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21st Century Youth Competencies Assessment

October 2014

IREX West
Bank
Partnerships
with Youth
Program

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IRES's **Partnerships with Youth** (PWY) program conducted an assessment of 21st Century Youth Competencies in the West Bank between April and June 2014. The assessment engaged youth in its design and implementation, and gauged the skills and knowledge that young people need for a successful transition to adulthood.

21st Century Youth Competencies

PWY defines 21st Century Youth Competencies as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will lead to young people's future economic, civic and social participation, and emotional and physical health. This includes all domains that interact as a child grows: cognitive, social, psychological, and physical. This first round of the assessment provides a baseline for 21st Century Youth Competencies in the West Bank, both to help guide programming and to contribute to a robust learning agenda.

Partnerships with Youth

PWY is a USAID-funded project to expand **educational and leadership opportunities** for young people aged 14-29 in the West Bank by creating sustainable hubs for youth innovation and learning.

KEY FINDINGS: Palestinian Youth in the West Bank



Low competency levels identify disadvantaged youth groups



Youth community involvement varies, especially among females



Youth engagement can predict youth employment



Youth believe they can lead but lack opportunities



Many young people remain undecided about participating in youth organizations

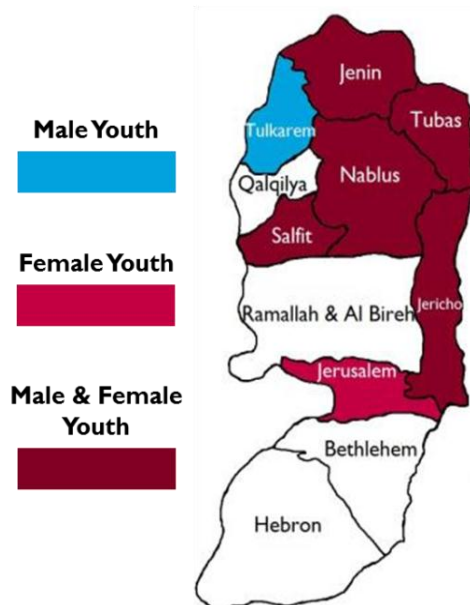
For additional findings from the 21st Century Youth Competencies Assessment, please see the report.

KEY FINDING: Low competency levels identify disadvantaged youth group

PWY identified groups of disadvantaged youth by analyzing the 21st Century Youth Competencies levels of young people. The assessment identified groups reporting competency levels below the West Bank average which PWY categorizes as disadvantaged. Distinguishing such groups enables the project, its partners and the wider development community to tailor youth development programs and specific interventions to better meet the needs of these young people.

PWY identified these groups by creating an index of youths' responses to 28 questions about their competencies. Youth whose answers revealed lower competency levels received lower index scores, and vice versa. The table below shows the difference between the index scores of specific youth groups and the average in the West Bank. For example, in the first column, the average male youth aged 14-19 scored 98 on the index, while male youth aged 14-19 scored 7 points higher in Bethlehem, 3.5 points higher in Qalqilya, etc.

Disadvantaged Youth in the West Bank



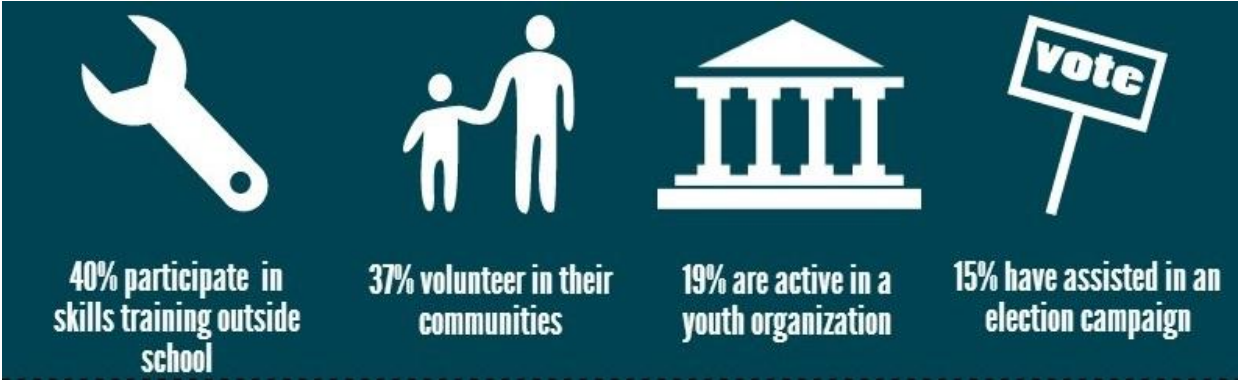
Youth Competency Index: Differentials from Average						
Governorate	Males			Female		
	14-19	20-24	25-29	14-19	20-24	25-29
Bethlehem	7	5	7.5	4	2	3
Qalqilya	3.5	-1	8	3.5	6	1
Ramallah & Al Bireh	2	4	5.5	2.5	0	10
Tulkarem	0	4	-2	4	2	-1
Hebron	2	6	7	-1	4	5
Nablus	-1.5	3	-3.5	-2	1.5	-1
Average Competency Level	98	105	109	97	101	105
Jerusalem	1	-1	0	1	-6	-2.5
Salfit	-7	-2.5	-7	-5	5	3
Tubas	-5	-6	-1.5	-1	-5	-5.5
Jenin	-3	-3.5	-9	-4	-5	-11.5
Jericho	-11	-9	-10	-18.5	0.5	-20

Index Score	Difference from Average Competency Level
Very High	Greater than +6 index points
High	Between +2 and +6 index points
Average	Less than +/- 2 index points
Low	Between -2 and -6 index points
Very Low	Greater than -6 index points

Disadvantaged youth are generally disengaged youth. International research demonstrates that disadvantaged, disengaged youth tend to feel hopeless about their future and demonstrate a much higher likelihood of becoming involved in risky or destructive activities. Conversely, advantaged and engaged youth are more likely to feel positive about their future and to seek opportunities to engage productively in society and the economy.

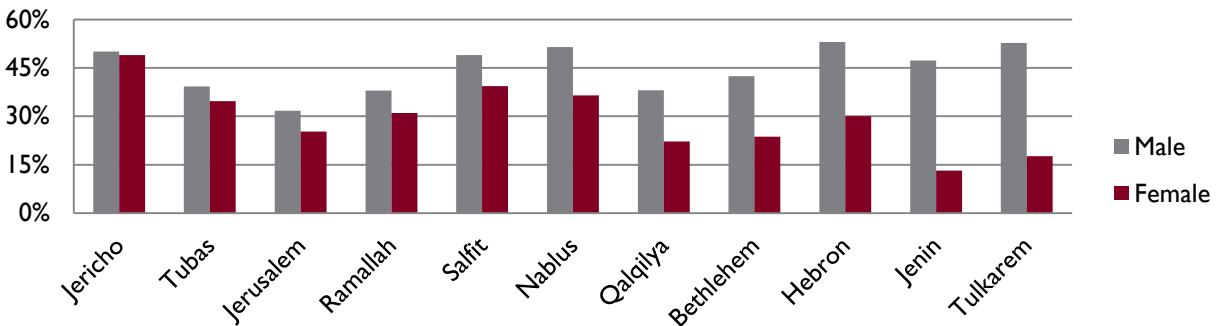
KEY FINDING: Community involvement varies, especially among females

Youth with higher competency levels tend to be involved in their communities. However, less than 50% of youth reported having participated in each of the following civic and social activities.



Youth engage in their communities at different rates depending on the activity, their gender and the governorate. Activities such as those listed above provide young people with opportunities to strengthen their skills and knowledge, build their leadership skills, and contribute to society. The chart below shows the difference in volunteerism between male and female youth across the governorates.

% of youth who volunteer in their communities



Female youth reported volunteering in their communities less often than their male peers. This gender gap also occurs in other activities, including: being active in a youth organization, assisting in an election campaign, being involved in local government, and participating in physical activities.

Gender Inequalities Amongst Youth

Female youth report lower 21st Century Youth Competency Levels and engage in their communities at lower rates than male youth as shown in the graph and table below.

Competency Index Scores



% of youth	Male	Female
Participating in physical activity	52%	25%
Participating in a skills training	42%	37%
Contributing to an online campaign	35%	26%
Active in a youth organization	24%	14%
Assisting in an election campaign	18%	11%
Involved in local government	17%	8%

Identifying the skills and participation gaps that exist between male and female young people in the West Bank enables PWY and its partners to better design their programs to offer girls and young women opportunities for learning and participation, and to promote gender equality and female empowerment.

KEY FINDING: Youth engagement can predict youth employment

The activities in which a young person engages increase the odds that he or she will gain employment. PWY garnered the following results through statistical analysis.

Predicting Youth Employment



A youth who assists with an election campaign is **76% more likely** than the average youth to gain full or part time employment.



A youth who is active in local youth organizations is **62% more likely** than the average youth to gain full or part time employment.



A youth who participates in a skills training outside of school is **51% more likely** than the average youth to gain full or part time employment.

KEY FINDING: Youth believe they can lead but lack opportunities

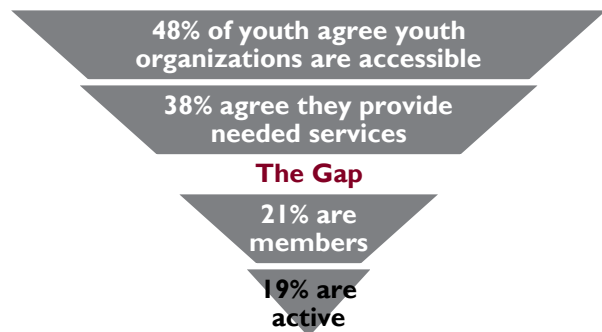
PWY found that, while the majority of young people perceive themselves as leaders in their communities, lower percentages of youth are actually active in their communities.



This contrasts with the lower rates of youth who engage in their communities. 71% of youth believe they are role models; yet, only 37% report volunteering, and 19% report being active in an organization. PWY believes this suggests that youth lack opportunities to take the lead in their communities.

KEY FINDING: Young people remain undecided about youth organizations

A significant segment of youth is undecided about the benefits of participating in youth organizations. Young people report knowing about the organizations in their communities, yet few youth report being members or active in these centers.



This gap suggests that youth organizations in the West Bank lack the capacity to provide quality programming and leadership opportunities to young people. Focus group data from the assessment indicate that young people decline to engage with youth centers which lack the organizational capacity to provide effective and sustainable programs. Youth expressed that centers lack programs on employability skills, activities occur at inconvenient times and locations, and staff fail to build trust with parents and disengaged youth.

Assessment Methodology

The assessment employed a mixed methods approach. It gathered data through a representative survey of youth in the West Bank at a 2.8% confidence interval and a 95% confidence level, key informant interviews, and focus groups. PWY partnered with the Arab World for Research and Development to conduct the assessment including survey, interviews, and focus groups. Data collection took place in April and May 2014, and PWY reported preliminary results to USAID in June 2014.

The Assessment

- ✓ **1500 youth** surveyed in 11 governorates of the West Bank
- ✓ **119 youth** participated in focus groups
- ✓ **10 key individuals** interviewed
- ✓ **35 youth enumerators** conducted the survey