



Population Policies and Migration Department
League of Arab States

Arab Youth: Reproductive Health and Inter-generation Communication

Population Policies and Migration ~~Department~~ Affairs Division
League of Arab States

22A Taha Hussein st., Zamalek-Cairo

Tel: 202 27354306

: 202 27351422

Fax

emailyouth@poplas.org

www.poplas.org

Executive Summary

Since its presentation in the international conference for population and development ICPD/Cairo 1994, the concept of reproductive health and reproductive rights became no more related only to health with its inclusive meaning of psychological, physical, sexual and social aspects; rather it became a developmental approach. That is because health improvement is an important aspect and indicator of human development at the same time.

Health is Wealth, as asserted by all developmental literature and projects that achieved tangible results. That is why health improvement is considered an important approach for poverty reduction and eradication. When Wage earners-in either urban or rural settings- cease working because of health problems this consequently affect family income and satisfaction of its basic needs.

Population Policies and Migration Department/ within League of Arab States (LAS/PPMD) concern with reproductive health and rights of youth did not emanate only from the fact that it is an important dimension of youth empowerment. But also because the state of the art conducted by PPMD on the available research studies concerned with Arab youth issues, has proved that reproductive health and rights are one of the main challenges facing youth especially with the weakness of knowledge related to Reproductive Health issues, increase fo age at marriage and the openness towards other cultures and varying values. This was reflected through results of the those studies, that showed confusion and unclarity of youth's knowledge about reproductive health and reproductive rights. Studies has as well shown that youth became more vulnerable to dangerous behavior in various aspects of their health including their nutritional patterns, spending leisure times, as well as increasedprobability of infection by sexually transmitted diseases.

The following pages include two studies that belong to one field which is familial field. From one side reproductive health is closely related to familial life cycle, on the other side family interaction -existing or not- affects reproductive health for family members either through knowledge, values or practice.

According to the report's conclusion concerning youth status in relation to health and reproductive health and interrelation with the family, the report recommends the Arab governments to increase investments targeting youth health and development also in adopting policies dealing directly with youth needs. Parents have to open dialogue with youth on health, Reproductive and sexual health issues.

This study has revealed many indicators, the most important of which are:

- Knowledge about STD decreases among Arab youth to reach 50% at Arab level, and 14% among males in Algeria, 19% in Syria, 4% in Egypt, while it reaches 8% among females in Syria and 5% in Egypt
- Increase in the rate of young smoking males (37% in Algeria, 28% in Syria, 11% in Egypt, 21% in Emirates), while this rate decreases among young females (4% in Syria, 0.3% in Egypt, 11% in Emirates). The desire to imitate friends, to try or curiosity are from the mean reasons that encourages youth to smoke
- The age at marriage among females has increased in most of Arab countries to reach 29 years in Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon, 28 years in Qatar and Syria, 25 years in Jordan, Kuwait, 20 years in Egypt and 18 in Yemen and Palestine

The two studies had conveyed important messages to those concerned with familial issues. They shed the light on the changes taking place in the realities surrounding youth, and their consequences mainly on their relation with the roots and family relations and on risks threatening youth health. Also the studies urge for further qualitative research addressing those issues.

When presenting this work, we are urging youth, researchers, policy makers and executives to practically face the different diseases whose effect on adolescent and youth health could be extended and affect the health of all society.

We hope that this work include inspiring ideas and topics for future research work as well as conclusions and findings useful as lessons learnt urging further concern with reproductive health from youth starting from early childhood stages.

