

CALL FOR PAPERS

Workshop on the Social-Economic Situation of Middle East Youth on the Eve of the Arab Spring

December 8-9, Beirut, Lebanon (tentative)

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is at a critical juncture. The region has the highest youth unemployment rates in the world as a result of several factors, including institutional rigidities, education systems that fail to provide flexible skills that are needed in the global economy, and a demographic “youth bulge” that has increased supply pressures on the education systems, labor markets and housing markets of the region. After decades of social, economic, and political exclusion, young people across the region have been at the forefront of the social unrest taking place over the past two years.

Research conducted over the past two years has attempted to shed light on the evolution situation of young people in the region in the years leading up to the Arab Spring. These research efforts have built on previous work that has looked into the social-economic situation of young people during previous decade, exemplified by publications such as *Generation in Waiting: the Unfulfilled Promise of Young People in the Middle East* (Brookings Institution, 2009) which examined the transition from youth to adulthood in a series of case studies from Iran to Morocco. The framework of the volume interwove three interdependent transitions in eight MENA countries: education, employment, and family formation.

Abstracts are currently being accepted for a workshop on the Social-Economic Situation of Middle East Youth on the eve of the Arab Spring. The papers from this workshop will help take up the story of Middle East youth where *Generation in Waiting* and similar research efforts left off. Workshop organizers are looking for papers that examine the rapidly changing social, political, and economic landscapes and analyze events leading up to and during the early days of the Arab Spring. The workshop will serve as a space for sharing research findings, generating new ideas, and encouraging future collaboration on youth research. The geographic scope of the workshop includes the Arab World and Iran.

Papers selected for the workshop will be published as working papers through the Middle East Youth Knowledge Consortium and a select number will be considered for inclusion in a forthcoming edited volume on the subject, planned for 2013. Because of the timeliness of the topic, the organizers are looking for papers that are already developed or partially developed, but new research that has not been undertaken will be considered if papers can be completed on time.

Workshop Description

The organizers are interested in the following topics. Other relevant topics will also be considered.

- Impact of the financial crisis and global recession on youth economic outcomes
- Revisiting the social contract between the people and the state
- Educational quality / skills mismatch in the MENA region
- The School to Work Transition in specific countries
- Inequality and Deprivation
- Gender and work
- Family formation
- Civic Engagement
- Entrepreneurship / microfinance
- Public sector employment
- Informal and formal private sector
- Labor markets of the Gulf
- Well being and happiness
- Vocational Training and Employment Programs

The organizers are interested in papers that use recent household or firm survey data sets to analyze microeconomic conditions of youth in any countries in the region and that can provide insights into the social-economic situation of MENA Youth on the eve of the Arab Spring that contributed to fertile conditions for social and political unrest. Papers may cover a single country, provide a comparative analysis of more than one country, or provide a regional analysis.

Dates and Deadlines

October 15	Deadline for Draft Papers (including preliminary drafts)
October 22	Notification to authors of paper acceptance
November 15	Deadline for full papers
December 8-9	Workshop

Paper Guidelines

Draft papers submitted for consideration may be preliminary, but should nonetheless be reasonably developed. Papers presented or published as working papers elsewhere will be considered, but please do not submit papers that have already been published in a journal or will be submitted for publication before the workshop. Final papers should be 4000-7000 words in length excluding tables, figures, and references.

Accommodations and Travel

Presenters of accepted **FINAL PAPERS** will receive accommodations and travel to and from Beirut for the workshop and a 2,000 USD honorarium for the paper and the presentation.