
By, For and With Youth: Supporting Youth Inclusion through Civil Society Engagement in SEMED

Panel discussion

Wednesday, 9 May, 14.00 – 15.30

**CSO Meeting Room 1
Petra Hall, Sea Level (- 1)
King Hussein Convention Centre, Dead Sea, Jordan**

Organised by the International Youth Foundation, this roundtable discussion will explore how local CSOs have addressed the training, employment and economic inclusion needs of young people. A defining characteristic of the workforce development interventions to be discussed in this panel is the engagement of young people themselves in assessing the opportunities (or lack there-of) in their communities and in addressing the challenges they face through community service projects and/or the development of their own youth service providing CSOs.

The panel will also discuss best practices in CSO capacity strengthening to effectively engage young people and support their evolution to be agents of positive and transformational change in the economies of their communities, countries and regions.

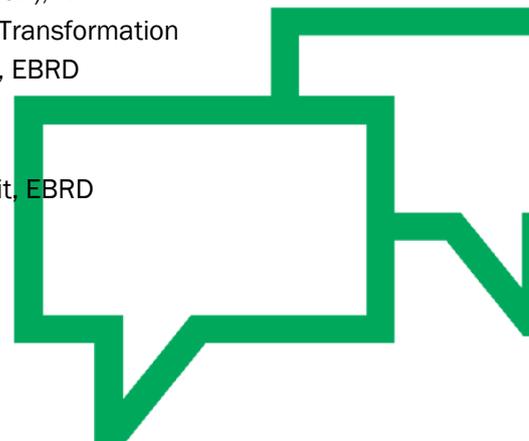
Panellists will present the work of their organisations, highlighting different approaches to youth engagement and to the creation of inclusion opportunities.

Speakers

- ▶ Eman Alaraj, Project Coordinator, International Labour Organization
- ▶ Rakan Al-Rwad, General Manager, Al-Qantar Center for Human Resources and Development
- ▶ Rasha Barakat, Chief Innovation & Human Capital Officer, Zain
- ▶ Hafez Neeno, Regional Director (Middle East) & Country Director (Jordan), IYF
- ▶ Mays Sharari, Senior Capacity Development Specialist, Development Transformation
- ▶ Barbara Rambousek, Director - Gender & Economic Inclusion (Acting), EBRD

Moderator

- ▶ Alessandra Antolini, Associate Manager, Civil Society Engagement Unit, EBRD



Biographies



Eman Alaraj, Project Coordinator, International Labour Organization

Eman Al'araj is Project Coordinator for the Project "Applying the G20 Training Strategy", a partnership between the Russian Federation and the ILO in Jordan. The project aims at developing the capacity of technical experts, policy makers, staff of relevant ministries and technical agencies in the TVET sector in Jordan. Eman has previously worked as Senior Researcher at the Jordan Strategy Forum where she led several research projects in the areas of trade and employment. Eman holds a Master's degree in Sustainability and Management from the University of Bath, UK and a BA in International Studies from Indiana University in the US.



Rakan Al-Rwad, General Manager, Al-Qantar Center for Human Resources and Development

Rakan is co-founder of Al-Qantar Center and general manager since 2013. Al-Qantara Center aims at building the capacity of youth and enhancing their political, economic and social participation. Recently, Al-Qantara Center was honoured to receive The Order of King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein for Excellence. Rakan studied Business Administration at Al-Huseein Bin Talal University. He worked in various youth associations. Rakan is a BADIR fellow and won an award from Zain Al Mubadara programme for one of his projects, namely Afaq Company for Printing Services and Marketing.



Rasha Barakat, Chief Innovation & Human Capital Officer, Zain

Rasha Barakat began her career in HR in 2002. She started working with Zain Jordan in 2005 and has taken on different roles throughout the years. In 2018, she became Chief Innovation and Human Capital Officer at Zain Jordan, the first female Chief in the company's history. Rasha is also responsible for Zain Jordan's Corporate Entrepreneurship Division aiming to spread innovation among Jordan's youth and entrepreneurs by supporting great ideas, building and activating the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and enhancing the current position of start-ups through different support mechanisms. Ms Barakat holds MScs (HEC & Oxford and The University of Manchester) and a BA (Amman Private University).



Alessandra Antolini, Associate Manager, Civil Society Engagement Unit, EBRD

Alessandra Antolini coordinates the Bank's institutional engagement with civil society organisations in the Middle East and North Africa. Alessandra also manages technical cooperation projects aimed at enhancing the capacity of civil society organisations in areas of economic and financial inclusion. Before joining the EBRD in March 2015, Alessandra worked with a number of civil society organisations in Kabul and Geneva, mainly on business development programmes for small enterprises, advocacy campaigns on the right to education for all, and education and empowerment projects with female students and adolescents. Alessandra holds an MSc from the London School of Economics in Development Management and a BA in International Relations and Affairs from the University of Bologna.



Hafez Neeno, Regional Director (Middle East) & Country Director (Jordan), IYF

Hafez Neeno has over a decade of experience in the fields of management, communications, marketing and social entrepreneurship. As a Regional and Country Director at the International Youth Foundation, Hafez leads both the regional and country offices in their collective mission of implementing impactful programmes. Prior to his current position, Neeno was Senior Programme Manager at the IYF where he was credited with the creation and development of Jordan's youth leadership institute, BADIR, leveraging over USD 500,000 in support, and maintaining multi-stakeholder relationships with partners in Kuwait, the UK and the US. He continues to lead this youth entrepreneurship programme, which has positively impacted the lives of more than 230,000 annually. Before joining IYF, Hafez was responsible for marketing and communications strategies for a variety of businesses, focusing on Corporate Social Responsibility and on projects that aim to give back to the local community. Hafez holds a BA in Business Administration (New York Institute of Technology).



Mays Sharari, Senior Capacity Development Specialist, Development Transformation (DT)

Mays brings 17 years of experience in capacity building and training for international development programmes. She is an expert in organisational capacity development, including tailored capacity assessments and strengthening plans for sustainable development. She has an extensive background working with young people to build quality life skills and career approaches that empower them to be resilient and proactive. Mays has trained more than 300 beneficiaries and led teams of 100 trainers and coaches working with youth, mentors and parents. Prior to joining DT, Mays served as Capacity Building Manager for the International Rescue Committee-Cross Border where she led the implementation projects in Syria. She holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Jordan.



Barbara Rambousek, Director, Gender & Economic Inclusion (Acting), EBRD

Barbara Rambousek is the EBRD's Acting Director for Gender and Economic Inclusion. She developed and leads the Bank's approach to economic inclusion and equality of opportunity, specifically in relation to access to employment, services, skills, and corporate standards and practices for youth, women and disadvantaged communities. Ms Rambousek brings 15 years of senior management experience, having directed large scale development and refugee programmes across 20 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Previously, as Head of Regeneration and Corporate Strategy for the London Development Agency, she led major urban regeneration programmes and the formulation of London's 20-year Economic Development Strategy. Ms Rambousek holds an MBA (Cass Business School, London) and MScs (London School of Economics and the University of Vienna).