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# USAID Youth in Development Policy

*for*

**Workshop on Youth Financial Inclusion in the MENA  
Region, Rabat, Morocco**

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## Why develop a youth-focused strategy for development assistance?

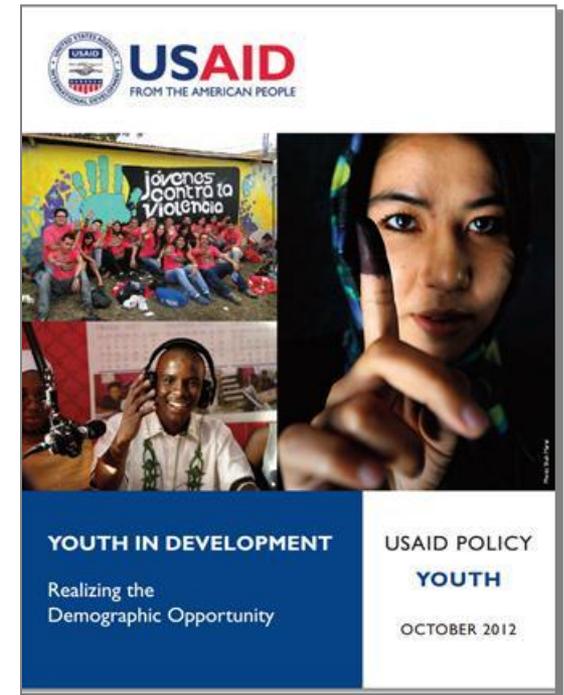
- Moment of opportunity and challenge across the region: the “demographic dividend”
- Youth compose ~30% of population across MENA
- Before the Arab Spring, youth unemployment was at 24%
- USAID supports countries across the region as they write new constitutions; reform institutions; carry out free and fair elections; and bring citizens into the political process
- To realize the benefits of the demographic dividend, need to make investments in the assets and skills of youth, particularly young women.



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# USAID Youth in Development Policy

- First-ever youth policy, making youth a priority in all our programming worldwide
- Purpose to invest in the assets and skills of youth, particularly young women
- Focuses on ways for youth to participate in building peaceful and democratic societies
- Helps ensure youth are better served by local and national institutions with a focus on financial inclusion





## Enhances Financial Inclusion:

- Ensures youth have access to food, healthcare and education – basics that are fundamental for growth and future development
- Gives youth access to microcredit, training, entrepreneurship counseling, and business development services so they can share in economic growth and national well-being
- Helps youth transition from just “getting by” to saving money and possibly starting a business or becoming self-employed
- Helps youth build relevant job skills for the 21st century job market



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## Current USAID Youth Programming

- **IRAQ:** USAID-supported small business development centers benefited 13,000 Iraqi entrepreneurs, more than 1/3 of these were youth
- **LEBANON:** USAID provided more than 2,600 loans valued at \$5.5 million – 43% of these microcredit loans were targeted at youth recipients
- **TUNISIA:** USAID's Internet and Communications Technology (ICT) project provided job skills training to 3,089 youth
- **EGYPT:** USAID-supported Higher Education Initiative will help students earn degrees in science, technology, engineering and business – knowledge needed for today's global economy



Anbar Small Business Development Center, Iraq



The LOTUS Scholarship Program in Egypt supports students to enhance 5 skills & career options.



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## Lessons to Apply to Future Program Design

- Ensuring that MENA youth are prepared for a changing economy means ensuring their financial inclusion in society
- Working with governments to change the regulatory environment is critical to providing institutions capable of offering youth financial inclusion
- Case in Point – Tunisia ICT Sector Project:
  - Combines financial and economic inclusion;
  - Combines regulatory reform; and
  - Increases youth access to economic opportunities.



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## THANK YOU

To learn more about USAID programming and our Youth  
in Development Policy visit us at:

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