



INVESTING IN YOUTH

ISDB INTERVENTIONS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

List of Acronyms

BDCs	Business Development Centers
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
E4E	Education for Employment
E4C	Education For Competitiveness
GVCs	Global Value Chains
HPs	Harmful Practices
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IHS	In Her Shoes Methodology
IsDB-BISEW	Islamic Development Bank-Bangladesh Islamic Solidarity Educational Waqf
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
ISFD	Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development
IYF	International Youth Forum
LDMCs	Least Developed Member Countries
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MCs	Member Countries
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MFI	Mediating Financial Institutions
MSEs	Medium to Small Size Enterprises
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
NCoS	National Center of Specialization
NEYAT	Nurturing Enterprising Youth in Agricultural Technologies
PFI	Participating Financial Institutions
SIGAs	Survival Income Generating Activities
SDIs	Service Delivery Indicators
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
S&T	Science and Technology
VCA	Value Chain Approach
VCs	Value Chains
VET	Vocational Educational Training
VOLIP	The Vocational Literacy Program
WBG	World Bank Group
UPAY	Unemployed Potentially Active Youth
YDF	Youth Development Forum
YDS	Youth Development Strategy
YES	Youth Employment Support

Executive Summary

Since the mid 1990s, youth¹ have been recognized as a specific social category with specific needs and challenges that demand dedicated interventions based on sound policies and adequate diagnostic. Across the world, a number of countries, including the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) member countries (MC) have started to develop and implement youth programs and national youth policies and strategies. The political desire to engage youth has especially mounted in the last few years. Between 2013 and 2014, for instance, the number of states with a national youth policy has increased from 99 (50% out of 198 countries)² to 122 (62% out of 198 countries)³. Currently, about 50% of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) MCs (27 out of 57 MCs) has national youth policies; the majority of those were developed in the early 2000s⁴.

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This political will has been driven in part by youth demographics. The world has never been this young: In 2014, people aged 10 to 24 amounted to 1.8 billion making up a youth constituency that is greater than any point in human history⁵. The IsDB-served regions host a significant proportion of the world's youth constituency. Since 2014, the Arab region, for example, has been hosting the youngest population in the world—the largest youth generation the region has witnessed in 50 years— and in Africa alone, there are almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24.⁶

There has been a paradigm shift in how youth are perceived, from “problems to be managed” to a more positive image of youth as important “resourceful” members of society that are crucial players in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda. It is now well understood that youth-inclusive societies are more likely to prosper and that the exclusion of youth not only results in a missed generation for global development but also leads to numerous challenges, from stunted growth, lack of creativity to loss of social cohesion and stability that could

1 The Youth Development Strategy of the IsDB defines “youth” as the period of transition from the childhood state of dependence to the full independence of adulthood, covering the age bracket of 15 to 35 years.

2 The State of youth policy 2014. Youth Policy Press.

3 An up-to-date list is available at Youthpolicy.org. <http://www.youthpolicy.org/nationalyouthpolicies/>

4 Calculations are made by the author using Youthpolicy.org data. <http://www.youthpolicy.org/nationalyouthpolicies>

5 The State of World Population 2014, United Nations Population Fund.

6 *ibid.*



lead to crisis and conflicts. Young people, as such, play a critical role in development. This role has been especially reinforced in contemporary societies, where young women and men are more aware of development challenges and are increasingly willing and able to publicly express their quest for equitable economic opportunities, good governance, and greater wellbeing.

The IsDB has been working to address youth development related issues since its establishment, specifically in the areas relating to young people's education, skills development, employment and engagement" ppparticipation.

During the past decade, IsDB has strengthened its work towards youth development, focusing on enabling youth to unlock their potential as partners and leaders in sustainable development. This new stage is crystallized in the Bank's 10-Year Strategic Framework (10-YS), the President's Five-Year Program (P5P) and the development of the Youth Development Strategy (2020-2025). The Youth Development Strategy (YDS) seeks to provide a coherent, coordinated, and holistic framework for the Bank's future youth development activities to increase impact of its interventions and to ensure that they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Furthermore, the Bank is committed to developing knowledge products and undertaking analytical work that can inform and examine issues and progress in the area of youth development. As such, this publication is intended for more than documenting the strides made by IsDB interventions. Rather, it aims

to (i) contribute to the global debate on youth by raising awareness on youth issues, and documenting good practices and successful approaches.

The publication reviews a number of youth-oriented initiatives implemented by the IsDB in MCs and through Communities Outreach in Non-Member Countries. The report is organized into three sections corresponding to the strategic pillars of the YDS. In the first section, the review of the select cases on the Bank's efforts towards improving young people's educational outcomes. The second section examines case studies in the area of economic empowerment that aim to increase youth employment and economic opportunities. The final section presents the Banks's interventions for enhanced youth engagement.

The analytical review of the cases follows a standardized structure across sections. The review first introduces the scope of the selected cases (objectives, target segments, activities, etc.); it then identifies their value-added and significance.

The select cases cover a range of relevant and salient development challenges to young people. Addressing these challenges and striving, more largely, to empower youth, the cases are fully aligned with the commitments of the Bank and its MCs to the 2030 Agenda "leave no one behind" and the Sustainable Development Goals. They also reinforce the IsDB's growing role as a center of excellence.

Introduction

Well-educated and economically stable and productive youth can grow and flourish their societies. Yet what enables and motivates young people to make purposeful use of their talents and capacity to create added value is Engagement (having an awareness of societal needs and challenges taking action and contributing as development partners and active agents initiating positive transformation).

Despite the centrality of engagement for youth's wellbeing and sustainable development, youth participation structures continue to be heavily challenged, globally and across IsDB MCs. In most MCs, youth participation is hampered, on the one hand, by educational and economic restrictions, and, on the other, by the lack of effective mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes. Unsurprisingly, various surveys also demonstrate that youth often feel excluded and marginalized in their societies and think that their participation is tokenistic or not valued in society. Additionally, social norms that perpetuate age-related exclusion and ageism as well as gender discrimination result in multiple forms of discrimination against youth, in particular, young women and the impoverished, and reinforces young people's view of not being recognized as partners in their social-economic development.

To assist MCs to establish an enabling environment for increased youth engagement, the IsDB has taken a comprehensive approach, emphasizing the need for both (i) promoting capacity development to equip young people with employment/entrepreneurial skills through which they can contribute to sustainable and inclusive development, and (ii) opening up new entry points that would facilitate inclusive and meaningful youth participation at the local, national, and regional levels.

To showcase the IsDB's work and interventions on youth engagement, the Youth Development Forum is selected as a best practice example. The Bank initiated the Youth Development Forum and Summit, an annual event that takes place on the side-line of the IsDBG Annual Meeting. The Forums serve as a new entry point for the Bank to engage with youth and for them to voice their needs and discuss challenges they face. At a broader level, the Forums aim to contribute to the dialogue on how youth engagement can serve as a pivotal force for youth development.

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SECTION 03
ENGAGEMENT

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FORUMS (YDF) AND THE SUMMIT

3.1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE ISDB FORUMS AND THE SUMMIT

3.1.1.1 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FORUMS AND THE SUMMIT: ENTRY POINTS FOR THE BANK'S ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUTH

In the last two decades or so, the Bank has intensified its work on youth, searching for different entry points that would enable meaningful youth engagement. This quest has resulted in the launching of the Youth Development Forums. The 1st Forum was held in 2012 and since then Youth Development Forums (YDF) have been taking place annually as a standing event on the side-lines of the Bank's Annual Meetings to address specific youth issues.

3.1.1.2 OBJECTIVES



Increased Engagement

IsDB Youth Development Forum, as an entry point, opened up a new chapter for youth engagement



THE YOUTH ORGANIZING TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ASPECTS OF PREPARATION OF THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FORUMS AND SUMMIT.



by tackling a longstanding obstacle that limited young people from engaging in the development of their societies and taking part in shaping of their own future. The Youth Development Forums provide a platform for young people to share their voices and ideas across a broad audience. As they make their voices heard, young men and women simultaneously acquire information on the broader global context, and the stakeholders to engage with, allowing them to have a more informed view on decisions and policies affecting their lives. Forums also provide a platform to forge innovative partnerships between young people, youth organizations, IsDB, and other partners at a regional and international level.



Enable Youth to Play a Leading Role

The Youth Development Forum is the first initiative of the Bank where a youth team plays a leading role, as all Forums have been organized by the Youth Organizing Team, composed of young professionals/ staff members from IsDB, coming from various departments and units across the Bank. The Youth Organizing Team is responsible for all aspects of preparation from identification of the theme and speakers to marketing and outreach.



A Youth Focused Approach

While having young people as the key organizers of the Forum enables the Bank to create opportunities for youth engagement and participation internally, it also ensures that IsDB Forums refrain from a top-down, "adultist" approach and instead adopts a youth-oriented approach. As the Youth Organizing Team is composed of young people, they have the best understanding of their peers' view and are able to bear a youth perspective to all aspects and activities of the YDF.

3.1.1.3 HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

Between 2012-2019, the IsDB held seven Forums and one Summit, as listed below, chronologically:

1st YDF, 2012	Youth and Development in IsDB Member Countries, (37th Annual Meeting Khartoum, Sudan)
2nd YDF, 2013	Innovative Solutions for Youth Employment in the Muslim World (38th Annual Meeting Dushanbe, Tajikistan)
3rd YDF, 2014	From Job Seekers to Job Creators Youth Entrepreneurship and its Role in Alleviating Youth Unemployment in the Muslim World (39th Annual Meeting, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA))
4th YDF, 2015	Leveraging the Power of Networks for Youth Development (40th Annual Meeting, Maputo, Mozambique)
5th YDF, 2016	Youth in Development: Innovative Solutions for Financial Inclusion (41st Annual Meeting, Jakarta, Indonesia)
1st Summit, 2017	Youth Engagement in Socio-Economic Development: Towards Shaping a Development Vision for the Youth in IsDB MCs (42nd Annual Meeting, Jeddah, KSA)
6th YDF, 2018	Strategic Partnerships to Boost Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment (43rd Annual Meeting, Tunis, Tunisia)
7th YDF, 2019	Transformation Through Sustainable Employability for All: Bridging the Gap (44 th Annual Meeting, Marrakesh, Morocco)

The IsDB Group Youth Development Forum is an annual event that brings together influential thinkers, policy makers, entrepreneurs and international development policy experts to address, discuss and debate critical issues of relevance to young women and men around the globe. Over the past eight years, seven successful YDFs and one Summit have been organized on the sidelines of the IsDB Group Annual Meetings.

While the themes for each Forum are chosen to ensure alignment between the Forums and the corresponding Annual Meeting, since its very first edition (2012), the Forum has continuously evolved and progressed, striving to make its efforts for youth participation more impactful. In fact, throughout this journey, the YDFs appear to have gone through two distinct stages: early stages and the maturation stage.

- > The early-stage Forums, namely, the first four Forums (2012-2014), laid out a common understanding of youth engagement and development. These Forums identified the linkages between youth and development, mapped opportunities & challenges common across MCs, and introduced new and alternative ways to boost youth development; such as productive and youth-inclusive uses of Islamic financial options or the role of networks for youth entrepreneurship.
- > From the 5th Forum on (2016-2019), the YDF entered into a new stage of maturation, putting a greater emphasis on enhancing youth participation, building capacity and skills of young people, and creating opportunities for young people to influence decision-making.

3.1.2 VALUE ADDITION

ENHANCED YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

As Forums matured and progressed, they have moved the focus on more than just “young people having a say” and introduced interactive and action-oriented content, enabling young women and men to actively take part in the Forums and leave the Forums both with greater knowledge, tangible skills, recommendations and key actions.

The First Forum that introduced interactive content was the 5th Forum, “Youth in Development: Innovative Solutions for Financial Inclusion (2016).” Differing from the first stage YDFs it delivered a Master Class. Briefly, the Class demonstrated –using the actual case of Indonesian fishermen in remote areas– how technology and access to finance could improve any business environment, and allowed the participants to offer and share their solutions. This interactive workshop provided young participants an opportunity for learning through interaction.

Subsequently, another great step was taken by the 6th Forum, “Strategic Partnerships to Boost Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment” (2018), to enhance youth participation. The 6th Forum carried out an interactive training program. A 5-day entrepreneurship boot camp for 50 unemployed graduates in Tunisia was set up. The camp provided participants with a holistic and intensive business education to scale up business ideas and startups into full-fledged sustainable businesses. It concluded with the participants pitching their business ideas to a panel of judges with a chance to win seed capital for their startups from Knowledge Management and Institutional Learning Division (KMIL) at IsDB. The three winners included Instapower, PodoSave and Artisan.

The Camp exposed young participants to hands-on, action-oriented content, equipped them with new entrepreneurial knowledge, and enabled

youth to witness an accelerated entrepreneurial experience. It, moreover, provided an opportunity for the Bank to foster an entrepreneurial culture among youth. The progress the 6th Forum has made both in content and coverage demonstrates that YDFs are dynamic initiatives, constantly evolving to better respond to the changing needs of youth in MCs.

GREATER IMPACT ON DECISION-MAKING

A remarkable step to increase youth engagement took place during the First Youth Summit, “Youth Engagement in Socio-Economic Development: Towards Shaping a Development Vision for the Youth in IsDB Member Countries” (2017).

The Summit was the first gathering where the Youth Organizing Team, through the help of partner institutions –such as the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation, the Global Shapers Community, the United Nations Population Fund– mobilized youth delegates from across MCs to join the Annual Meeting. Youth delegates from 48 MCs joined the Summit, thus the Summit reached a new level of youth representation.

The Summit also constituted for the very first time an opportunity, where the youth directly addressed the Board of Governors and the management of IsDB to voice concerns regarding their future. This was a remarkable development giving youth a chance to have real impact on decision-makers. In fact, 48 youth delegates came together and prepared a written Communiqué of recommendations on critical issues such as education, employment and gender equality, directly to the Board and IsDB Management.

The most remarkable outcome of the Summit was that youth delegates successfully inserted their views and needs into the Bank’s Youth Development Strategy, shaping its main pillars. The Summit, in brief, provided young people with a real seat at the table, while demonstrating the Bank’s recognition of youth both as leaders and partners in development.



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