

Access to services for Adolescents and Young key populations (AYP) in the MENA region

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**Ending the AIDS Epidemic in the Middle East and North Africa Region, Thursday,
30 May, 8.00 am NY/2.00 pm Geneva/3.00 pm Amman.**

Main challenges services for AYP in communities in the region

- Emergency, unrest, security in the country- lack of room for long term programs;
- Economic crisis fueling up risks and leading to engaging AY in risky Behaviors ;
- Cultural and legal barriers;
- Lack of political commitment : youth rights, youth development and empowerment especially those who are at risk are not seen as priority during emergency;
- Lack of social and health inclusive and comprehensive programs/ services including cultural, recreational and arts activities ...
- Insufficient/ gaps in resources (human resources, equipment...)
- Lack of commitment from Internationals for long term actions



- Increased risks of HIV/STIs/HPV/HCV infections;
- Increased risky behaviors, violence... among YA;
- Cross cutting complex AY concerns: protection, education, economic
- Increased demand for mental health and substance use treatment and prevention, and for comprehensive sexual health interventions...

HIV/AIDS programs/Youth empowerment/ life skills/ social behavioral change are long term goals

Innovative ways



- Meaningful engagement of YA in their diversity on nation wide (PCA, YLI) in programs development/ design, implementation and monitoring
- Education and chatting Apps development and promotion
- Go to--- Outreach (online and mobile)
- Mobile and in center services AY friendly and inclusive
- Campaigning and social media engagement of AY- Messages appropriate

What support would you need (from government, community and other stakeholders)? How can we ensure sustainability of services like yours, provided at the community level?

- **Government**

- Political commitment and policy changes that :a) guarantee active and meaningful participation of youth in democratic practices and processes at different levels b) Stop the discourse of stigmatization and discrimination related to sensitive topics c) Decriminalize persons who adopt risky behaviours such as substance use...
- Raise public finance support (programs, financial, protection,...) for community actors and NGOs targeting youth in all their diversities
- Ensure the activation a national youth committee to oversee the implementation of youth policy and making sure that the voices/needs of AY at risk in all their diversity are being heard
- Promote an inclusive social and health care environment appropriate and accessible for AY health needs in HIV and other related matters

- **UN and INGOs**

- Long term programming through supporting local CSOs/NGOs
- Build youth centered evidence based programs/services
- Scaling up community outreaching programs/services
- Scaling up community based inclusive youth friendly auxiliaries aids and support services and make them accessible and “free of charge”
- Guarantee health and social services free of stigma towards youth at risk
- Empower youth in all their diversity to be able to engage in advocacy purposes for policy change

Lebanon program for AYP in communities in the region- UNICEF

Comprehensive, accessible and appropriate package of services

- In-center and online SRH, HIV, MH and HR service' provision (friendly and inclusive)
- Field and Online Outreach
- Mobile unit for testing and counseling
- Dardashe concept sessions (*sensitive topics*)
- Life Skills training
- Capacity Building for frontline workers
- Caregivers capacity building
- Community-Based Activities through youth-YLI
- Capacity building and training for HCP: SWs, nurses...





Success Story

During our outreach efforts at SIDC on April 24, 2024, a success story unfolded when a 20-year-old individual approached us for STI testing. Upon further discussion, it became apparent that he had been assaulted while intoxicated, oblivious to the gravity of the situation. Acting swiftly, our team consulted specialists and secured essential resources, including rape kit, PEP, and Doxy-PEP. With just six hours remaining before the 72-hour window period elapsed, PEP was administered, potentially preventing a life-altering outcome.



Success Story

In addition to medical assistance, we referred the individual to our mental health system for support and provided guidance on accessing legal help. Our commitment extended beyond the immediate intervention as our team maintained contact with the individual, ensuring they received the necessary support and information on PEP and mental health resources. This highlights how we strive to take care of all aspects and stresses the importance of continuing to raise awareness to protect vulnerable individuals in our community.





Thank You

