Arab youth volunteering for a better future

Over the past two years, the Arab world has experienced a series of popular uprisings demanding change. Born-headed mostly by youth, these protests drew attention to the power of peaceful engagement for change. People exercised their civil rights to express their views and call for social justice and democratic governance. In several countries, attitudes towards youth and state governance changed, providing opportunities and creating expectations for greater participation of youth.

The wave of youth-led transformational change processes in the Arab region has highlighted young people as a positive asset for peace and development. To address the challenges and aspirations of youth, volunteering provides a viable, sustainable mechanism that can turn their grievances and frustrations into positive energy and a social asset. Youth volunteering can engage young men and women in a range of activities that can improve their participation and positively harness their energy to contribute to the achievement of local, national and global development goals, while enhancing their life, citizenship and work-related skills.

The Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future Programme is an initiative led by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and is in line with the regional strategies of the United Nations (UN) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This regional initiative aims to harness the power and energy of youth through volunteerism, drawing on the inherent core values of selflessness, solidarity and social cohesion. The programme will strengthen the infrastructure necessary to build the skills and capacities of youth in the region. It will thereby enhance their social inclusion and active participation in the socio-economic development of their countries. The programme will be implemented in five countries: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.

“There are moments when historic, transformational change is possible. This is one of those moments in the Arab States.”

Helen Clark, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
UNV Overview: Arab youth volunteering for a better future

The Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future Programme is an initiative led by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to facilitate young people's participation in five Arab states through volunteerism as a positive and sustainable mechanism for effecting social change.

UNV and its partners recognize that youth volunteering can engage young men and women in a range of activities that can improve their participation and positively harness their energy to contribute to the achievement of local, national and global development goals. At the same time, involvement in volunteering can enhance their life, citizenship and work-related skills. In line with regional strategies of the United Nations (UN) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this initiative aims to harness the power and energy of youth in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen through volunteerism.

It draws on inherent core values of self-help, solidarity and social cohesion. On 3 October 2012, UNV is holding a regional consultation workshop with stakeholders in Cairo, Egypt, to discuss the findings from five national consultations and agree on the strategic directions for the future of this Programme. Participants include youth, civil society organizations, government representatives, UN agencies and development partners.
Arab States

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals