

NEWSLETTER

United Nations Development Programme



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Resilient nations.

From pitching in candlelight to virtual networking: YLP6 Virtual Regional Youth Forum

At the end of each year, the Youth Leadership Programme (YLP) culminates in the Regional Youth Forum, which gathers young people and partners across the region. This year, YLP transformed its activities on the ground from physical to virtual including the Regional Youth Forum which gathered online over 200 participants from 16 countries across the Arab region to create connections, pitch their social innovations and learn together.

For many youth participants, the Regional Forum is their first international experience. Meeting other youth from different countries with the same passion for making a change and helping their communities, is an empowering experience for many. The Forum ensured creating a network of expertise, support and friendship across the region through various interactive sessions.

"I love that we can share our opinions with other people from different countries and see what is happening outside the borders. My favourite part of the Regional Forum was getting a network across the Arab region. YLP brought us together." Ayah Altamimi, Jordan

YLP's themes for 2020 were climate action, civic and political participation, and pandemics. In addition, the Forum supported the youth's leadership skills by introducing the concept of Emotional Intelligence. One of the participants reflected later: *"It is necessary to believe in the development of ourselves to achieve sustainable development in our societies and the world. The great ones are not angels from heaven, but human beings like us on earth."* Mahmoud al-Ashwal, Yemen

During the Forum, youth participants pitched their projects to the international panel of judges specialized in social innovation or the themes the youth were working on. Before the Forum, youth had been preparing their social innovation projects at the country level with the support of UNDP Country Offices and YLP partners.

The pitching illustrated clearly the resilience and commitment of young people: despite challenges such as power outage in the middle of pitching, they kept going on in candlelight and using the 3G internet from their phones. After three days of pitching, three winners and honorary mentions were selected.

Mahmoud al-Ashwal from Yemen took home the first place with his project "Mud latrines", which aims to support people's basic needs in marginalized and vulnerable areas in Yemen through building bathrooms using sustainable and locally available materials. The second place went to Souhail Stitou from Morocco with his project "DigiGirlz", which aims to increase the number of young women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), information and communication technology (ICT) and software engineering fields. Finally, the third place went to Madleen Jayyab and her project "3abqour" which aims to demystify mathematics and encourage



young people and children to develop their skills and creativity. Honorary mentions went to Hala Naamani from Lebanon with the project “Two Better”, Shehab al-Outmi and “COVID-19 response” from Yemen, and Fatima Zahra El Harouni Alaoui and “Iktichef” from Morocco.

Read more about the youth participants on our Regional Forum platform and watch the Regional Forum opening ceremony [here](#).

Watch the inspirational speech for the youth participants delivered by Michael Haddad, UNDP Goodwill Ambassador for Arab States [here](#).

Amid the Covid19 pandemic, the Global Knowledge Index 2020 is launched

On December 9, 2020, under the umbrella of the Knowledge Project, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF) unveiled the 2020 results of the Global Knowledge Index (GKI) during a press conference that took place in Dubai and was streamed globally.

The 2020 edition of the GKI expanded its coverage to 138 countries aiming to alert policymakers on opportunities and risks across multiple disciplines. The Index inspires countries to formulate forward-thinking strategies to support knowledge and promote it as a main component in establishing a strong knowledge economy.

“Over the past years, the Global Knowledge Index has formed an effective tool for countries to measure knowledge as a broad concept that intricately relates to all aspects of modern human life,” said Jamal bin Huwareb, CEO of Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation.

The Index recognizes the multidimensional nature of knowledge systems in all contexts and applications relating to economic and social structures. It ranks countries based on their preparedness and investment in 7 main sectors including: pre-university education; technical and vocational education and training; higher education; research, development and innovation; information and communications technology; economy; and the general enabling environment for knowledge to flourish.

Based on the results of the GKI 2020, Switzerland retained its number-one rank for the fourth year, followed by the United States and Finland. Sweden and Netherlands broke into the world’s top five countries ranking fourth and fifth respectively. The United Arab Emirates retained its position in the world’s top 20 countries, advancing three positions, ranking 15 on the global level and first among all the Arab states, while retaining its second place globally on the level of the economy for the fourth year.

The results of the Global Knowledge Index 2020 show that countries all over the globe need to invest more in research, development and innovation, where the global average is the lowest among the sectors forming the Index.

“...The strengths and weaknesses of Egypt's performance in the GKI are explored along with solutions to address the challenges” said Dr. Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Egypt who participated to the launch.



Despite the challenges posed by the COVID19 pandemic, the United Nations Development Programme and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation were determined to release this edition of the Global Knowledge Index in difficult and exceptional times, continuing their pledge to harness the power of knowledge and to contribute to achieving sustainable development in the Arab region and beyond.

Visit the Knowledge4All.org portal for the full results of the Global Knowledge Index 2020 and watch the video here.

You can learn more about the Knowledge project initiatives on Knowledge4all Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram pages.

The kids of Lebanon: healing through art & music

On August 4, the Beirut's port explosion hit the community hard, causing the death of around 200 people and leaving a devastating effect especially on the most vulnerable, including kids and youth.

Besides the physical damages to the city's buildings and infrastructures, thousands of injured, displaced and traumatised children are now dealing with the wake of the blast.



In line with UNDP's response and recovery efforts in the aftermath of the Beirut explosion, on October 3, UNDP Arab Youth Arts and Music Initiative (AYAMI) hosted the "Kids of Lebanon" initiative in Beirut. AYAMI cooperated with the **Dafa Campaign, Tinol Paints, The Vibe Wellness Circle, Embrace Lebanon** as well as **Mission Joy**, in an attempt to tackle the repercussions of this traumatic event on the youth.

The aim of the initiative was to create a healing space for the youth in need through art and music, while simultaneously spreading awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and shedding light on AYAMI's mission, in a fun and educative manner.

AYAMI places art and music at its core, because they represent powerful, yet simple, tools to communicate complex messages and engage people and communities, including youth to prepare them to become drivers of change. Moreover, achieving the SDG is fundamental to give kids and youth a better future. Under this framework, **250** kids (10-15-year-old) were encouraged to think creatively and use art to formulate and communicate their thoughts, concerns and aspirations and participated in a variety of recreational activities, including painting, dancing and singing, live interactive shows. Over the course of 2 days, AYAMI also offered psychosocial support sessions for the youth, mostly focusing on **Trauma Healing** through meditation, painting and art.

In line with AYAMI's mission statement and as a response to the Beirut explosion, the project activities focused on spreading awareness on the SDGs, more specifically **SGD 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable** through portraying the AYAMI jingles and songs starring the young singers from the "The Voice Kids: Ahla Sawt" and distributing SDG branded items.

To get to know more about AYAMI, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tiktok