic crisis, marked by poverty, inflation, job scarcity, and currency devaluation, has affected over 80% of the population. The World Food Program's Household Deprivation Score (HDS) indicates a rise in multidimensional deprivation from 53% in December 2021 to 60% in August 2022.

The youth in Lebanon face challenges like poverty, security issues, political instability, limited job prospects, high school dropout rates, and expensive living combined with low wages. Corruption and political issues exacerbate these problems, necessitating a national policy on decent work for youth to stimulate the economy, curb migration, and provide opportunities.

The Proposed National Decent Work Policy for Youth in Lebanon (PNDWPY) aims to offer resources, platforms, and growth opportunities. Objectives include consolidating youth programs, fostering development across sectors, and promoting coordination among government entities and civil society. Education reform aligning with economic needs, innovation, and entrepreneurship initiatives, and a labor market information system are proposed. Social capital, research, monitoring, and evaluation, and capacity development are emphasized for effective policy implementation. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) will lead curriculum reform, collaboration with ministries, and advocacy for resource mobilization.

II. CONTEXT

Lebanon is currently grappling with a multifaceted crisis, exacerbated by a prolonged economic and financial downturn since 2019. Political stagnation, declining stability, and internal and external shocks have intensified the impact on society, pushing a significant portion of the population into dire circumstances. The economic fallout has led to inflation, currency devaluation, and a shift from private to public services. The education sector is severely affected, with over 10% of children lacking access to education, and a recent cholera outbreak highlighting the precarious state of water infrastructure. Vulnerable groups, including children, women, and the elderly, face increased hardships due to economic collapse, unemployment, and rising utility costs. The electricity supply crisis, exacerbated by global factors, further compounds the challenges, affecting households' ability to preserve food and maintain health and well-being. Overall, the severity of humanitarian needs is rooted in people's inability to meet basic needs and access essential services.

III. INTRODUCTION

The global youth population is 1.792 billion, underlining the importance of young people in society. Lebanon, with a youthful demographic surpassing the global average, has an estimated population of 5,489,739 million. Approximately 37.9% of Lebanese citizens are under 24, constituting 16.7% aged 15-24 and 6.9% aged 25-29. When including non-Lebanese individuals in these age groups, the combined percentage of young people (15-29) constitutes 47% of Lebanon's total population, underscoring the substantial presence of youth in the country.

Examining the age and gender distribution further reveals a diverse population structure, with a higher concentration in younger age groups and a slight male majority. The youth population aged 15-29 in Lebanon consists of 11.8% males and 11.1% females. While acknowledging common issues among the youth, it's crucial to recognize their diversity, considering factors like gender, urban/rural residence, and access to infrastructure.

Developing a comprehensive national youth policy is essential for addressing the challenges and enhancing opportunities for Lebanon's youth, aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. This policy aims to empower the youth, fostering good health, education, and economic participation, forming the foundation for a stable and prosperous future. The coherence of this policy across government, civil society, and the private sector ensures Lebanon's aspirations align with broader national goals.

IV. STATE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEBANON

BACKGROUND

In 2021, Lebanon ranked 110 out of 184 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI), scoring 0.706 points. While the average HDI from 2005 to 2021 was 0.735, recent trends indicate a decline, particularly evident in regional disparities and national inequality levels. The HDI evaluates long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living.

Lebanon's severe economic crisis, now in its fourth year, has had devastating effects, pushing over 80% of the population into poverty. Inflation has soared, with the Consumer Price Index rising by 253.55% annually. Unemployment reached 30% in 2022, purchasing power dwindled, and the Lebanese pound lost nearly 95% of its value. The World Food Program's Household Deprivation Score (HDS) reveals a rise in multidimensional deprivation from 53% in December 2021 to 60% in August 2022.

The crisis's impact extends prominently to Lebanon's youth, facing challenges like poverty, security issues, socio-political instability, limited job prospects, high school dropout rates, and restricted access to higher education. Mismatched education to job market demands, high living

costs coupled with low wages, corruption, nepotism, and a lack of political representation further compound their difficulties. The absence of a mechanism to address youth concerns exacerbates these obstacles, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive policies to address their unique challenges and ensure representation in the government.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION & SKILLS TRAINING

Education, a cornerstone of individual prosperity and national progress, faces substantial challenges in Lebanon, once renowned for its strong educational system in the Middle East. Since the crisis in 2019, the availability and accessibility of higher education have been severely limited, forcing 30% of students to abandon their education, and 40% to cut educational expenses to meet basic needs.

Private universities demanding tuition fees in new US dollars pose financial hurdles for students, potentially excluding them from higher education. This situation may redirect students abroad or toward the Lebanese University, which, facing its own challenges, grapples with funding issues, strikes, exam delays, and class interruptions due to power shortages and a lack of laboratory materials.

Choosing an alternative path like Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions presents challenges such as outdated curricula, a shortage of qualified trainers, and a mismatch with labor market demands. Public sector TVETs, like the Lebanese University, face location-based challenges, with instances of violence, drug abuse, tensions, and discrimination affecting students in specific regions like Baalbeck.

Female youth encounter gender stereotypes in TVET institutions, where strict segregation of gender roles persists. This influences employment prospects and specialization choices, reinforcing gender dominance in certain domains. These challenges increase the risk of students dropping out, seeking low-skilled jobs, and facing hazardous working conditions, unfair wages, and an unprotected environment. Addressing these issues is vital for ensuring inclusive and quality education for Lebanon's youth.

ACCESS TO THE LABOR MARKET

The Lebanese labor market "is highly complex and the Labor market data and figures are scant, incomplete, outdated and in some cases contradictory. Characterized by low activity and employment rates; a low contribution of women to economic life; a large informal sector; a high influx of foreign workers; and a large number of skilled Lebanese people seeking and obtaining employment abroad."²

The recent job opportunities in the economy have mainly been in low-productivity sectors that employ low-skilled workers. Meanwhile, the demand for skilled labor remains lower than the supply, leading to significant skills mismatch in the labor market. Additionally, 41% of wage earners perform jobs that are outside the scope of their education and skills.³

Youth face difficulties in entering the job market due to fierce competition among peers (approximately 50,000 Lebanese youth enter the labor market each year) and limited job availability caused by the current crisis.⁴

Personal barriers, such as financial constraints and limited professional networks, also contribute to the youth's exclusion from the labor market.⁵

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM (LMIS)

In 2018, UNESCO released a report called "Review on Labor Market Information System (LMIS) in Lebanon." The report emphasized the discrepancy between the demand and supply of the labor force in Lebanon. It also highlighted the existence of 1700 classified jobs without any salary scales.⁶ Additionally, Lebanon encounters difficulties such as high unemployment rates, especially among university graduates. There is also a lack of standardized skill descriptions or classifications for jobs when compared to the curriculum. Moreover, local students tend to prefer academic post-graduate degrees over vocational and technical education.⁷

EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT, & PARTICIPATION RATE

As recently as 2022, the World Bank (WB/I-BRD) reported that the size of the labor force in Lebanon stands at 1,866,554.⁸ ILO's recent survey revealed a significant rise in Lebanon's unemployment rate, soaring from 11.4% in 2018-2019 to 40% in 2021.⁹ By January 2022, the rate had slightly decreased to 29.6%, with a concerning 60% of unemployed individuals being youth.¹⁰ Notably, the employment gender gap in Lebanon is one of the widest in the Arab region, standing at 30%.¹¹ This disparity is exemplified by the fact that there are more unemployed women than men. In 2022, ILO reported that female unemployment rate standing at 32.7% in comparison to the male rate (28.4%), while the youth rate (47.8%) is almost twice the adult rate (25.6%).¹² No wonder the unemployment has risen, according to ESCWA, over 350,000 jobs were lost between October 2019 and June 2020, and one-fifth of the companies have closed during the same period.¹³

YOUTH NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, NOR IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING (NEET)

According to the 2019 CAS report "the total percentage of NEET youth who were unemployed was about 22%¹⁴. As seen in the below graph, the proportion of young men in employment (37.8%) was considerably higher than the corresponding proportion for young women (22.6%). By contrast, the relative number of young men not in employment, nor in education or training was 16.7 per cent, considerably lower than the proportion among young women (26.8%)."¹⁵

QUALIFICATION MISMATCH

Qualification mismatches are prevalent among young employed individuals (15–24 years old) and the overall employed population (15+ years old). About 31.5% of young employed people exhibit over-education, with a higher rate among men (32.6%) compared to women (29.7%). Under-education affects approximately 22.9% of young men and 18.8% of young women. The pattern is similar for the overall employed population.

Research by Wael Mekdach reveals that curricula in most Lebanese higher education institutions do not align with technological advancements in the labor

market, reflecting a lack of coordination between educational institutions and industry needs.¹⁶

Surveys from the EU-funded MYSEA project indicate that employers struggle to find suitable workers, with skill mismatches across sub-sectors. Agricultural technical schools (ATs) fail to meet market requirements, and TVET programs show a disconnect from labor market demand. A 2022 CAS and ILO survey notes that 56.6% of the employed population lacks the necessary education level for their jobs, reflecting an increase from 50% in 2018-2019.¹⁷

In specific sectors, a recent ILO survey in the plastic industry reports that 70% of enterprises face skill deficiency issues. In the tech sector, a survey by Forward MENA reveals that 88% of Lebanese companies seeking employees in digital and tech roles cannot find suitable candidates. Additionally, 76% of surveyed companies cite a mismatch between graduates' skills and market job requirements as a primary challenge. These findings underscore the pressing need for better alignment between education and labor market demands in Lebanon.¹⁸

MIGRATION

The crisis in Lebanon has triggered a significant outmigration of educated young individuals and families in search of better employment opportunities and an improved quality of life. The World Bank has raised concerns about the substantial loss of human capital, emphasizing that brain drain is becoming an increasingly desperate choice.¹⁹ Professionals in essential services, such as doctors, nurses, engineers, academics, and entrepreneurs, are among the first to leave, exacerbating the severity of the economic crisis.

A 2020 survey revealed that 77% of Lebanese youth aged 18 to 24 expressed a desire to emigrate, a higher proportion than in war-torn countries like Libya, Iraq, and Yemen.²⁰ This human hemorrhaging is evident in negative net migration figures: -237,572 in 2019, -115,146 in 2020, and -115,122 in 2021, indicating a consistent exodus from Lebanon.²¹

While legal migration is one aspect, the rise in irregular migration is concerning.

More Lebanese people are resorting to irregular migration by sea to escape their circumstances. UNHCR reports show that Lebanese individuals accounted for 18% of such attempts in 2020, 12% in 2021, and 24% in 2022.²² The International Organization for Migration (IOM) identifies young individuals under 35, unmarried men, without a university education, and from rural areas as the demographic group most at risk of irregular migration.²³ This trend poses additional challenges for Lebanon in the face of an already collapsing economy and multiple crises.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Despite small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) being the backbone of Lebanon's economy, the potential for young men and women to pursue business development careers is hindered by a weak national entrepreneurship ecosystem. Critical measures, such as an updated Code of Commerce, a new bankruptcy law, a law for private equity funds, and a law governing secured transactions, remain unimplemented.²⁴

Many young individuals perceive a lack of funding as the primary obstacle to entrepreneurship, believing they can establish and run businesses if given sufficient resources. Recognizing the transformative role of young entrepreneurs in economic growth, the Lebanese government should prioritize policies that encourage young people to be "job creators" rather than "job seekers," considering financing for youth-led enterprises as an opportunity rather than a risk.

While youth entrepreneurship isn't a singular solution for unemployment, policies and programs in this domain should complement broader youth employment strategies. Policymakers should focus on flexible and selective measures to ensure that young people acquire relevant skills and experience before entering the business world. This approach is crucial, particularly in the context of Lebanon's multiple crises.²⁵

Here are some of approaches and practices that must be implemented in order to promote successful youth entrepreneurship activities:

- Promoting and introducing self-employment opportunities
- Instruction in the skills required for self-employment
- Mentoring support
- Access to workspace
- Assistance with business expansion
- Network accessibility and support
- Financial and non-financial support
- Including enterprise training (focused on access to markets, value addition, and value chain integrations)
- Business development support

DIGITAL LITERACY

The rapidly evolving digital economy is reshaping job markets across various industries, creating opportunities but also highlighting a shortage of qualified workers with advanced digital skills. While young people are often considered "digital natives," many lack the necessary skills for employment, particularly in areas like coding and advanced ICT skills.

Addressing this digital skills gap offers a strategic approach to combat youth unemployment. Integrating digital skills into school curricula, establishing comprehensive on-the-job training systems, engaging public and private sector job creators to hire young people for digital-focused roles, and promoting youth-led digital entrepreneurship are crucial strategies to leverage the growth potential of the digital economy.

Decent Jobs for Youth (DJY) categorizes digital skills into various domains, including advanced digital skills (coding, software development, cybersecurity), basic digital skills (web research, online communication), mid-level digital skills (graphic design, social media management), soft skills (leadership, communication), and digital entrepreneurship skills (online market research, strategic planning). Recognizing and nurturing this diverse range of digital skills is essential for preparing young people for the evolving demands of the digital job market.²⁶

SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION & SKILLS SUPPLY METHODOLOGY

In Lebanon, 84% of employed youth work in the service sector, with 60% engaged in informal employment. The NEET rate is lowest in the MENA region at 22%, but there's a significant gender difference (16.7% for men, 26.8% for women). The high NEET rate is attributed to challenging transitions, as 28% of youth have difficult transitions. Lebanon lacks a Labor Market Information System, resulting in outdated and unreliable labor market data.²⁷

The 2018-2022 Technical and Vocational Education and Training National Strategic Framework aims to align TVET with the market. The World Bank emphasizes the need for Lebanon to invest in improving learning outcomes and equipping youth with market-relevant skills for economic recovery.²⁸

Various INGOs and NGOs, including the ILO and its International Training Centre, have implemented programs to train youth in different skills. The Skills Academy Lebanon, launched in 2020, provided online training to 174 TVET stakeholders, with 61% women participants. The Academy focused on refining competencies to address individual and institutional needs, providing customized coaching and mentoring sessions after the training.²⁹

V. THE PROPOSED NATIONAL DECENT WORK POLICY FOR YOUTH IN LEBANON

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Proposed National Decent Work Policy for Youth in Lebanon (referred to as PNDWPY) builds upon previous policies and their implementation, as well as international and regional advancements. It presents innovative ideas for development, particularly for young individuals, while considering the significance of demographic dynamics, technological progress, and sustainable development principles.

POLICY VISION

Our vision is for all young people in Lebanon to have access to the necessary resources, platforms, and opportunities that enable them to contribute to their own development and that of their communities.

POLICY MISSION

Our goal is to establish a comprehensive, cross-sector national framework for youth development. This framework will prioritize empowering and supporting young individuals, offering them numerous opportunities and platforms to actively engage and utilize their skills for personal and social growth. Our approach will be global in scope, integrated, and targeted.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Enhance the consolidation and integration of youth development programs across ministries, stakeholders, and policies.
- Implement policies that foster youth development across all sectors and stakeholders, leading to positive outcomes for young individuals.
- Strengthen coordination among government entities, financial partners, development partners, civil society organizations, including youth-led organizations and networks, in implementing youth development programs.
- Encourage active participation of young people in their own development and the development of their communities.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Youth programming in Lebanon will be guided by the following principles:

- **Equity and Inclusion** – All young people, regardless of their socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, will have equal access to opportunities and resources.
- **Effectiveness** – strategies and resources are used at the right times to achieve the greatest possible benefit for young people.
- **Commitment, Participation and Collaboration** – Young people, parents, community members, leaders, government and other stakeholders are involved at all levels of youth development programs.
Empowerment and positive orientation – development interventions will enable young people to seize opportunities and make decisions based on their strengths.
- **Sustainability** - Youth development programs will be cost-effective, scalable and integrated into national systems to ensure the continued availability of interventions beyond temporary support.
- **Integration** – Youth development programs are integrated into government structures and implemented comprehensively to ensure that young people have access to all necessary services.

POLICY STATEMENTS & IMPLICATIONS

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training are essential for the development of youth. This is because they facilitate the development of life skills, career decisions, and long-term development not only for young people but also for the country as a whole. Despite a high primary enrolment rate, the country's secondary and tertiary enrolment rates are significantly lower. Lebanon also has a scarcity of unregulated TVET institutions. Furthermore, the school curriculum does not correspond to economic needs.

POLICY STATEMENT

All young people must receive appropriate education for sustainable development at all levels (primary, secondary, and TVET) and in all types of education (formal, informal, non-formal, and vocational) based on their abilities.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Curriculum Reform:**
MEHE will advocate for curriculum reform to align with national economic needs and prepare youth for the fourth industrial revolution. Collaboration with various ministries, including Labor, Industry, and Economics, is planned.
- **Inclusive Education:**
MEHE will collaborate with the Ministry of Health to address the educational needs of disabled youth, aiming to improve their outcomes.
- **Resource Provision:**
Collaboration with ministries and stakeholders will ensure the provision of human resources, infrastructure, and other necessities for high-quality education for in-school young people.
- **Cross-Sectoral Collaboration:**
MEHE will work internally and across sectors with ministries of Industry, Economics, and others to comprehensively address the needs of young people in the education system, facilitating their development and employment.
- **Digital Infrastructure:**
Collaboration with the Ministries of Telecommunications and Information, along with relevant institutions, will focus on improving internet and digital infrastructure to support education, employment, competitiveness, and growth.
- **Climate Change Education:**
Collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs aims to include climate change resilience in school curricula.

- **Inclusive Curriculum:**
MEHE plans to incorporate digital education, climate education, energy education, business ethics, and transversal skills into school curricula.
- **TVET Promotion:**
MEHE will develop a TVET introduction program for schools, organize tours of TVET facilities to encourage students to pursue TVET education, and collaborate with media outlets to combat negative perceptions of TVET students.
- **Qualification Boards:**
MEHE aims to establish qualification boards for TVET students to obtain licenses for practicing their trade, collaborating with relevant ministries, international syndicates, sectors, and stakeholders.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INNOVATION, & JOB CREATION

The primary goal of entrepreneurship development is to increase the rate and number of new businesses established in order to facilitate employment and economic development. Because of the new businesses it creates, innovation is also considered a component of entrepreneurship. Individually and collectively, innovation and entrepreneurship address poverty issues for which the unemployment rate serves as a proxy indicator. The goal of this pillar is to foster an environment in which young people can develop entrepreneurship skills and gain access to business start-up capital and value chains.

POLICY STATEMENT

All young people must be provided with digital education, entrepreneurship, and innovation education programs, as well as skills that will allow them to take advantage of the fourth industrial revolution to improve their employment prospects, innovation, labor market participation, and personal and national development.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Diverse Education System:**
MEHE, in partnership with civil society, will implement an inclusive education system addressing unemployment challenges and supporting SDG achievement.
- **Labor Market Information System:**
The Ministry of Labor, with collaboration from relevant ministries and stakeholders, will establish a labor market information system to identify national labor needs, upgrade curricula,

and address deficiencies in employment, internships, and education.

- **Youth Entrepreneurship Programs:**
Ministries of Commerce and Interior, along with other stakeholders, will facilitate youth entrepreneurship through various programs.
- **Skills Development:**
All ministries and institutions are tasked with helping young people acquire skills related to sustainable development and the fourth industrial revolution.
- **Support for Start-ups:**
The Ministry of Information and Communication, along with relevant public and private entities, will provide support for youth start-up projects, including incubation, acceleration, information, funding, and a conducive environment.
- **Youth Programs Implementation:**
MEHE, collaborating with all ministries and institutions, will advocate for and facilitate the implementation of youth volunteerism, apprenticeships, and internships programs in government, private sector, civil society institutions, and abroad, leveraging the capabilities of the Lebanese diaspora.
- **Innovation Hubs:**
MEHE will identify underutilized government properties to transform into innovation hubs for young people, fostering creativity through low-cost rental.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

The norms and trust networks that enable people to act collectively are referred to as social capital. Social capital emphasizes the importance of people's social fabric. It is regarded as an equal form of wealth to economic capital, capable of alleviating economic hardships and constructing long-term solutions to problems. Individuals in high-social-capital societies are more willing to cooperate and share resources, resulting in collective actions and the development of prosperous societies. Social capital is invested in social networks and is associated with civic mindedness, or the willingness of individuals to act altruistically and cooperatively for the benefit of the larger community. This policy pillar focuses not only on the micro level, but also on the meso and macro levels.

POLICY STATEMENT

All young people, individually and/or collectively, must be encouraged and mobilized to organize themselves and interact with existing institutions at all levels, local, regional, and national, in both

formal and informal settings, in order to foster social trust and lay the groundwork for their willing participation and involvement in development.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Strengthening Youth Structures:** MEHE and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in collaboration with various entities, will establish and strengthen youth structures at all levels to facilitate interaction.
- **Youth Participation in Decision-making:** Public institutions and all stakeholders are obligated to ensure active and effective youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels.
- **Community and Youth Involvement:** MEHE will ensure increased community and youth involvement in the governance of local schools, governments, and NGOs.
- **Networking Skills:** Public institutions and civil society organizations are tasked with teaching young people networking skills and providing platforms for expanding their networks.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Good governance and leadership are essential for achieving policy objectives. This is primarily due to the rights-based approach adopted for development initiatives and goals, such as the SDGs. The achievement of the SDGs, in particular, emphasizes the need for: just, secure, and stable societies; an integrated development approach; and comprehensively meeting and satisfying the needs of the majority of the population. As a result, good governance and leadership have become critical pillars of youth policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

Good governance and leadership principles must be implemented at all levels of the youth decent work strategy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Good Governance Principles:** MEHE, with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant entities, will identify and outline good governance principles for implementing the strategy.
- **Government-Civil Society Coordination:** MEHE and relevant institutions are responsible for creating and facilitating a government-civil society coordination mechanism for youth development work.

- **Multi-sectoral Youth Coordination Structure:** MEHE and relevant institutions will establish and operationalize a multi-sectoral youth coordination structure involving government, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders.
- **Monitoring Civil Society Organizations:** MEHE will monitor civil society organizations' adherence to good governance principles and foster accountability to relevant structures.
- **Youth Participation Advocacy:** MEHE and relevant institutions will advocate for and encourage young people to participate in decision-making at all levels.
- **Regular Reporting:** MEHE will ensure the regular compilation, publication, and dissemination of reports on youth development in the country.

RESEARCH, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Research, monitoring, and evaluation of development programs improves the program's and stakeholders' ability to learn from past experiences, improve service delivery, plan and allocate resources, and demonstrate results as part of accountability. The lack of monitoring, evaluation, and learning jeopardizes program outcomes and achievements. The recognition that young people are not a program but a target population for development interventions being implemented by all stakeholders, including the government, is a critical component of this policy theme.

POLICY STATEMENT

All sectors implementing this strategy, including MEHE, must support monitoring and evaluation systems that consolidate and integrate youth development indicators into their mandates. All state and non-state institutions involved in this strategy must report to the appropriate national entities in a timely and efficient manner.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Coordination of Youth Development Initiatives:** MEHE will enhance the coordination of youth development initiatives across government ministries, ensuring youth decent work issues are addressed in all sectors.
- **Framework for Tracking & Evaluating Strategy:** MEHE will establish a framework for tracking and evaluating the youth decent work strategy across various sectors.

- **Support for Sector M&E Systems:**
MEHE will assist in developing or strengthening sector Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems, facilitating tracking and reporting of youth development indicators at all levels.
- **Resource Allocation:**
MEHE will allocate resources to execute the monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan for the youth decent work strategy.
- **Development of Data Collection Tools:**
MEHE will aid in developing routine data collection tools and systems to effectively monitor and evaluate the country's youth decent work programs.
- **Routine Data Collection Coordination:**
MEHE will coordinate routine data collection for monitoring and evaluation, compiling reports on M&E activities.
- **Utilization of Disaggregated Youth Data:**
MEHE will facilitate the use of disaggregated youth data by other government ministries and sectors for informed programming.
- **Identification of Key Infrastructure:**
MEHE, in collaboration with relevant ministries, will identify and advise various sectors on the necessary infrastructure for driving youth development.
- **Advocacy for Resource Mobilization:**
MEHE will advocate for resource mobilization and policies to establish sector-specific youth development infrastructure.
- **Resource Mobilization by Ministries:**
Various ministries must mobilize resources to ensure the infrastructure supporting youth development in their sectors is established.
- **Civil Society Resource Mobilization:**
Civil society is urged to capitalize on existing infrastructure and mobilize resources to strengthen it further.
- **Encouraging Collaboration:**
MEHE, working with relevant ministries, will encourage collaboration between civil society and government entities to maximize the use of available infrastructure.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Capacity development is a process in which individuals and institutions acquire skills to implement various aspects of youth policy. The main goal of capacity building is to improve knowledge and skills in youth development as outlined in the policy. This in turn helps to achieve the set goals and objectives. In Lebanon, it is important for youth development practitioners to have the necessary skills and infrastructure in order to effectively plan, implement, and achieve their objectives. Infrastructure plays a crucial role in facilitating economic growth by improving connectivity, productivity, and efficiency.

POLICY STATEMENT

Youth development work should be professionalized by implementing regulations for youth development and enhancing the capacity of institutions involved in such interventions. It is necessary to revitalize and/or construct youth development-related infrastructure (e.g., technology) based on the needs of the strategy for youth employment and development.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Professionalization of Youth Development Work:**
MEHE, in collaboration with relevant ministries and institutions, will facilitate the professionalization of youth development work in the country.

VI. SWOT ANALYSIS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED POLICY

STRENGTHS

- **Resilient & educated youth:**
Despite the challenges, Lebanese youth have shown resilience and possess a high level of education, which can be harnessed for economic development.
- **Diaspora connections:**
The large Lebanese diaspora can be leveraged to create opportunities for youth employment through networking, investments, and knowledge transfer.
- **Civil society engagement:**
There is a strong civil society presence in Lebanon, which can advocate for the implementation of a national decent work policy for youth and hold the government accountable.

WEAKNESSES

- **Multilayered crises:**
Lebanon is currently facing multiple crises, including economic collapse, political instability, and the aftermath of the Beirut blast, which can hinder the implementation of any policy, including a national decent work policy for youth.
- **Lack of political will:**
The government's lack of political will and corruption may impede the effective implementation of the policy, leading to limited impact on youth employment.
- **Brain drain:**
The country has been experiencing a brain drain, with skilled youth leaving in search of better opportunities abroad, exacerbating the unemployment issue.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **International aid & support:**
The international community has shown willingness to support Lebanon in its recovery efforts, including youth employment initiatives. This can provide funding and expertise to implement the national decent work policy.
- **Digital economy:**
The rise of the digital economy presents an opportunity to create remote job opportunities for Lebanese youth, reducing the dependency on traditional sectors that have been severely affected by the crises.
- **Social entrepreneurship:**
Encouraging social entrepreneurship can create opportunities for youth to address societal challenges while generating income and employment.

THREATS

- **Political instability:**
The ongoing political instability in Lebanon can further hinder the implementation of any policy, including the national decent work policy for youth.
- **Economic collapse:**
The economic collapse in Lebanon has led to high inflation, currency devaluation, and limited job opportunities, posing a threat to the success of any youth employment policy.
- **Social inequality:**
The existing social and economic inequalities in Lebanon can exacerbate the challenges faced by marginalized youth, hindering their access to decent work opportunities.
- **Lack of coordination:**
The lack of coordination between different stakeholders, including government entities, civil society organizations, and private sector actors, can hinder the effective implementation of the policy.
- **Corrupt politicians & apathetic public servants**

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