



Fact Sheet

“Missed by the Boom, Hurt by the Bust: Making Markets Work for Young People in the Middle East”

AUTHORS

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SUMMARY

A new report entitled *Missed by the Boom, Hurt by the Bust: Making Markets Work for Young People in the Middle East* cautions that the Middle East may face a new jobs crisis that will damage future prospects for the region’s young people. Issued by the Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings and the Dubai School of Government, the report is the first of its kind to assess the early risks faced by young people in the Middle East during the global economic downturn, calling on policy makers to safeguard the welfare of youth in the region.

KEY FINDINGS

- Recent high growth in the Middle East did not sufficiently resolve the region’s education and employment problems. Countries are entering the global slowdown with large pre-existing hurdles, including high rates of youth unemployment and deteriorating job quality.
- The global economic slowdown is hitting the Middle East at a time when the youth share of the total population is at a historic high, with nearly 32 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 29. This means that a large number of new job seekers will continue to exert pressure on the region’s labor markets for years to come.
- Policies that increase public sector employment and job protection while delaying progress toward greater global integration are likely to be counterproductive. The path to economic recovery will require cultivating a skilled workforce, expanding the role of the private sector, and reducing the appeal of government employment.
- The report presents ten policy recommendations. Countries in the Middle East committing to fiscal stimulus should prioritize job creation for young people. Governments should engage in an open and transparent dialogue on the economic crisis with citizens, the private sector, and civil society. Additional recommendations include reforming public sector hiring practices and raising the value of informal jobs – which are serving as a refuge for an increasing number of young people – through investing in skills development.

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The Wolfensohn Center for Development at the Brookings Institution and the Dubai School of Government launched the Middle East Youth Initiative (MEYI) in July 2006. The Initiative is devoted to promoting the economic and social inclusion of youth in the Middle East. Recently, MEYI has embarked on a new partnership with Silatech to generate solutions in critical youth areas by promoting new knowledge, innovation, and learning across borders.

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