


Youth and Local Government Reality and Prospects

Diagnostic Report

Arab World Center for Research and Development (AWRAD)

Ramallah 2011

"This publication is made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID under the terms of the CA No. 294-A-00-05-00242-00 and implemented under LDR which is being implemented by CHF International. The contents are the sole responsibility of the Arab World for Research Development, Awrad, and do not necessarily reflect the view of USAID, the US Government or CHF International."

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several overlapping squares in shades of orange, light blue, and green, with thin, flowing lines and swirls in a light orange color weaving through and around them.



AWRAD work team

Team Leader: Dr. Nader Saeed

Report Author: Wasim Abu Fasheh

Report Revision: Dr. Badr Al-Aa'raj, Dr. Nader Saeed, Reem Zeyad- Ghattas

Project Manager: Reem Zeyad- Ghattas

Administrative Coordinator: Yaser Ayyoub

Technical Coordinator: Nour Audeh

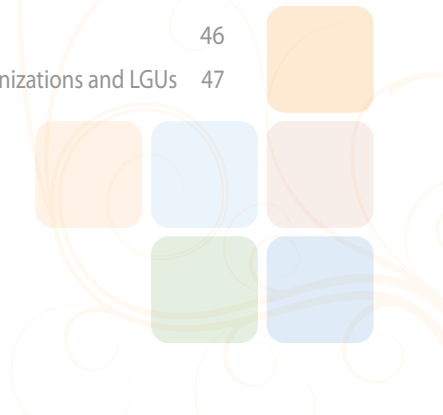
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Arab World For Research & Development

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Executive Summary

Introduction

These are the outcomes of the Diagnostic Report conducted by the Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) for the CHF implemented; USAID funded Local Democratic Reform Program – Tawasol. The study was supervised by Dr. Nader Saeed and a qualified team of researchers that used a field survey of 2,200 Palestinian male and female youth who represent all socio-economic groups in 80 West Bank locations. The study also used thorough interviews with experts directly involved in this field as well as held focus group discussions with Palestinian youth, and representatives of institutions and local government units (LGUs). Case studies were also used to obtain further information and analysis on the study. The field work was conducted between the 6th and the 16th of July, 2011, and the main results are presented below.

First: Knowledge and Conceptual Context

1. Narrow understanding of local government:

Only 5% of Palestinian youth surveyed consider Local Government Units as developmental organizations that have a role in economic and social development, However, 56% view them as providers of services such as cleaning, water, electricity and infrastructure.


2. Belonging as a wider area for participation:

Two thirds of youth feel they belong to their local communities and 51% feel they fulfill their duties toward their community while 23% feel that LGUs meet their duties towards youth.

3. Limited legal awareness:

Only 11% of youth surveyed and 24% of youth organizations' representatives were aware in which year the Local Authorities Law No. 1 (1997) was ratified. Only 23% of youth and 57% of local organizations' representatives were aware of the quota for female representation in LGUs (20% of the total number of seats).





Framework Number (1): Qualitative Highlights (Concept of Local Government)

The workshops and interviews formative data reveal a limited and sometimes mistaken perception of local government. The following testimonials, for instance, were quoted from the participants during workshops and interviews:

- *LGU responsibilities include infrastructure, roads, water, electricity, cleaning* (a 19 year old young woman from Nablus area).
- *LGUs should implement economic development and provide job opportunities for youth* (a 23 year old young man from Bethlehem area).

It was also obvious that belonging and inclusion is not only linked to youth, but also to the extent those organizations reach out to them. While some people blame those youth for their apathy, others blame LGUs themselves.

- *Youth are not interested nowadays in their community and each of them thinks of him/herself only* (a 52 year old LGU Chairman from Jenin).
- *Youth are willing to participate, but no one cares for them. How are they expected to be devoted to something they feel it's not theirs* (a 25 year old young man from Bethlehem area).

Second: Participation in Local Development

1. Limited membership in organizations:

16% of respondents declared that they are activists in student factional/political bodies or student councils while the active membership in socio-cultural clubs was 11% compared to 9% membership in developmental youth organizations and unions.

2. Student councils and balloting experience:

University student councils constitute the most important body for balloting practice among youth as 30% of respondents declared they voted in student council elections. The percentage of youth who voted in sports clubs elections was 14% and it was 9% in cultural clubs.

3. A generation deprived of participation in local elections:

54% of youth surveyed have not participated in local elections to date, while 46% declared they have exercised their voting right. Two thirds of the non-voters were under the legal voting age when the latest local elections were held in (2004 and 2005).

4. High desire for participation:

72% of youth expressed their willingness to vote in the upcoming local elections.

Of those who indicated they have no wish to turn out to vote, 54% were unwilling to participate believing that elections will not bring about any change.

5. Gap in supporting the election of youth:

15% of LGU representatives compared to 44% of youth favor electing a young member (aged 35 or less) to head local councils. In contrast, 65% of LGU representatives compared to 35% of youth favor LGU candidates who are older than 35.

6. Limited support for the election of young leaders:

16% of youth declared they participated in workshops to identify priorities and 9% participated in meetings to plan for LGUs while 37% declared they participated in voluntary campaigns to serve their LGU.

7. Limited oversight role:

13% of youth declared they took part in some activity to follow up and exercise a kind of oversight on the work of the LGU in their local community.

8. Training activities:

16% of youth surveyed declared they participated in a training course/activity held for youth by the LGU.


9. Visits to LGUs:

41% of youth surveyed visited their LGU more than a year ago while 27% of them declared they visited the LGU's headquarters during the last few months.

10. Negative evaluation of LGUs' role in promoting participation:

44% of youth consider the role of LGUs in promoting youth participation in their work as (positive) while 53% consider this role as (negative).





Framework Number (2): Qualitative Highlights (Youth Participation)

There is a generation deprived from participating in LGUs functions. The study's participating respondents have sorted a set of reasons for such deprivation:

- *How would you call for youth participation without holding elections? There were no local elections in the past 6 years and many of the LGUs are unelected and are therefore illegitimate (32 year old youth organization representative from Ramallah area).*
- *Both society and the Palestinian Authority still view LGUs as Mukhtars' (elderly clan leaders) organizations. This means that youth are still children compared to the elderly and don't have the right to make decisions (27 year old young woman from Qalqilya area).*
- *If the Ministry of Local Government is interested in youth, all of its decisions would obligate LGUs to involve youth in all aspects of their work (24 year old young man from Hebron area).*
- *Youth organizations have shortcomings in supporting youth. They disburse lots of funds, but all in vain. They should support youth participation in all LGUs (45 year old representative of LGU from Bethlehem area).*

Third: Youth Representation

1. Minimal youth representation

57% of LGUs do not have any young members while 30% include one or two members in their composition. Furthermore, less than 7% of youth have represented their colleagues in the membership of the Projects Committees formed by LGUs.

2. LGUs are the least representative of youth in decision making positions:

- The majority of those surveyed (51%) considered the representation of youth in decision making positions at LGUs as weak, 31% considered it intermediate, and only 13% considered it as sufficient.
- In comparison, 46% of youth considered their representation in decision making positions at governmental institutions as weak, 43% considered their representation in the political factions as weak while 38% considered their representation in the decision making at civil society organizations as weak.

3. The needs of youth are inadequately represented

- 36% of LGUs' representatives believe that youth needs are well represented in

LGUs projects that have been implemented during the last two years. Only 21% of youth share this perspective.

- 19% of youth believe their priorities are well represented in the electoral platforms of parties running for local councils
- 22% of youth believe their priorities are well represented in LGUs' plans.

Framework Number (3): Concept of Representation

There was no clear understanding of the representation concept among the majority of participants. The majority thought representation means having young people as members in local councils. Although this is necessary, representation has a broader meaning that embraces the needs and priorities of youth as well as all age categories, in the planning and implementation of development in terms of policies, laws and procedures.

- *Representation means that we have an elected or appointed member in the LGU (18 year old young man from Bethlehem area).*
- *Representation should also be in elections; namely, we should be on the electoral lists and in the candidates' platforms (26 year old young woman from Tulkarm Area).*
- *When we plan LGU projects, we think of all the people. Youth are included just like the rest of the people. We sometimes organize meetings with youth organizations (59 year old representative of a LGU from Nablus area).*
- *Representation means more. We want the law to guarantee that youth representation is ensured in all aspects and in each stage of LGUs work (representative of youth organization from Hebron area).*

Forth: Youth are a force for change

1. Limited influence

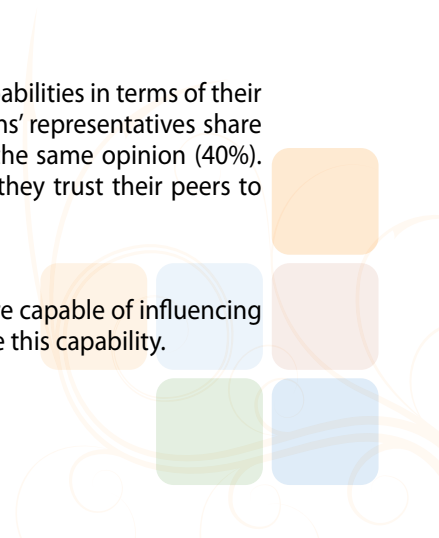
Only 12% of youth believe they have influence on the decisions made by the LGU in their town, while 27% believe their influence is limited and 62% believe they have no influence at all.

2. Various levels of trust in youth capabilities

Only 26% of LGU representatives at large trust youth capabilities in terms of their success to run the LGU. In contrast, 51% of organizations' representatives share the same opinion, but lower percentage of youth has the same opinion (40%). A slightly higher percentage (45%) of youth indicated they trust their peers to some extent.

3. The ability to influence elections

44% of youth are either unsure or do not believe they are capable of influencing the results of local elections while 56% believe they have this capability.





4. Individual initiatives to influence

21% of youth declared they took a real initiative to influence an issue they considered important in the LGU's work and 17% declared they have been part of a collective initiative to influence the LGU's work.

5. Youth participation is an added value

Over 90% of youth surveyed and representatives of LGUs and organizations believe that youth participation in LGUs constitutes a valuable added value to the work of LGUs.

6. Desire to join LGUs

21% of youth expressed their desire to become members of LGUs and 9% intended to nominate themselves for local elections.

Framework Number (4): The Role of Youth in Change

In principle, there was no disagreement regarding the importance of youth participation and the belief that youth ought to play a significant role in inducing change. However, differences existed regarding the perceived ability of youth and their organizations to bring about this change. Moreover, there is a common discrimination against youth based on their age.

- *Youth are apathetic, they want rights in everything, but they are not willing to meet their duties. Where are the youth today and why they are not taking initiatives to change the situation if it is inappropriate for them? (55 year old representative of LGU from Nablus area)*
- *Frankly, we the youth and our organizations are not united and each of us is functioning based on his/her own interest and those of his/her family and political party. Without an agreement among youth on what they want, nothing would change (27 year old young man from Qalqilya area).*
- *Definitely youth have great capabilities, for sure they are capable of making the change and they are ready to volunteer and work in their community, but what is lacking is the support of the ministries and organizations (22 year old young woman from Bethlehem area).*
- *Youth are going to participate in elections and they would change whatever currently exists. We want to vote and nominate and accordingly we need training and awareness on how to make the change (19 year old young man from Salfit area).*
- *Youth constantly take initiatives and try to make change. We tried to form a Youth Shadow Local Council in our town, but the municipality and the elders resisted the idea (29 year old representative of youth organization from Nablus area).*

Fifth: Challenges and Priorities

1. Patriarchy and tribal culture are among the main challenges:

- One third of youth considered the family/tribe as the biggest obstacle facing youth participation in LGUs.
- Other obstacles cited were the patriarchal values (22%), partisan/factional culture (19%), and the electoral law (12%).
- Of LGU representatives, 30% considered the apathy of youth and their lack of experience as the major obstacles. Very few of those representatives see a problem in the electoral law.

2. Creation of job opportunities a top priority:

- 56% of youth surveyed believe the first priority of youth groups and organizations is to exert pressure on relevant institutions to create job opportunities.
- Other priorities include ending the division between political parties (21%), development of the educational system (9%), promotion of democracy and freedoms (7%), and amendment of the Local Council Elections Law (6%).

3. Means of change

Over 80% of youth believe the following means of change are important:

- Conducting community dialogue to support youth participation;
- Organizing community awareness campaigns to put pressure on relevant parties
- Introduce legal amendments as needed; and
- Training and raising the awareness of youth themselves.





Framework Number (5): Essential Trends

The participants in the study emphasized many trends and put forth a number of recommendations, including the following:

- The importance of integrating youth, their visions, and present and future interests in the work of LGUs through extending the field of LGU work from the concept of service provision to comprehensive development.
- The process of youth involvement and participation in all fields and levels of LGU work is still in its initial stages and requires joint efforts by governmental, non-governmental, local and international organizations to achieve the required development.
- The importance of raising awareness and dissemination of knowledge among youth, the community and organizations with regard to the valuable role to be played by youth and also with regard to legal aspects.
- The importance of developing youth skills in local government and LGUs as well as their skills in initiating calls, demands as well as leading campaigns.
- Developing LGUs work to include modern technology for communication with young generations.
- Supporting applied models that incorporate youth in LGUs work in an integrated manner. These models should be revisited, learning from experiences and circulating them after careful evaluation.
- Training LGU members on mechanisms of working with youth and means of incorporating youth participation into local governance.
- Employing the media for awareness on youth rights and their relation to the LGUs' work.
- Accelerating the process of local elections and ensuring the support of families and factions in electoral lists.
- Promoting youth belonging through enabling educational and employment opportunities, as well as providing them with appropriate venues (institutions and clubs) to express their positive talents and energy.
- Evaluation of the Youth Shadow Local Councils (YSLCs) model and consider replication, with emphasis to represent youth not only in (YSLCs), but also in LGUs themselves.

Sixth: Issues for Discussion

1. Integrity and transparency

20% of youth believe that the performance of local youth organizations and LGUs is (good) in terms of integrity and transparency. In comparison, 41% describe the performance as fair and 33% as weak.

2. Need for Coordination

While 41% of LGU representatives assessed the state of effort-coordination among organizations as positive, this viewpoint is shared by only 21% of the youth

3. Quota support

Over 85% of youth, representatives of LGUs and organizations agree to allocate a quota of LGU seats for youth. Moreover, 77% of youth, 63% of organizations' representatives and 46% of LGU representatives support the formation of youth electoral lists.

4. The age of 25 is an appropriate age for LGU membership

Only 13% of youth support reducing the membership age in LGUs of the age stated in the law (25 years)

5. Minor support and major opposition to lowering the voting age:

20% of youth and 10% of institution representatives support reducing the legal age of right to ballot from 18 to 16 years.

6. Investment of modern technology

68% of youth surveyed use the internet to some degree and 60% of them use social networks (such as Facebook). Nine percent of youth declared they communicated with their LGUs through the internet in recent years. The same percentage declared they joined a social group through the internet to develop the performance of LGUs.

Framework Number (6): Issues for Discussion

The research reveals many issues that young people believe require further discussion in order to reach the desired change and decisions. For example, the perceived legal and cultural discrimination against young people, weak collaboration between relevant institutions, failure to incorporate technological advances into work practices, and what is seen as insufficient community representation in local councils.

- *Sure the law discriminates against youth and treats them as if they do not understand. Why not reform and amend the law? And why not lower the candidacy and voting age? And what about a quota for youth in LGUs?* (26 year old representative of youth organization from Hebron area).
- *We are not opposed and we want to coordinate efforts with youth organizations; even the concerned PA institutions do not coordinate with each other* (44 year old representative of LGU from Tulkarm area).
- *Municipalities, particularly in villages, do not have any modern means of communication to communicate with youth. There are some LGUs that have an electronic webpage, so why not use the internet and Facebook groups to inform people about what is happening and ask them about their opinion* (23 year old young woman from Ramallah area).
- *The problem is that the LGU of our town does not do anything. It might not have the capabilities; however when the head of the LGU is doing something, he does it for his family and in front of his house* (21 year old young man from Qalqilya area).



Introduction:

Based on a request from CHF International, through funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Arab World Center for Research and Development (AWRAD) has conducted this study which links between the process of effecting comprehensive development and the democratic transformation in Palestine, its relatedness to incorporating youth visions and interests and their vital role in making change that meets the ambitions of the Palestinian people. This study aims, specifically, to diagnose the current status of youth in the context of local government through:

- Diagnosis of the relevant issues, capabilities, opportunities and challenges to youth participation in local government.
- Identification of the extent to which youth are represented and participate in local government
- Exploring the potential of youth and youth organizations, especially with regards to their capacity to achieve the required change; namely, their active involvement in local government units and local development.
- Development of recommendations and future directives that assist in enhancing the relationship between youth and local councils, while advancing youth role in Palestinian community development.

Methodology:

This study is based on a participatory, objective and inclusive research methodology. It is also based on the integration of the following qualitative and quantitative methods and tools:

First: Literature Review:

The research team has reviewed all available literature relevant to the relationship between Palestinian youth, Local Government and LGUs; particularly, the sector-based plans of the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the national policy for youth as well as available reports and data on youth issued by Palestinian governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Second: Quantitative Data:

A number of field surveys were conducted to identify the viewpoints of three relevant target groups: youth, LGUs and youth organizations. The questionnaires were filled at the identified research sites as a sample of 78 LGUs has been selected in the Palestinian cities, towns, and villages. **The following is a detailed description of the conducted survey:**

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed by the research team in cooperation with CHF International. A customized questionnaire was designed for each of the three target

groups, while considering comparative questions between the three questionnaires. The questionnaires were divided into three key sections that included a variety of substantial indicators to evaluate youth representation, participation and their role in the change process “Youth as Agents for Change”.

Sample

- **Youth Category:** The study has targeted male and female youth whose ages ranged between 18 and 35 years. The sample size was (2200), and equally distributed among both sexes. The survey on youth was implemented in two phases, each of which targeted equal number of locations totaling 78.
- **LGUs’ category:** The survey has targeted three categories: LGU mayors, members, and staff. A total of 116 interviews were conducted.
- **Organizations’ Category:** the survey has targeted (97) of the heads of youth organizations, their deputies or the senior management staff in the targeted areas of the study.


The sample of the 78 locations was randomly selected out of a wide research community inclusive of all villages, towns and cities. The lists available at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Local Elections Commission were used for this purpose.

Table (1) Sample Target Groups

Target Group	Number of Questionnaires	Data Collection Methodology
Youth	2200	Random sample of youth category aged from 18-35 out of the (78) location samples where the survey was implemented on youth category during two phases. The first of which covered 39 locations while the second covered other 39 locations.
LGUs	116	It has targeted all LGUs in 39 locations in the West Bank.
(Local) Youth Organizations	97	It has targeted all youth organizations in the 39 locations.

Field work

Field work commenced on July 6, 2011 and ended on July 16, 2011. A total of 35 field researchers and supervisors as well as data entry assistants have helped in implementing the survey. Prior to the field work, an intensive training program was set for the field researchers through a workshop held in the city of Ramallah. To ensure the highest level of quality and proficiency, the work team has utilized available monitoring and examination techniques such as the phone field monitoring technique. Field supervisors made phone calls with field researchers on a daily basis



to ensure their availability in the specific locations and to assist them in solving any problems or obstacles they might face. Generally, field work was done smoothly and without any major problems.

Data entry, organization and analysis

Data preparation was fully finalized by the Center's data entry and statistics team who prepared a coding book for the organized interviews. Another coding system was prepared for each questionnaire. The coding process reflected the internationally approved standards. Data entry took place at the headquarters of the Center and the process was limited to two persons only to ensure confidentiality and quality. All needed corrections were then incorporated on data and interviews by competent coding staff. This was also followed by a set of examinations through "auditing" software specifically designed for this job as each questionnaire was reviewed to ensure data coherence.

Finally, the computer software "SPSS" was used to classify and analyze the data and to develop a manual on the targeted population. In addition to the data related to each question, a classification technique was implemented to verify the possible relations between various variables, namely, the independent demographic variables such as age, area, education, labor and other social and economic indicators.

Third: Qualitative Data:

Qualitative data was collected through:

- **In-Depth Interviews:** 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with various groups including those interested in or work in the fields of youth and local government representing various organizations: LGUs, local youth organizations, relevant international organizations, relevant ministries and political parties. Researchers used a guidance manual to assist them in presenting questions and receiving the necessary information.
- **Focus Groups:** The work team held 3 focus groups in the West Bank attended by more than 30 people including youth and LGU representatives. One of the focus groups has targeted young males and females in Qalqilya area; another one has targeted the heads of LGUs in the center and the third focus group has targeted members of Beit Fajjar Youth Shadow Local Council. Questions were prepared in advance in order to trigger heating focused discussion on youth and local government.
- **Case Studies:** comprehensive and thorough process of collecting information was implemented on three case studies:
 - Beit Fajjar in Bethlehem area, "South of West Bank" which has a local YSLC and active organizations.
 - Kufur Ni'meh in Ramallah area, "Center of the West Bank", where a local YSLC was founded but did not succeed or sustain.
 - Marj Bin Amer in Jenin area, "North of West Bank", which is an amalgamated area representing several villages.

Extending the Youth Concept: From Age to Developmental Paradigm


Generally, there are three trends in defining youth. The first is based on age level at which the youth category ranges between 15 and 25 years. During this phase, physical and mental growth is fulfilled and the individual becomes capable of performing various basic functions. The second trend is based on sociological (social) factors, which suggests that youth is a social reality. This concept is based on social integration and maturity standard of personality in a framework of a set of characteristics, features, roles and relations that distinguish youth from other social categories. Finally, the third trend combines the two foresaid trends as it takes into account age classifications as well as other indicators like social and psychological ones.

Framework (1): Definition of Youth Concept

The United Nations define youth as individuals within the age category of 15-24 although the United Nations itself defines children as individuals within the age category "since birth until 18 years old" in order to provide protection and rights for individuals to the highest possible age. The United Nations indicates the necessity to differentiate between two age categories within its definition of youth. Those categories are: adolescents of 13-19 years old and adult youth of 20-24 years old due to the different social, psychological, health problems and needs facing each category. Meanwhile, many countries state youth age as the age at which individuals receive equal treatment before law, which is mostly the age of 18.

At the Palestinian level, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics issues its data on youth within the age category (15-29) while providing detailed data on those who are less than 19 years old. However, the wider definition of youth is the one used by the Ministry of Youth and Sports which views youth as a category extending from 15 to 35 years old. Whatever definition is used for age, this diagnostic report embraced a flexible paradigm adapted for the purpose of study's subject as well as the programs to be designed in the future regarding youth participation in local governance. Therefore, youth were considered as 18-35 years old, while distinguishing between the various youth categories within this wide age group.

One of the important elements that need to be considered when defining youth is the developmental paradigm, which takes into account the variables between youth within any specific age segment. The effectiveness and efficiency of any programs or policies related to youth (either targeted as prevalent now, or integrated as the situation should be) should consider the various variables such as age (within the widest age category), sex, employment, social class, place of residency and level of education; all of which include a basic cultural dimension that cannot be quantitatively measured. This perspective should also take into account the existing relations and the interrelated interests among the various age categories as well as the implications of the existing policies and decisions made by the elders in various



fields on future generations. One example on the importance of this trend is the public debt which is the responsibility of the currently living elders; yet, future young generations would have to bear this debt's consequences in the future. The same applies for the policies on population and economic development and their impact on retirement and elderly pensions in the future.

Section 1: Youth and Local Government - Overview

1.1 LGUs Roles and Responsibilities

Studies on local governance almost consensually agree on the following three main functions of local governance:

1. Democratic representation and ensuring democratic public participation within the local framework;
2. Service provision to citizens in their residential and work areas to allow sufficient distribution of responsibilities between the Central Government and Local Government Units; and
3. Developmental role at the local level based on the general developmental vision at the national level. Such functions have been clearly reflected in the Local Government Sector Strategic Plan issued by the MoLG for the years (2011-2013).

Despite the integration of the aforementioned functions, the survey results have reflected the limited knowledge of youth on LGUs' roles and functions as if these functions are restricted to service provision. The majority of youth (41%) described the LGU in their area as an organization under MoLG's umbrella that provides cleaning services as well as other basic services such as water and electricity. This definition of LGU service provision is not restricted to youth; in fact, some LGU staff considers the current role of LGUs' as mere service providers, although they assume other responsibilities theoretically.

Framework (2): Local Government Functions according to Target Group Respondents¹


- *“The LGU provides public services such as water, electricity and infrastructure, including roads and schools... establishment of recreational centers for youth in addition to other projects that are useful for the town or city ...”* (focus group with youth/Qalqilya).
“LGUs offer services through providing projects for the town such as water installations and infrastructure as road asphaltting. I think its role is limited to these services...” (Interview with Society Director/ Village).
- The head of a local government directorate had a different perspective; he sorted out the functions and responsibilities of the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) as well as the LGUs in accordance with the law as follow:
“MoLG’s responsibilities were stated in article 2 of Local Authorities Law No. 1 of 1997 as overseeing LGUs and ensure their enforcement of laws, bylaws, regulations and instructions they receive from MoLG. According to the law, LGU functions include the provision of basic infrastructure services and other public services as well as overseeing LGU’s organizational and developmental role.”

To further understand youth perceptions of LGU roles, the following findings were revealed in the study. While 11% of youth defined the LGU as a specialized organization in infrastructure such as roads and walls, only 5% of youth thought the LGU is a specialized organization in economic and social development. But the perception that gains the most ground is that the LGUs role is rather a combination of service delivery and an all-inclusive developmental role, as indicated by 38% of youth surveyed. A mere 4% expressed their unfamiliarity with the LGU functions. The majority of youth (58%) believe the LGU in their respective areas is an effective body but it requires some development. This is contrasted with 28% who believe the LGU is an important body for the town and 10% who believe the LGU is ineffective and insignificant.

1.2 Priorities of Community Segments at the Local Level

The three key functions of local governments mentioned above constitute a general framework that entails a wide array of interrelated functions, which together are considered vital and urgent for ordinary citizens. This justifies the importance, vitality and necessity of the presence of local governance. It also explains the need for governmental and non-governmental organizations to treat youth’s participation in the context of local government as a priority on their agendas.

LGUs’ functions vary based on the diversity of community segments and categories. Therefore, policies, programs and projects, although directed to citizens as one group, must be evaluated based on their effectiveness and success in being sensitive and responsive to the varying needs of the citizens of each community.



"Each community segment such as youth, the poor, women, and children has its own needs. MoLG coordinates its work with other line ministries in accordance with the specific needs of each segment. For instance, MoLG builds playgrounds for children and youth based on coordination with the Ministry of Youth and Sports which is responsible for such sector. As MoLG, we set instructions to all LGUs to cooperate with all organizations that provide financial and moral support for youth, women and children sectors and we ensure the availability of funding to all LGUs to establish playgrounds, public gardens and parks to relief this sector". (Interview with a Director of Local Government Directorate)

At the democratic and public participation levels, one of the priorities is to expand the scope of public representation and participation to include the marginalized groups. This outreach should entail women and youth, taking into consideration the sources of influence in the society (nationally and locally) as participation at the local level is influenced by familial and political party interference.

"One of our main priorities is to promote youth and women representation in LGUs". (Interview with a young man/ youth organization).

At the level of both services and all-inclusive development, especially considering the interconnectedness between both, we found varied demands related to various social categories. There are demands related to equal distribution of services in all areas. Moreover, certain programs and projects reach out to specific societal categories. Another factor to take into account is the outreach to marginalized segments, for instance, delivering infrastructure for people with special needs.

"Regarding youth, the LGU did not represent youth interests and the youth segment was not included in the strategic development plans or even in the LGU's budget. The youth segment has its own needs such as recreational centers and clubs... for women, LGU services reach out by providing garbage containers, road cleaning and asphaltting in the areas adjacent to houses. These services usually benefit housekeepers more than other people do. Whatever applies to women and youth applies to children whose priorities also include public parks and recreational centers." (Interview with a youth group coordinator/ Salfit)

"Sure there are differences based on location and traditions of each village or locality. Other differences are based on age and education levels. The problem is that some LGUs act based on family relations and not the actual needs and priorities of each societal category... we have to learn about the marginalized villages and their needs which are completely different from the needs of other areas". (Interview with a young person/ youth organization)

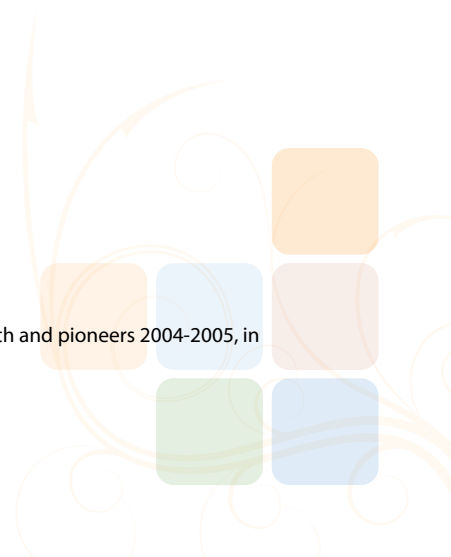
1.3 General Framework for Youth Issues: Participation and Inclusion

Community participation among youth can be defined as "their active engagement as citizens in the processes of program and policy development, decision making, and occupation of leadership positions at the level of organizations, both official and unofficial ones. It also means the integration

of youth perspectives in all community aspects: economic, social, political and cultural. To reinforce their participation, youth have the full right to receive and access information. They should possess the power and influence to affect the outcomes of the wide range of community development schemes through their organized work and their active role in planning, monitoring and oversight of impact. Youth participation does not only contribute to the success of programs and plans, but also promotes the feeling of identity, ensures social communication and interaction, and improves the sense of responsibility and belonging among youth.

Regarding youth's participation and interaction, the concept of inclusion is called for in the different youth-related studies. The National Policy for Youth and Pioneers in 2005 presents a long-term developmental vision in the area of youth inclusion in policies, programs, and services. Such vision contributes to achieving gender equality and realizing effective communication and integration among generations. This idea of inclusion is based on the treatment of youth not only as a target group but also as a social group that possess needs, a group that affects and is affected by all respects of life within the framework of roles and the existing relations in society at local and national levels as well as economic, social and political fields¹.

¹ Birzeit University, Development Studies Center, National policy for youth and pioneers 2004-2005, in partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2005.





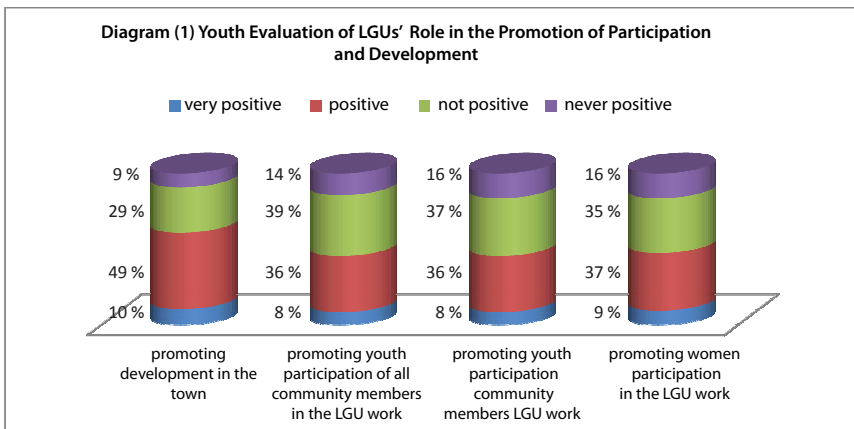
Framework (3): Key Principles of Participation and Inclusion.

- **Partnership built on mutual respect:** youth's status and role in the community are influenced by their relations with the other age groups. This relation falls within a hierarchy based on age and sex, which necessitates a change in the nature of this relation for it to be based on partnership and mutual respect among all age groups.
- **Developmental perspective:** youth's status and role are influenced by the political, social, economic and cultural reality of the community. Therefore, investing in the human being, especially children and youth, and using the available resources in this regard, would result in long-term advancements in all fields of human development.
- **Age and gender as two dimensions to analyze programs and projects:** this means taking age and gender components into consideration:
 - The role of each age group/gender in identifying needed programs and projects
 - The benefits and outcomes of such programs on the varying groups
 - The impact realized from implementation of these programs and projects, taking into consideration the various age groups, as well as gender.
- **Youth inclusion in all policies:** The status of youth is not only influenced by programs directed to them, but it is also influenced by economic and social policies as well as legal frameworks. Therefore, promoting youth inclusion in the society requires taking their status, interests, priorities and viewpoints into account in each policy, program and law.
- **Interrelation between private and public spheres:** this requires analyzing the influences and power sources within the family, community, and state as well as the impact of each source on the rest of fields. This analysis should differentiate between cultural and institutional spheres.
- **Levels of empowerment:** youth integration requires their empowerment at all levels: enjoying basic needs (food, housing and health), equal opportunities in education and employment, active contribution to decision making at all levels, and supporting youth access to financial and institutional property and decision-making positions.
- **Youth involvement in all phases:** the integration of youth and their priorities in programs and projects requires them to be part of all phases and processes, including needs assessments, planning, design, implementation, oversight and evaluation.

1.4 Performance Evaluation of LGUs and other Organizations

Due to the lack of clarity in youth perceptions of LGUs and their role, especially the developmental one, the results of youth evaluation of LGU performance was generally moderate. When the issue of LGUs' role in the promotion of development was addressed, the evaluation has ranged between positive and very positive, reaching up to 59%. However, this percentage has declined when the LGU's role in promoting community participation was tackled as the results did not exceed 44% (positive and very positive). The issue of promoting youth participation has achieved the same percentage 44% while the issue of promoting women participation has achieved two additional points 46%. Female youth's evaluation was not much different from males even regarding female's evaluation of the LGU's role in promoting female participation in LGU work.

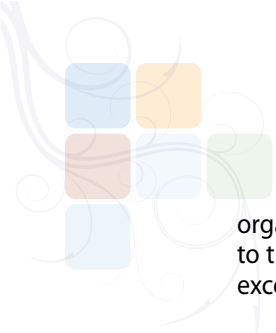
The following diagram reflects the various levels of evaluating LGUs' performance according to youth viewpoints:



Generally, youth give a “moderate performance” when asked about the integrity and transparency of LGU as well as youth organizations working at local and national levels. Survey results show that (41%-43%) of youth have evaluated these institutional bodies as moderate against (19%-24%) as good. Approximately one-third of youth surveyed evaluated the integrity of LGUs and local youth organizations as weak, with a lesser percentage (23%) expressing the same evaluation to youth organizations working at the national level (the difference in the percentage was by those who believe they don't obtain information on these organizations to evaluate them at integrity and transparency levels).

However, youth organizations representatives have given higher evaluation to LGUs, local and national youth organizations in terms of integrity and transparency. The percentage of “good” evaluation was 40% for LGUs, 49% for local youth organizations and 37% for national youth organizations.

Finally, the percentage of “good” evaluation shows a considerable increase among LGU representatives as it was 78% for the LGU, 59% for local youth



organizations with a slight decrease for national youth organizations (compared to the answers of youth organizations' sample) as the "good" evaluation did not exceed 37%.

Section 2: Youth Representation at the Local Level

2.1 Concept of Representation

Representation "generally" indicates a state in which a person or a group of people enjoy the ability to express the interests and viewpoints of other persons of the same background or political, social or intellectual interests or trends. Therefore, representation in various organizations is based on geographic or segmental (based on social segment) or political standards to reflect the variations within the community.

Representation takes various levels and forms. At the one hand, representation varies based on the position of the representative at the decision-making hierarchy. Such position reflects the level of representation in any field.

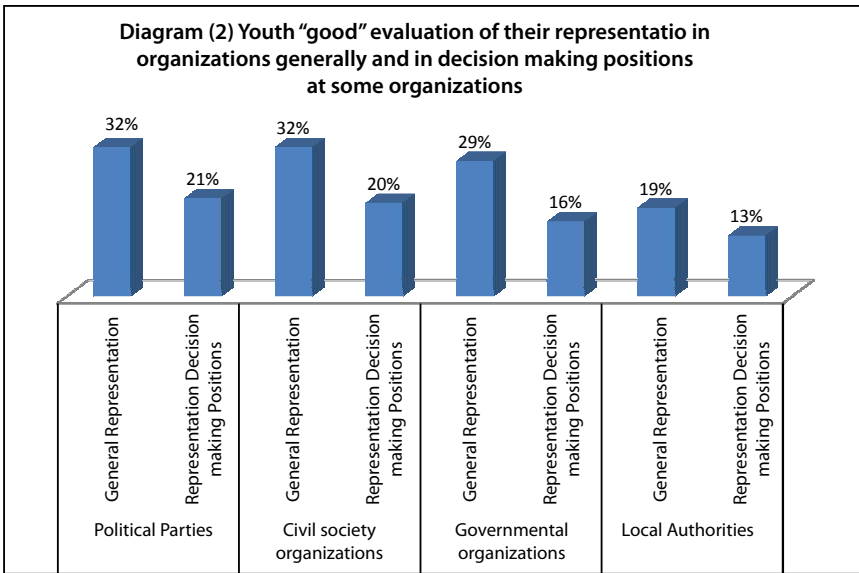
On the other hand, representation is affected by the form of such representation. These forms either take the form of assigning a position within an organization which employs an individual or group that serves to represent a societal segment in the community. Or it takes the form of allowing community groups and individuals to affect and influence policies and decisions taken at these organizations.

2.2 Youth Representation in Organizations

As indicated above, two forms of representation can be distinguished. The first is generally related to the organization (regardless of the representation level), and the second is related to decision making levels. Through the survey, we can compare between some figures in terms of youth representation at organizations, including diagram (2) which represents the type of organization and representation level. Regarding representation, the results have generally shown that the youth satisfaction was highest in the field of youth actual representation in NGOs and political parties (32% for each). Their satisfaction was a bit lower when evaluating youth representation at governmental organizations (29%). Finally, youth surveyed expressed a mere 19% satisfaction of the youth representation in LGUs.

Regarding representation at key decision making levels, the youth surveyed gave a lower satisfaction on the level of decision-making youth acquire at these organizations. For example, while 32% evaluate youth representation in NGOs as generally good, only 20% see this representation effective in terms of the actual decision-making positions assumed by youth. The same applies to governmental organizations where 16% evaluate youth representation in decision making levels as "good", against 29% who approve of their general representation in governmental organizations. In LGUs, the satisfaction was lowest both in terms of youth representation at the LGU, or at the actual positions assumed at the decision-making hierarchy.

Young females' evaluation on youth representation in decision making levels was slightly lower than young male's evaluation (from one to six points). In terms of age, the higher the youth age category (within their three age categories), the slightly higher the evaluation rate was on youth representation in decision making levels within organizations.



Youth attribute their lack of representation in various organizations to the spread of nepotism and favoritism. Therefore, they feel mostly represented in their own organizations, despite being mostly on a voluntary basis. Even in this case, youth do not feel they are well-represented at the decision-making levels within their own organizations. A young woman from Qalqilya expressed her opinion in this regard saying:

“Youth only participate in youth organizations and mostly voluntarily or as administrative board members or employees. All of the focus group attendees are volunteers in many associations such as the Red Crescent, and three of them are board members at local charitable societies or youth councils. However, youth representation in the governmental organizations or LGUs is semi-absent due to favoritism. Even voluntary work at those organizations requires favoritism! Young woman/focus group in Qalqilya).

Regarding respondents view within youth organizations and LGUs' on youth representation in decision making positions at these organizations, the results were as follows:

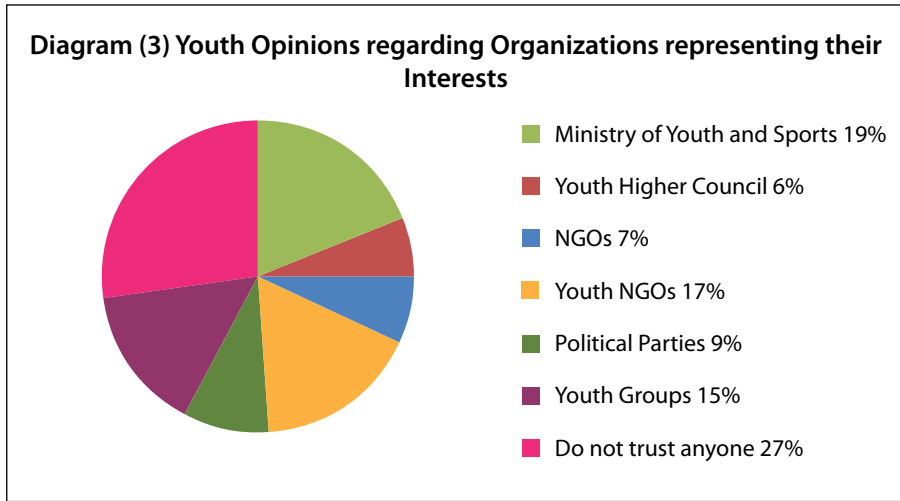


Table (2): Evaluation rated as "Good": Samples of Youth Representation in Decision Making

	Youth Organizations' Sample	LGUs' Sample	Youth Sample
Governmental Organizations	17%	36%	16%
NGOs	34%	52%	20%
Political Parties	38%	45%	21%
LGUs	14%	30%	13%

It is clear that there is no difference concerning the evaluations of youth and youth organizations' about their satisfaction of youth representation in governmental organizations and LGUs in decision making positions. However, the variation is clear regarding their evaluation of representation in NGOs and political parties as the percentage of "good" evaluation by the youth themselves is lower than the evaluation of NGOs' respondents. Meanwhile the percentage of "good" evaluation is getting clearly higher in the LGUs' sample for all the above mentioned organizations.

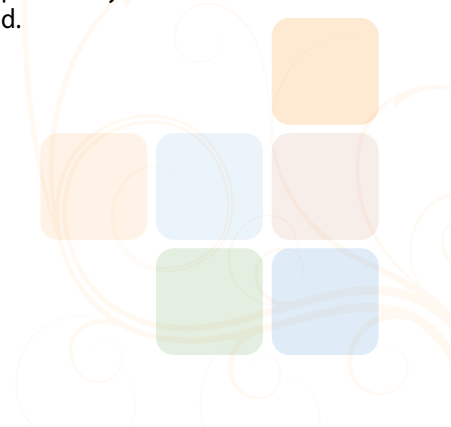
Of the survey results, it is also worthy to look at two answers stated in the LGU representatives' sample. In this sample's respondents, 30% believed that youth enjoy good representation in decision making positions at LGUs; however (and this is the second percentage), 57% of these LGU respondents stated there are no youth in the structure of their LGUs and 18% stated that there is only one young member in their LGU. This means that 75% of the LGUs either do not have any youth members, or only have one youth member, which raises more than one question. For example, if youth are barely represented as members, how can they be well represented in decision making positions (an issue indicated by 30% of the sample respondents). This evaluation could actually indicate that youth are indeed participating in decision-making processes, such as serving in ad-hoc committees responsible for specific projects in the local community, or assuming senior positions at the LGUs. Given various organizations that allow more youth representation (and participation), youth opinions vary regarding the organizations they consider more representative of their interests and priorities. Among the important results in this regard is that 27% of youth distrust any of the organizations as being representative or expressive of their interests, meanwhile there is a relatively high percentage - compared to organization widely working with youth - that trust youth social media groups. This percentage was 15% (compared to 19% and 17% at the Ministry of Youth and Sports and youth organizations, respectively).



It is worth mentioning that male youth entrusted various organizations as representatives of their interests and priorities more than female youth did, whereas the percentage of distrusting any of the organizations was higher among female youth at 33% compared to 23% among male youth who expressed lack of trust in any of the foresaid organizations. Moreover, younger youth expressed a higher degree of trusting such organizations than the older ones (not necessarily toward all organizations). For instance, the percentage of trust in the Ministry of Youth and Sports among youth age category (18-24) was 22% while it was 20% among age category (25-29) and (16%) among age category (30-35).

2.2.1 Representation from Youth, Youth Organizations and LGUs' Perspective

Representation takes many forms and can be found at various levels as presented above. The simplest of these forms is the physical presence of youth in some organizations (further clarified above). However, the most complex form of representation is the inclusion of youth interests and priorities in the organizations' programs, plans and budgets. This form represents sustainable developmental awareness of the institutional practices. In order to clarify this form of representation based on the opinions of youth themselves, the survey suggested the following four forms of representing youth needs and priorities in the LGUs exclusively: platforms of members and lists represented in the LGU, LGU plans, projects implemented by the LGU in the past two years and the activities implemented by the LGU over the same period.





Framework (4): The Concept of Representation according to the Target Group

There is no clear understanding of the concept of representation. The majority of participants in the study believed that representation means only youth presence in LGUs as members. However, representation has a broader concept which includes the integration of the needs and priorities of youth as well as age categories in all planning and implementation of development at all levels of policies, laws and procedures.

- *Representation means having an elected or appointed person in the LGU (a young man, 18 years old, Bethlehem area).*
- *Representation is also required in elections; I mean we should be on the electoral lists and in the candidates' platforms (a young woman, 26 years old, Tulkarm area).*
- *When we plan LGU projects, we think of all people; I mean youth are included as the rest of the people and sometimes we hold meetings with youth organizations (LGU representative, 59 years old, Nablus area).*
- *Representation means more than this; we want to make sure that the law guarantees youth representation in all fields and in each stage of LGUs' work (representative of youth organization, Hebron area).*

The results were as follows: 19-22% of youth said that their needs and priorities have been represented in the four forms mentioned above, while 36-41% said that their needs and priorities have been moderately represented. In contrast, 34-38% believed that none of the four representation forms have reflected the priorities of young people.

Apart from the forms and levels of representation, youth, "especially the active ones and those in youth organizations", link the issue of representation (as participation) to the existing socio-cultural network in terms of its interaction with weak legal structures. This is due to the fact that the law is an expression of the community's culture and the organization of its relations, but it could simultaneously form a tool of change. However, the Palestinian situation, "as seen by a young man" does not provide the law with such power and it is often marginalized.

"There is no fair representation. For example, persons with disabilities must be integrated in the institutions by 5%, but this was not applied. Our law is applied whenever we want and ignored whenever we want. There is also a lack of confidence in women because the society's culture is patriarchal based." Interview with a young man, PYALARA

Respondents from youth organizations tend to consider the needs and priorities of youth represented in the forms mentioned by a higher percentage than in the answers of youth. The percentage that considered those needs and priorities well represented was (21% -33%) and moderate (32% -42%). Results are detailed as shown in the following table

Table (3): Forms of Representation in LGUs’ Work from Youth and Youth Organizations’ Perspective

Answer	Yes		Moderately		No	
	Youth Sample	Youth Organizations’ Sample	Youth Sample	Youth Organizations’ Sample	Youth Sample	Youth Organizations’ Sample
Platform of members and lists represented in the LGU	19%	25%	41%	37%	34%	36%
LGU plans	22%	21%	36%	42%	35%	36%
Projects implemented by LGU in the past two years	21%	30%	36%	31%	38%	39%
activities implemented by LGU in the past two years	20%	33%	39%	32%	36%	35%

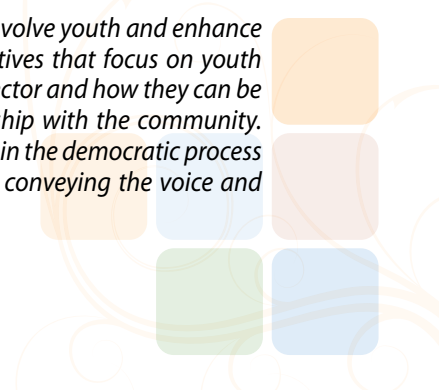
It is necessary here to analyze these percentages in a balanced way, as youth are considered the party that has representation and participation related demands. Therefore, they underestimate their representation or participation percentage than estimated by other social and institutional parties that constitute another party on which the demands fall through these relations with youth. This is what we note in the table above, for example, where the percentage of youth “good” evaluation of their representation in all aspects was less than it was in the answers of youth organizations.

2.3 Youth Representation at the Local Level: Practical Examples

37% of youth said they heard about institutions’ initiatives and projects that aim at promoting youth representation at the local level. At the same time, the respondents of youth organizations sample, by a percent exceeded two fold (79%), said they had already heard about this kind of youth initiatives. The percentage of young men who heard about initiatives and projects for promoting youth representation at the local level was higher than the percentage of young women. Such percent was 42% for males and 32% for females.

Among the most important models that met with different responses, which would be addressed by the report in the next section, was the idea of Youth Shadow Local Councils which represents a model that can be studied and built upon. (CHF) representative has pointed to this form:

“So far there are no plans and policies at LGUs that help involve youth and enhance their role in local government, but there were new initiatives that focus on youth empowerment and awareness on the local government sector and how they can be integrated in decision-making and improve the relationship with the community. Through YSLCs, youth became more confident of their role in the democratic process and they interacted with LGUs through cooperation and conveying the voice and priorities of youth to these LGUs”. (Interview with CHF)





2.3.1 Information and Opinions on Youth Shadow Local Councils (YSLC)

The idea of YSLCs has started in 2009; back then, they were called “Supportive Youth Local Councils”. The idea of the project was based on the establishment of these councils to act as shadow councils of LGUs in terms of composition, functions and work. This project has emerged as a result of the actual need to provide ways and mechanisms for increasing youth involvement in community service through a youth framework capable of inducing responsible engagement in the field of local governance and the representation of young people’s future needs and aspirations at the local level. The number of YSLCs is currently 12².

In spite of the limited experience and the recent establishment, 18% of youth respondents confirmed they heard about these YSLCs. This percentage is on the rise among males as it was 23% compared to 12% among females. Regarding the evaluation of YSLCs’ performance by youth who heard about them, 42% said they have heard of these YSLCs but they do not have sufficient information to evaluate their performance. 32% evaluated the performance of these YSLCs as good, 19% as moderate and 8% as weak.

The percentage of those who heard about YSLCs among the representatives of youth organizations and LGUs has significantly increased up to 59% each. However, the high rates in these two samples were not met with similar high rates among those who have sufficient information about the councils’ experience. About half of those who heard about YSLCs do not have sufficient information to evaluate their performance. Approximately 30% of LGU representatives expressed “good” evaluation of YSLCs, 12% moderate and 8% weak.

A number of youth and other participants in the study have highlighted some sources of concern, among which is the possibility of isolating young people (in their own institutions) instead of integrating them (in local governance). YSLCs bring back to mind women departments in some institutions that have been later renamed as “Gender Units”. So, instead of integrating women or youth and representing their interests or priorities, they were considered as a distinct category or separate from the community issues. Moreover, the formation of YSLCs (or units in the case of gender as a matter of approach) could be a space for the formation of and the expression of interests as well as setting a mechanism which works through the existing system, but not contradictory or separate from such a system. This mechanism should not also be an alternative of demanding full youth integration in the existing frameworks and bodies. This idea was expressed by a YSLC member saying:

“I think it is unnecessary to separate the LGU from the YSLC. I mean, for example, a youth member of an LGU should have the right to be a member in a YSLC. One does not negate the other because the LGU deals with all problems of the town and would not be able to focus on youth. Therefore, it would be good to have youth represented at the LGU to represent youth needs and rights. At the same time, the youth would focus on activities that the LGU does not address. The YSLC focuses on a specific category of people aged 15-22 so the rest of youth are not represented in the YSLC and they should be adopted by the LGU.” (Focus group/youth council)

2 CHF is currently conducting a comprehensive assessment of the role of YSLCs.

There are many who believe that the experience of YSLCs must be developed, replicated and given broader roles. A member from the Higher Youth Council said:

“YSLCs proved to be a great experience for youth representation as they guaranteed youth integration at the local level. YSLCs should be given a broader and complementary role to that of LGUs, as well as an oversight role.”

Some YSLCs recorded important successes, including the experience of Beit Fajjar’s YSLC. There was good cooperation between the village council and the YSLC. This experience was supported by local organization and youth tasks have been facilitated at the LGU. The Beit Fajjar YSLC has integrated youth in many activities and it allowed the members to propose and implement activities and, in many cases, it supported them with resources available. Youth believe that one of the criteria for this successful experience is LGU and local organizations’ responsiveness to youth, in addition to youth’s faith and confidence in their capabilities.

“Representation is to have a role in decision making and implementation. I think the LGU has taken into account the integration of youth needs, incubated the YSLC and integrated youth in the community through training and strategic planning. This is the biggest evidence that LGUs were concerned to have this experience succeed. It is also an indicator that it trusts youth capabilities and effectiveness. The LGU does not have much financial support but it has the moral one, in addition to its participation in youth activities. The LGU, at the same time, facilitates the work and procedures for the implementation of activities such as providing youth with cars. All the organizations of our town participate with and support youth activities ... youth also participate with them and there is cooperation between both sides. For example, the YSLC was following and supervising the gardens project... youth are usually invited to any activity implemented by any organization in the town and share all of their capabilities with them in return. If youth need any assistance for any of their activities, they receive it through these organizations. Assistance mostly depends on the nature of the project upon which the YSLC approaches the competent organization and always get a positive response.” Workshop of YSLC members/Beit Fajjar

Framework (5): Success Story: YSLC Experience - Beit Fajjar

Work mechanism between Beit Fajjar LGU and the YSLC played a role in the relative success of this experience and giving broader roles to youth due to the high degree of confidence in the importance of youth representation and participation. YSLC members talked about the joint work mechanism saying:

“There is an excellent cooperation between us and the LGU and both organizations are complementary to each other. We have a weekly meeting with them and the LGU has no problem if we attend its meetings. Most of our activities should be approved by the LGU... and the LGU is always consulted because of the wide experience they have. There were many complementary roles many times. For example, the LGU engineering staff has worked for the summer camp and the school umbrellas and they supervised the work based on their experience. We planned and they implemented...”

There are, however, other YSLCs that did not succeed due to the familial and factional competition in these YSLCs due to their attempt to use them for gaining limited personal interests. The YSLC model did not succeed in those



locations for the following reasons:

“The existing organizations in the town have caused problems and competitions among youth. In each problem we, as an LGU, left the issue to the implementer that did not prepare the youth for such an experience. Youth thought they can function without reference to the LGU which created a communication problem between the bodies of the YSLC and the LGU. Moreover, the current LGU structure has spoiled the whole situation. For example, when a young lady, her brother, cousins and neighbors won the elections, they became one group while the rest of the YSLC became another group; a situation similar to the quota system... the idea was not also circulated and promoted in a proper way and there was incorrect communication with the factions and families”. (An interview with a village representative who is familiar to the situation)

Regardless of the situation, the majority included in the questionnaire for youth organizations (64%) expressed their support to form YSLCs in all localities. Other 13% support this option to some extent while 72% of LGUs' sample expressed support or limited support to expand the idea of YSLCs to cover all the districts.

Section 3: Youth Participation at the Local Level

3.1 Participation Concept and Levels

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Most of participation definitions and various classifications address the degree of control and command on resources and decisions related to people's life. Participation, in terms of content, means a change in the relations of the dominant power, which is the gradual transformation and shift to self-independence and responsibility. Participation, in terms of the development perspective is considered as an objective and means at the same time. While participation helps in maximizing the use of human capabilities as a means to increase development levels, it allows people to achieve their full expectations and support their best contribution to the community.

Participation occurs at two levels: individual level, such as the participation of individuals in the voting process and as entrepreneurs and businesses. The second level is collective such as representative trade union and political factions. The forms of participation range from economic to social, including family, political and cultural participation.

Therefore, youth participation can be defined as: their active engagement as citizens in the program and policy development processes, decision-making as well as occupying senior positions in official and unofficial organizations. Youth participation also means the inclusion of youth perspectives in all community-based operations: economic, social, political and cultural³. To ensure their participation, youth have the full right to be provided with an access to information, possess the influence on the results of community operations through their organized work, and their role

³ National policy of vanguards and youth; former resource

in planning, monitoring and evaluating impact. Youth participation does not only contribute to the success of programs and plans, but it also encourages the sense of identity, ensures social communication and interaction and develops the sense of responsibility and belonging

3.1.1 Youth Membership in Organizations and Forms of Participation

Forms of youth membership in organizations have been varied, but it should be emphasized here that the percentage of active membership in various organizations should be carefully analyzed. On the one hand, there is no consensus among youth themselves on the meaning of active membership, while on the other; the wording of the question addressed in the survey allows more than one answer. For example, one of the respondents is likely, for instance, to be a member of youth factional body, sports club and developmental organization at the same time.

Returning to the results of the survey, it was found that 17% of youth are members of the youth factional body, 16% are members of sports clubs and 15% are members of NGOs or charities. The percentage of respondents who answered that they are active members in cultural and social clubs was 12% while the percentage of those who are active members “according to their perspective” in trade and labor unions or youth developmental organizations was 9% for each type. Finally, a new percentage appeared, that was not taken into account in the past, represented by active membership in social media groups. The percentage of youth within this category was 11%.

Table (4) Youth Membership in Various Organizations

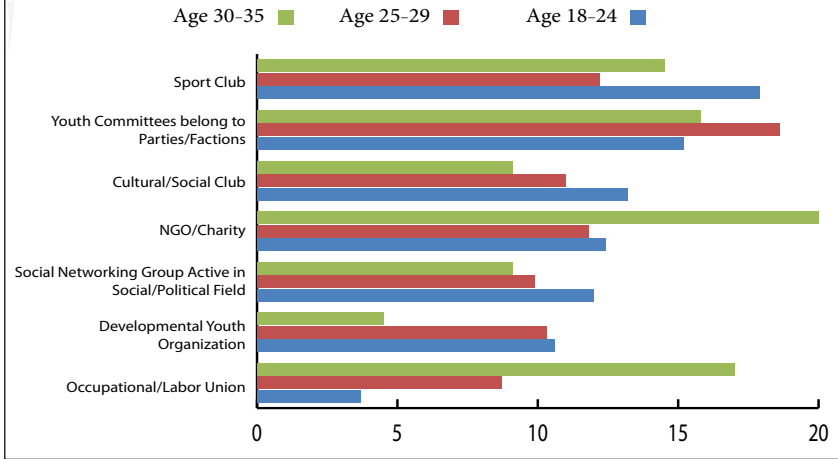
Organization	percentage
Youth factional bodies	17%
Sports clubs	16%
NGOs and charities	15%
Cultural and social clubs	12%
Social networking groups	11%
Youth developmental groups	9%
Trade or labour unions	9%

The rate of youth representation in the different organizations varied based on the age categories. Older youth age category (30-35 years old) was more represented in NGOs and labor unions while the representation of the younger age category (18-24 years old) was more prevalent in sports, cultural and social clubs.



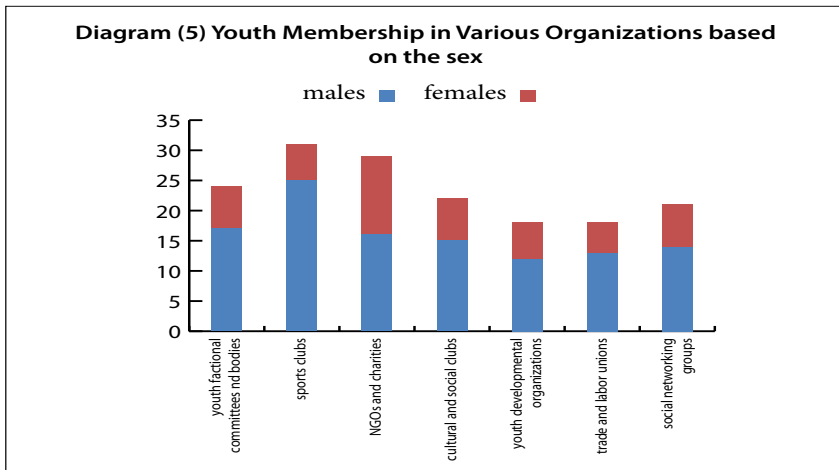


Diagram (4) Youth Membership in Various Organizations based on Age Category



Despite the low membership in organizations as revealed in the study, it is essential to review the role of organizations themselves and the extent of their influence. The purpose of civil society organizations is basically to act as a liaison between the community and the political sphere (i.e. government). These organizations are also channels that express certain community interests or the interests of the entire community to decision makers. Therefore, the outputs of these organizations, their projects, programs and policies are an intense expression of priorities, interests and visions of its members. More importantly, the outputs of these organizations are considered some of the most important inputs that inform the political system as a whole as well as the process of its public policy-making.

Youth membership varies based on sex to a large degree since the membership of young men in all organizations is much higher than the membership of young women, with the exception of the NGOs membership which is nearly equal for both males and females. However, the deepest membership gap is in the sports clubs and youth committees of political parties. For more details, the following diagram shows the percentage of membership among young men and women in different organizations:



The below framework confirms the nature of variables between various youth categories in terms of the nature of residential locality, educational level and work sector.

Framework (6): Variations in the Levels of Youth Membership in organizations using multiple variables

It has been previously noted that dealing with youth as an age category without considering the sub-variations between them would result in inaccurate generalizations and reduce the sensitivity of the policies and programs for each category within the youth sector as a whole. We have seen the basic variations in the membership of young people in various organizations based on age and sex, and we present here more of these variations using other variables:

- **Locality (City/Village):** In general, youth membership in various institutions in the cities is higher than villages, particularly in the youth factional bodies where youth membership in cities is doubled. The same applies for social networking groups as well as trade and labour unions as the difference was 10%.
- **Level of Education:** The percent of organizations' membership increases by the increase of education level among youth. The difference was sometimes doubled between those who completed their Bachelor degree or higher and those who did not finish their high school education. In general, youth in schools are still enjoying higher membership percentages than others (as a second percentage after the bachelor degree or higher).
- **Work Sector (Civil, Governmental, and Private):** the most prominent variations here are the high membership percentages in youth factional bodies and trade and labour unions among civil servants compared to others, followed by membership in the youth factional bodies working for the private sector and then followed by membership in the trade unions among the workers in the private sector.
- **Level of Income:** Youth membership percentages in various organizations increase by the increase in level of income.



For more accuracy in terms of active membership in organizations, we present the following three forms of participation in these organizations: 1) voting in the organization's internal elections; 2) candidacy and 3) participation in the organization and management of an election campaign in these organizations.

Regarding the form of participation represented by voting in various elections, results showed a percentage that can be viewed as balanced compared to what youth themselves viewed as an active membership. 30% of youth respondents said they took part in the vote for student council and student unions elections. It should be noted here that this percentage is consistent with other research data, given that (41%) of those surveyed have completed their school education but did not join in higher education at which student council elections form part of the most important forms of public and political participation. Participation in voting in the election of youth bodies belonging to political factions and parties came as second highest by 18% followed by voting in sports clubs elections (14%) and then cultural/ social clubs and trade and labor unions 9% and 8% respectively.

Regarding the second form of participation (candidacy for elections), the results reflected close participation rates. 4% of youth said that they nominated themselves for both youth factional elections and student council elections. The least form of such nominations was related to trade and labor union elections, as 1% of youth nominated themselves while 3% of youth said they nominated themselves for sports or cultural and social clubs elections. We emphasize here that the percentages reflect the views of the participants in the study, but do not provide data about the reality of actual participation or its percentages.

Regarding the indicator (the participation in electoral campaigns of organizations), the results were more consistent with previous results. The highest levels of this form of participation, according to youth, were for student councils and youth factional bodies by 14% and 13% respectively, followed by participation in election campaigns for sports clubs 7%, and 5% for social clubs, and finally 3% for trade and labor unions.

The results, moreover, certify that the gap between the two sexes is a (gender gap) as young women participation is low in all organizations. This also applies to the rates of their participation in voting, candidacy and electoral campaigns compared to young men.

3.2 Youth Participation at the Local Level: from Elections to LGUs

Local elections experience in the country has reflected a degree of relatively large-scale interest and participation. It was interpreted by many concerned people and observers as relevant to the familial factor at the local level along with the factional factor. These factors are necessary to acknowledge while exploring youth attitudes on local elections and their participation, especially that youth understanding of LGUs in which we explained above does not reflect a high degree of relevance in the minds of youth regarding the role of local level.

In this context, the poll results show the participation rate in voting for local elections for the years (2004 and 2005) reached 46% among youth, compared to 54% who did not participate in these elections. The percentage of young women participation

specifically in these elections does not vary from young men participation, according to the survey data.

The main factor resulted in the lack of participation was represented in that 67% of those who did not participate were less than the legal age for voting (i.e. less than 18 years old), when last elections were held in (2004/2005). This age gap confirms that distributing the percentages of participation in voting for the previous local elections based on youth age categories were as follows: the first age category (18-24 years) by 11%, the second age category (25-29 years) by 73% and the third age category (30-35 years) by 78%.

Others who did not participate in these elections have attributed their abstention to the following reasons:

- I was busy or abroad when elections were held 11%.
- Elections do not change anything 7%.
- Competing lists do not represent my choices and ambitions 3%.
- I have a political stance not to participate in elections 2%.

Youth's conviction in the importance of raising their voices and the impact it can achieve on elections results was reflected in the high percentage of youth participation in the latest elections. This fact could also form the basis for the upcoming local elections. The study revealed that 56% of youth believe that their vote have a significant impact in determining the elections results, 27% believe that it has a significant impact to some extent compared to 17% who do not see any importance for their participation in the voting process.

As a complement to youth voting experience in the recent LGU elections (2004/2005), forms of their participation has varied. However, it should be noted that the highest participation rates were in the preparatory meetings of the political parties, families and clans. In the first case, participation rate was 16% among youth, rising in the second case (family/clan meetings) to 19%, which confirms the strength of party and family presence in local elections, whereas participation in election campaigns for a list or a candidate was 16%.

None of the other forms of participation exceeded 7% regarding participation in election observation committees, 6% as a delegate for one of the candidates or lists to the ballot box, 4% in the sorting committees and finally 3% to run for elections.

A young man commented on the limited role of youth in the electoral process apart from voting:

"The youth role is represented by one item which is mainly the election campaigns by 90% as well as regulating the electoral process and poster hanging. Regarding the selection of candidates and setting the lists, youth's role is minor or absent as there is no intervention or powers for youth." (Young man/focus group with young people in Qalqilya)

One of the female staff in one of the relevant ministries added:

"The main source of youth participation problem in local elections is the family and factional interventions. Youth participation is still limited and restricted to certain

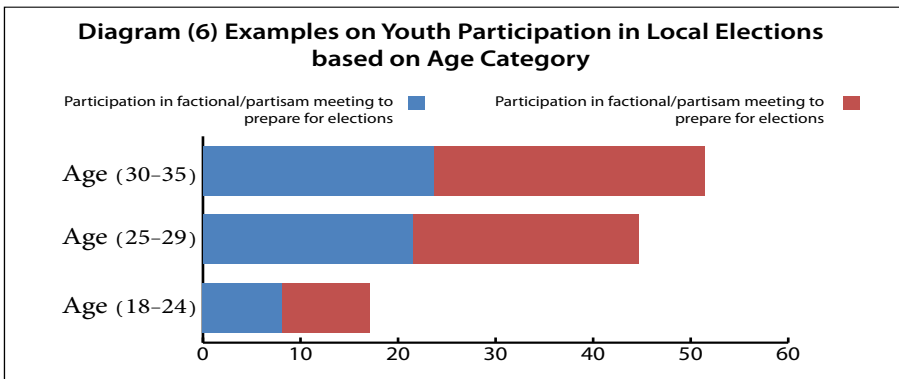
activities only and there is a considerable influence of the party and the family....”

Framework (7) Variation in Youth Gender-based Participation

Despite the equal percentages of young men and women who participated in the voting process during local elections, there is a major variation in other forms of their participation. Young women participation was almost restricted to voting. The results show that:

- Participation in election campaigns: males 25%, females 7%.
- Participation in factional meetings: males 26%, females 7%.
- Participation in family meetings: males 29%, females 8%.

The results also show that youth are not a homogenous category; there is variation imposed by many factors one of which, of course, is age. A young man/woman aged 18 years is necessarily different from someone aged thirty. Data revealed, for example that a higher percentage of the older youth age category participate in family and factional meetings. Community confidence factor impacts the age issue as one of the explanations for such variation in participation. The following diagram shows the differences:



Relating to youth issues and priorities in local elections, there are two key forms of participation. The first: is the participation in preparing an electoral platform in which 14% of the youth sample respondents participated, according to their declarations. In a close percentage, (13%) practically participated to include youth demands in the electoral lists or candidates' platforms.

3.2.1 Direct Youth Participation at the Local Level: Forms and General Trends

Far from last elections experience and figuring out the current youth attitudes toward participation in the upcoming local elections, results show that the majority (73%) intend to vote in these elections, compared to 17% who said they are unwilling to vote and 10% who have not yet decided on the vote. The percentage of people intending to vote in the upcoming local elections was

lower among females reaching 66% (ten points less than males intending to vote).

The factors behind the position of youth who expressed their intention not to vote were as follow (noting that the percentages in the table are for 17% of youth):

I am convinced that elections would change nothing	54%
The experience of the current LGU members proves that elections do not produce the best professionals	16%
I have a political stance not to participate in the elections	16%
Because electoral lists are based on factional and partisan distribution	4%
Because electoral lists are based on familial and tribal distribution	3%

The percentages set forth in the table reflect that there is a majority of people who do not intend to vote in the upcoming elections. Some think that elections would not be able to achieve change with regard to the local level, in addition to the position of 16% stemming from the experience of current LGU members. For these youth, it is an indicator that elections do not necessarily produce the best professionals. It is striking that the composition of family or factional electoral lists was of low percentages in terms of its negative impact on youth participation in the vote.

Regarding youth participation in candidacy, results show that 9% intend to nominate themselves in the elections, «In principal, at least for now», compared to 84% who have no such intention, knowing that those aged (18-24) are not eligible to run for elections. In contrast, 7% are undecided if they would nominate themselves or not.

In general, the relatively high rates of youth’s intention to participate in local elections, both in terms of voting or candidacy, are influenced by a number of factors, including the belief of the majority of youth (65%) that this participation is very important and 32% considering it somewhat important.

3.2.2 The Levels of Youth Participation in Local Projects

The concept of participation is not restricted to participation in elections at all levels only. Youth participation at the local level takes many forms that can be summarized in activities and events related to the identification of priorities, needs and demands. The other level is related to raising awareness and training on topics related to LGUs. The third level is the voluntary campaigns; the fourth is the involvement in projects and programs planning and finally participation in the actual implementation of these projects and programs. The table below shows these major groups of participation forms at the local level and the percentage of each:

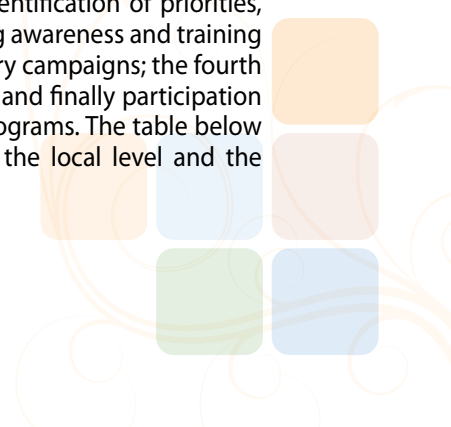


Table (6): Youth's Forms and Levels of Participation at the Local Level

Main participation levels	Participation forms	Percentage
	Meetings of area residents to identify priorities or demands from LGU	21%
	Workshops implemented by the LGU to identify priorities and needs	16%
	Meetings of youth groups to identify needs at the local level and integrate them in the LGU projects	19%
Raising awareness and training on subjects related to the LGU	Programs and projects for youth organizations related to LGUs and their work	16%

It is clear, according to the results listed in the table, that the issues of setting priorities/ demands and voluntary campaigns stand out as one form of youth participation at the local level through three main practices: first: meetings of area residents to identify priorities or demands where youth participation comprises 21%. Second, meetings organized by the LGU itself in order to identify these priorities with a youth participation of 16%, but the percentage of youth participation in the meetings held by youth organizations was 19%. The second form related to voluntary campaigns occupies the highest youth involvement percentage as it was 37%.

Youth participation in activities aiming at raising the level of LGUs activities through workshops implemented by NGOs reached 14%, compared to 16% taking part in such activities through youth organizations in particular. The table also shows that the percentage of participation in planning and implementation processes was the lowest by youth as it was 9% each. This percentage requires careful attention as survey results showed acceptable or high percentages of youth participation in the priority identification and awareness raising activities, high participation percentage in voluntary campaigns, but low youth participation in planning and implementation.

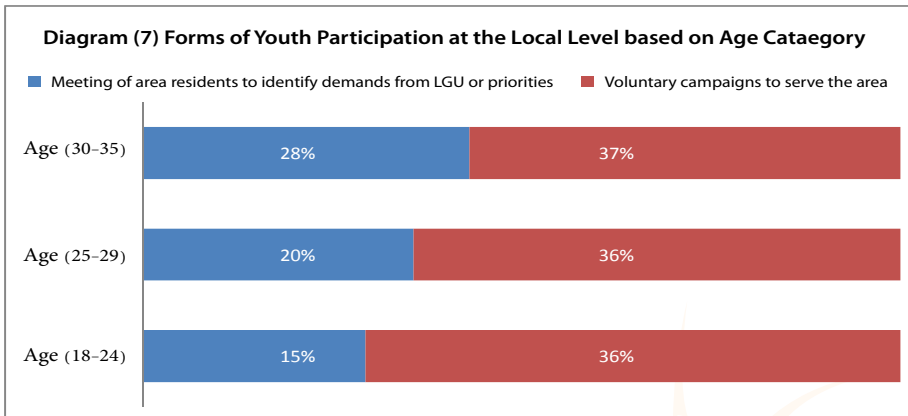
Focus groups' discussions as well as interviews with youth from youth organizations or activists at the local level show some disappointment rates among youth as a result of their weak participation in general and their weak participation in LGUs in particular.

Framework (8): Reasons behind Youth’s Limited Participation in LGUs’ Work

Participants in this study have listed a number of reasons for reasons behind their limited participation:

- How do you ask for youth participation in the absence of elections? There were no local election in the past six years and many of LGUs are not elected; therefore, they are illegitimate (representative of youth organization, 32 years old, Ramallah area).
- Our community and the Palestinian Authority deal with LGUs as if they are Mukhtars or clan leaders’ organizations. In the eyes of, youth are simply children who do not have the right to make decisions (Young woman, 27 years old, Qalqilya area).
- If the MoLG was interested in youth, all of its decisions should have obliged LGUs to involve youth in all their work aspects (Young man, 24 years old, Hebron area).

Forms of youth participation relatively vary based on their age categories. The striking issue in these results is the high participation percentage in voluntary campaigns. The percentages were close among similar age categories. However, this percentage was lower when it related to meeting to identify the needs and priorities of the area with clear difference between age categories as well.



It was also clear that youth of various age groups consider voluntary work as part of their responsibility toward their local community. There is a great voluntary legacy to the Palestinian organizations that cannot be ignored even though voluntary work has recently declined. Regarding the meetings of area residents, the percentage of youth participation was higher as their age increases, which is an indicator, to some extent, either on the weak interest by organizations to involve younger youth or the younger youth are less interested in local issues.

Framework (9): Forms of Youth Participation in Voluntary as well as Raising their Demands at the Local Level

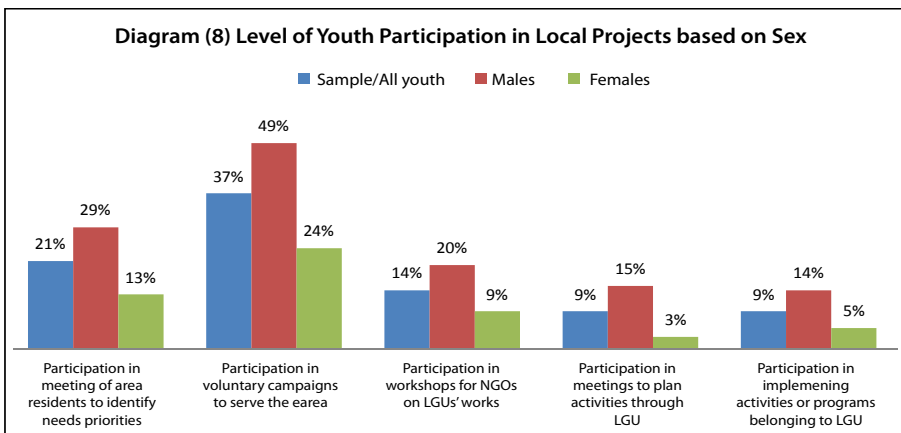
Young men and women of Qalqilya have talked about a number of activities they have implemented during the last two years to exert pressure and influence on local issues. These activities can be summarized as follows:

“Advocacy demonstrations against high prices, students’ related issues such as scores and curriculum, calls for voluntary projects, university students related issues such as loans and re-payment requirements needed for obtaining certificates, calls to put the right person in the right place as well as demands to abolish nepotism in recruitment”

Focus on the nature of activities that were organized by the LGU show the limited understanding of YSLCs functions among LGU members. Many of the implemented activities are only voluntary activities. A young woman member of YSLC presented examples of LGU activities stating:

“We implemented street-cleaning activities on biweekly basis and in fact everything was well-planned. We had a computer at our LGU office and we used to plan and write everything and call upon young men and women to participate. We used to invite approximately 120 people, sometimes 80 or 60 young men and women of which have participated. Prior to that, and during the implementation period, we used to call for a General Assembly meeting which, of course, was attended by young men and women as well as LGU members. We have also planted trees along the main road of our town and it was a successful activity. Another activity was planting public gardens with flowers, paintings on sackcloth, taking photos to our town and setting a heritage gallery that exhibited many things.”

Survey data shows low percentage of young women participation in local projects. This participation decreases further when activities were specifically related to decision making.



When youth have been specifically asked about training or awareness raising

workshops on LGUs' activities (through a separate question separate from the one listed above), the percentage of participation in such activities has increased to 19%. These youth have identified training and workshops subjects as follows:

- Youth participation in local governance and local elections 73%.
- Women participation in local governance and local elections 69%.
- Local elections laws, regulations and campaigns 60% each.
- Participation at the local level and social responsibility 59%.
- Role and functions of local governance 57%.

It was also striking that approximately 41% of youth have never visited their LGU for more than a year while 27% have visited the LGU during the last month, 20% within two to six months and only 11% during the last six months.

Framework (10): Participation at the Local Level: Other Variables

The report previously indicated that youth participation in local activities were in the following forms: 10% assumed membership in a Projects Committee formed by LGU, 19% participated in meetings of youth organizations to identify needs and integrate them in the LGU projects, and 16% participated in youth organizations' programs and projects related to LGU. This participation is linked to a set of factors:

Level of Education: for all forms of above mentioned participation, the increase of education level automatically increases the percentage of youth participation.

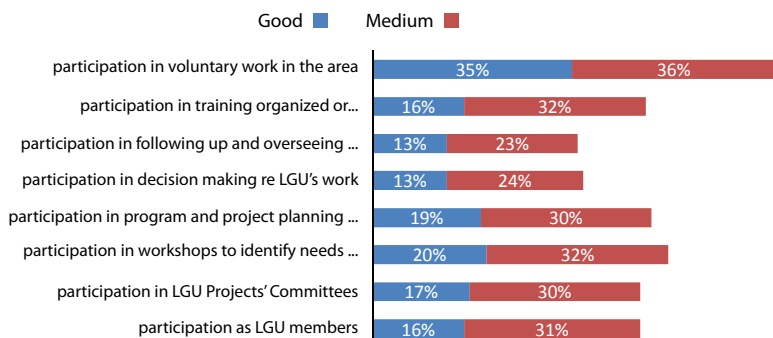
3.2.3 Youth Evaluation of the Reality of their Participation in LGU Work

Generally, youth evaluation of their participation in a number of areas in the LGU ranges between weak, medium and good with varying evaluation degrees. The lowest evaluation percentage pertaining to participation was in the areas of monitoring and oversight of LGU work, as well as participation in LGU decision making (13% each). Good and medium evaluation has gradually increased in the other fields. The highest evaluation among youth was for participation in voluntary work at the local level (35%), with another 36% of respondents evaluating such form of participation as "medium". This clearly indicates that youth evaluate their participation as higher the lower its degree of influence in LGUs' work. Accordingly, participatory decision-making at LGUs was rated the lowest evaluation among youth respondents, contrasted with voluntary work being rated the highest.





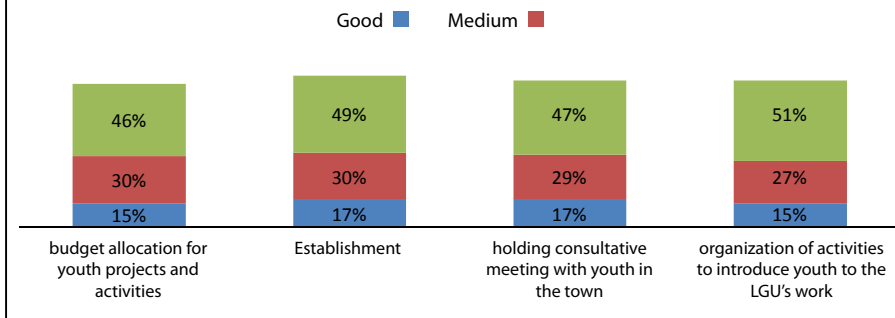
Diagram (9): Youth's Evaluation of their Participation Reality in Various LGU's work fields



3.2.4 Youth Evaluation of LGUs' Role in Involving Youth in Local Community Work

Youth favourable evaluations (good or medium) decrease when asked about the role of LGUs in involving youth and integrating their priorities within their work. Approximately half of the youth evaluate LGU's role in this regard as weak, whether this role is relevant to activity organization to introduce them to LGU's work, holding consultative meetings in the town, establishing buildings and headquarters for youth organizations or allocating budgets for youth activities as shown in the following diagram:

Diagram (10): Youth's Evaluation of the LGU's Role in involving them in Different Levels of their Work



Limited resources were among the main obstacles that prevented LGUs from allocating budgets towards youth related activities and projects in light of LGU's full agenda of demands and priorities as shown in the following statement:

"There is a budget to support organizations, but it is limited due to the limited LGU's resources, which rely on service fees. Therefore, there is not much support that is directed towards youth projects. I believe there should be a growing focus on teenagers who are (14-18 years old).

This youth segment is very important and should receive attention for two reasons: first, the inability of LGUs and community organizations to support this target group. Second, because the performance and activism of this target group is weak, considering the very important role it plays in promoting voluntary spirit.” (Interview with LGU member)

3.3 Forms and Levels of Youth Participation in Organizations at the Local Level

Generally, about half of youth organizations’ respondents (51%) stated that the organization at which they work or represent has had some role in local elections held in 2004/2005. The majority of respondents stated that roles of their organizations ranged between raising youth’s awareness on the importance of participation in elections, awareness on electoral laws and balloting regulations (about 95% for each), supporting young candidates for local elections by training and guidance (82%) or official role such as participation in sorting and monitoring committees (80%).

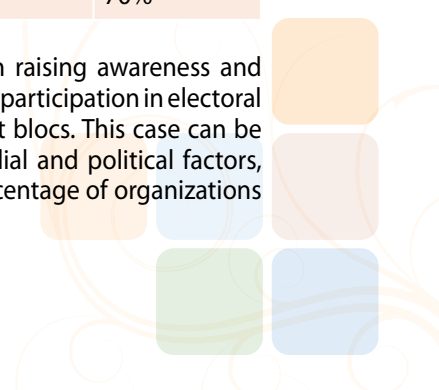
Youth organizations’ respondents, who stated that there is no role for their organizations in the last local elections, have stated the reasons. The majority of organizations (56%) did not state the real reasons while the rest of respondents’ answers have ranged between lack of interest in elections by their organization because it is not its field of work (19%), weak experience in elections (10%), avoiding problems with political factions running elections (8%) and (6%) because neither candidate was close to the organization.

The increased percentage of organizations willing to play a role in the upcoming local elections was also striking as it was (81%) (30% more than organizations who actually participated in the last local elections). The roles these organizations were willing to play in the upcoming elections can be classified into three major ones: the first is relevant to awareness and training followed by playing an official role such as election monitoring, and finally advocacy and support either to build youth coalitions to run elections or to enlist youth on electoral blocs.

Table (7): Roles Youth Organizations are Willing to Play in the Upcoming Elections

Nature of Role	Percentage
Awareness on electoral laws and regulations	100%
Training of youth candidates	89%
Monitoring elections	87%
Exerting pressure on electoral blocs to include youth	75%
Building youth coalitions to run elections	70%

It is clear that the focus of organizations was basically on raising awareness and training rather than advocacy and pressure to increase youth participation in electoral blocs or supporting youth candidates to form independent blocs. This case can be justified as the electoral reality, especially the strong familial and political factors, makes such attempts more difficult in spite of the high percentage of organizations willing to support youth candidates experience.



3.4 Roles and Activities of Youth Organizations at the Local Level

Active participation of youth organizations on the local level takes two forms. The first is relevant to the organization's participation or one of its representatives in certain activities. The second is the organization's implementation of certain activities. While most youth organizations do participate in activities held at the local level, they rarely are the prime implementer of such activities.

First: Youth Organizations' Participation in Activities at the Local Level

Representatives of youth organizations who have participated in the survey reflected high level of participation in activities at the local level. Participation rates among youth organizations ranges between (78%) in activities such as meetings in events planning through LGU and LGU's projects or program implementation and (96%) as the highest rate of participation in voluntary campaigns serving their areas. The forms of participation ranged from activities such as: workshops to identify needs and priorities organized by the LGU or NGOs and area residents meetings to identify needs or priorities required by the LGU.

Second: Youth Organizations Implementation of Activities at the Local Level

Activities implemented by youth organizations at the local level are represented in five major forms, according to statements made by leaders of these youth organizations: (1) joint meetings with LGUs, (2) training workshops, (3) joint activities with LGUs, (4) advocacy and pressure campaigns and (5) follow-up and evaluation activities of LGUs work.

Table (8): Youth Organizations Participation in Activities at the Local Level: Forms and Nature of Activities

Form	Activity	Percentage
Joint meetings with LGUs	Holding meetings between citizens and LGUs	50% 61%
	Holding meetings between youth, specifically, and LGUs	
Training workshops	Training workshops for youth in the town	81% 35%
	Workshops for youth on local governance	
Joint activities with LGUs	Holding activities in coordination with LGUs	71% 67%
	Holding youth exclusive activities in coordination with LGUs	

Table (8): Youth Organizations Participation in Activities at the Local Level: Forms and Nature of Activities

Advocacy and pressure campaigns	Initiating a campaign to influence LGU's work	47%
	Letter/petition writing on certain requirements from LGUs	56%
	Electronic campaigns through social groups on local demands	29%
Follow-up and evaluation of LGUs work	Implementing activities to follow-up and evaluate LGU's work	22%

It is clear that there is a diverse array of activities implemented by youth organizations. While most of these activities have a positive impact, many of them require further focus and promotion. For instance, half of the surveyed organizations hold meetings between citizens and LGUs and more than 60% of them hold meetings between youth and LGUs. This reflects youth organizations' interest in contributing to local affairs, especially affairs related to youth. This was also reflected in the joint meetings between youth organizations and LGUs. Although training workshops were implemented by 81% of youth organizations surveyed, only 35% of them trained youth on local government related issues. This area requires further focus, especially with the importance of promoting youth awareness on topics and laws relevant to LGUs work and functions.

Youth organizations surveyed have also shown varying degrees of activism in advocacy. The organizations surveyed indicated they practice various forms of activities to advocate for youth demands: 56% carried out petition drives, 47% conducted advocacy campaigns, and 29% of these organizations utilized social media networks to support their advocacy efforts.

Finally, only 22% of youth organizations indicated they play an advanced and formal role at the local level, by partaking in activities that monitor and evaluate LGU work.

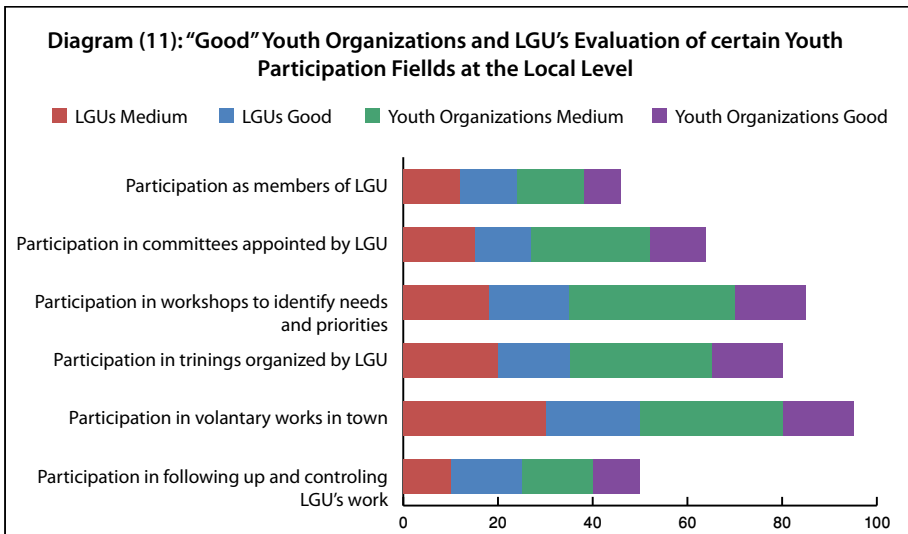
3.5 Evaluating Youth Participation from the Perspective of Youth Organizations and LGUs

Generally, LGUs see themselves as fulfilling their basic requirements in their quest to involve citizens in the fields of their work. From the LGU respondents, 59% believed they actively involved the public in their work, while 34% thought they were satisfied with their performance in this regards. However, the percentage declines when it is relevant to involving youth specifically to 47%. Regarding the same result in youth organizations' sample, the study concluded that youth organizations do not agree with opinions of LGUs sample respondents. Approximately one-third of youth organizations believe that LGUs are meeting their obligations to involve people generally while 50% believe in this notion to some extent. However, the percentage, relevant to youth specifically, declines to 26% by those who believe LGUs are fully meeting their obligations to involve youth.



The evaluation of youth participation in the LGU's work and other fields was higher in the LGUs' sample. Therefore, the percentage of "good" evaluation was higher in LGUs sample in all fields as clarified in the diagram below where the difference was 16%. This was also obvious, for instance, in the evaluation of youth participation in workshops set to identify needs and priorities. 53% of LGUs sample has evaluated this participation as "good" compared to 37% in youth organizations sample. If we view the results by joining "good" and "medium" evaluation percentages, LGUs evaluation remains higher.

Furthermore, the study noted that the percentage LGUs and youth organizations' evaluation of youth participation depends on the kind of activity implemented by youth. The diagram reflects that the highest evaluation percentage was for youth participation in voluntary work. "Good" evaluation percentage was 53% in LGUs sample, 54% in youth organizations' sample while the lowest evaluation percentage was for youth participation in LGU's related decision making. The "good" evaluation percentage in LGUs sample was 28% while it was 13% in youth organizations sample.



Reviewing the survey's data (as shown in diagram 11) clearly show that the evaluation percentage increases whenever the participation's subject did not involve decision making. This means that youth participation pyramid in LGU's work takes a converted form of influence and power pyramid. It is the highest when it is relevant to voluntary work, but the lowest when it is relevant to decision making or follow-up and oversight of LGU's work.

3.6 Evaluation of LGUs Role in Involving Youth in Local Community's Work

It is natural that LGUs respondents' evaluation of LGUs' role in involving youth and representing their interests in LGUs' work is higher than other study's respondents. As we indicated in a previous section of this study, youth's evaluation, as demanders of wider rights and participation at the local level, their evaluation of their LGUs' attempts to involve them was low. Only 17% evaluated the role of their LGU as "Good" in relevant fields.

Comparison between youth organizations’ and LGUs’ opinions may give a clearer picture on LGUs’ role in involving and integrating youth as well as representing their interests and priorities in LGUs’ work. The following table represents disparities among the two stakeholders’ opinions.

Table (9): LGUs and Youth Organizations’ Evaluation of LGUs Role in Involving and Integrating Youth Interests

LGUs’ Role/ Evaluation Percentage	LGUs’ Sample		Youth Organizations’ Sample	
	Good	Medium	Good	Medium
Budget allocations for youth relevant activities and projects	42%	30%	23%	33%
Establishing buildings and headquarters for youth organizations	53%	25%	29%	34%
Holding consultative meetings with the towns’ youth	48%	28%	27%	33%
Organizing activities to introduce youth to LGUs work	39%	29%	20%	25%
Implementing joint activities with youth organizations in the town	62%	24%	39%	34%

It was obvious through youth organizations’ sample that any of LGU’s roles to involve youth or represent their interests in all of LGU’s work did not occupy “good” evaluation percentage and did not exceed 39% in the field of joint activities with youth organizations. However, “good” evaluation percentage was lower as it reached 20% regarding LGU’s organization of activities introducing youth to LGU’s work.

Regarding LGUs’ sample, apart from introductory activities which did not exceed 39%, evaluation of their positive role in involving youth and representing their interests was about 50%. It even exceeded this percent in the field of implementing joint activities with youth organizations to reach 62%, which is a striking percentage as it was the lowest among youth organizations. This means that youth organizations are seeking further joint activities with LGUs while youth organizations believe that implemented activities may be sufficient as an explanation of such disparity.





Section 4: Youth as Agents of Change at the Local Level

4.1 The Concept of Change

Change is a transitional process from one state to another; therefore, initiatives alone are not sufficient enough to establish the envisioned change. Change requires qualitative and/ or quantitative transition. The duality of initiatives and change could indicate the understanding of how change occurs in communities. Initiatives itself cannot be considered as a change in the social space without relating to qualitative and quantitative transition of measurable impacts. Therefore, it should be indicated here that initiatives that lead to change does not necessarily entail one initiative, especially when it is relevant to social change resulting from certain factors all of which lead the change process without necessarily meaning that these entire factors work in the same direction or power.

The concept of change varies by according to the interests of community stakeholders. Social change include re-distribution of power resources as well as control and wealth which means there are two stakeholders or more for changing relationship, one of which loses part of its interests or privileges to the other. In this sense, talking about change and all related scenarios require answers to a set of key questions: what is the required change? Who approves the recommended change? Which category or class or a group of people is more likely to benefit from this change? Which is more damaged? What are the suggested policies to effect this change? Is it possible to create balance or conformity between the interests of the stakeholders concerned in achieving change? What are the various impacts of policies to be adopted to effect the change; that is, are they going to influence politics or economy or culture, or all of them? And what are the mechanisms that should be used to measure the required change?

4.2 Youth's Image toward themselves, Various Organizations and their Relation with Local Level Authorities: Impressions and Practices

Among the important issues of monitoring and analyzing youth's role at local level and their ability to effect the change is the relation between the image they have about themselves and their role on one hand and community institutions view toward youth on the other. The survey's results, generally, reflect a good degree of high self confidence among youth. The majority of youth believe that youth participation is a qualitative addition "significantly" or "to some extent" at the local level. The majority also believe that youth enjoy abilities qualifying them to be LGU members. Focus on this issue and asking questions related to the respondent him/herself, not to all youth, show that when we talk about individual respondent and his/her confidence in his/her abilities and self-readiness to participate, levels of such confidence decline or retreat in one way or another. We present below the most important results this study concluded in this regard.

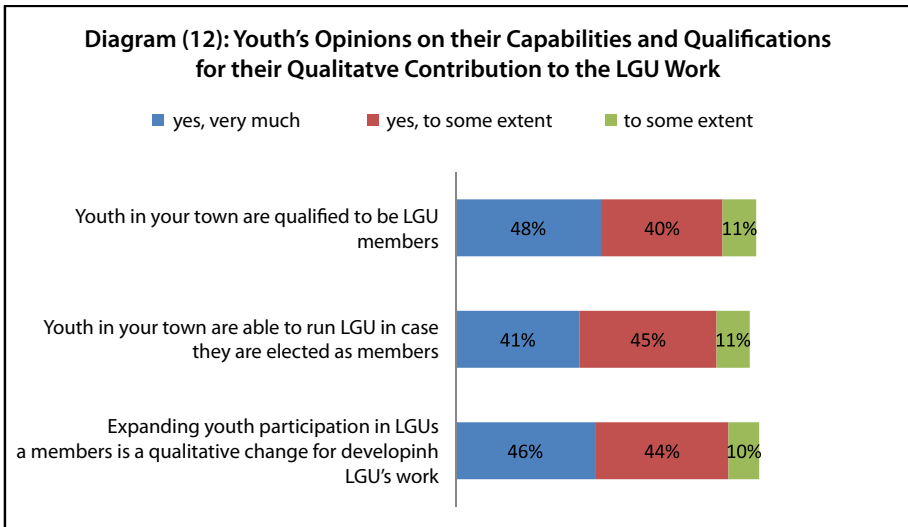



Diagram (12) shows that youth's image of themselves, the degree of their qualification for LGUs' membership, ability to run those LGUs and the qualitative change their participation could achieve are to a high extent similar and homogeneous. 48% of respondents expressed their support "to high extent" to the idea that youth "in the area to which they belong" have the required qualifications to be LGU members. 41% and 46%, respectively, support "to high extent" the idea that youth in the areas to which they belong are able to run LGUs in case they are elected as members and that expanding youth participation in LGUs as members is a qualitative change to develop LGUs' work. In the same context, other close percentages (range between 40-45%) support these three expressions or ideas but "to some extent". In other words, the sweeping majority of youth respondents (more that 85%) agreed with these three expressions either "to high extent" or "to some extent" while a limited youth minority (not exceeding 11%) expressed their objection. Briefly, youth's view toward their qualification to LGUs' membership, ability to run them and the social change their participation in LGU's work could effect is, to high extent, positive.

It is also striking that youth organizations and LGUs' evaluation of youth's qualifications to be surprisingly, members of LGUs think more highly of youth than youth themselves. 77% believe this in youth organizations' sample and 60% in LGUs' sample compared to only 48% of youth respondents who agree with this expression "to high extent". Moreover, the percentage of those who believe youth participation would make qualitative change in LGU's work was higher in both youth organizations and LGUs' samples than youth themselves. It was 60% in the first, 52% in the second while it was 46% by youth themselves.

Another result requiring focus was reflected in the 26% of LGUs respondents' sample who to high extent trust youth's ability to run LGUs if they are elected as members.



This result means high evaluation by LGUs' members of youth qualifications to be members of these LGUs, but not followed by a belief in their ability to run them.

Framework (11): Youth Interest in LGUs' Work Development

Visions of youth organizations, LGUs and youth themselves are much different regarding youth's interest in developing LGUs' work. 29% of youth organizations' representatives, 22% of LGUs' members believe youth are "to high extent" interested in developing LGUs' work compared to 60% of the two samples who believe youth are "to some extent" interested in this issue. 28% of youth themselves believe that youth in their areas are "to high extent" interested in paying efforts to develop LGUs work compared to 52% who believe that youth's interest in this issue is "to high extent" acceptable while other 20% believe the degree of interest is either weak or null. Most respondents of the three samples believe youth are either "to high extent" (about one quarter of respondents) or "to some extent" (about half of respondents) interested in LGUs work while only a minority of the three samples (does not exceed 28%) believe the degree of youth's interest in developing LGUs work is either weak or null.

As mentioned above, positive ratios start declining as soon as the questions begin to focus on specific forms or practices of influence. 75% of youth believe their ability to restrict or relief familial or clan disputes is between good and medium while such percent declines to 57% in terms of ability to restrict partisan and factional disputes at local level.

Framework (12): Youth Ability to Contribute to Familial and Factional Dispute Resolution

It is striking that youth organizations have higher evaluation of youth than youth themselves in terms of the latter's ability to contribute to familial or factional dispute resolution. Evaluation degree was (good and medium) on youth's ability to resolve familial disputes as it was 82% while a factional dispute was 67%. Evaluation percentage of LGUs sample was closer to youth self-evaluation regarding the two mentioned issues as evaluation percentage was 70% and 65% respectively.

It was also noted that these "positive" trends and rates are declining and retreating as long as questions presented to youth are tangible, limited and of individual nature. When youth respondents were asked about their personal readiness and willingness to effectively participate in LGUs work, answers were as follows:

- 21% of youth respondents are willing to be members of their LGUs compared to 72% who do not have such will.
- 32% of youth believe they are qualified for LGUs membership compared to 57% who believe otherwise.

- 19% of females expressed their willingness to be members of their LGUs, which is a close percentage to males' answers (23%). However, females who believe they are qualified for LGUs membership are much less than males, as females percentage was 25% while males' was 39%.

Framework (13): I am Willing to become an LGU Member... I Believe I am Qualified for it

Rates regarding the two questions relevant to youth's interest in becoming LGU members, as well as their belief in their qualifications for such membership varied based on certain variables:

- Percentage of those who expressed willingness to become LGU members was higher among youth of younger age category (18-24). This percentage was 24% compared to 18% for older ones.
- The percentage of those willing to become LGU members was gradually higher based on educational level. The minimum percentage started at 15% for those who are less educated (less than 9 years of education) and went up to 29% for BA holders. The percentage of belief in possessing qualifications for membership was higher among youth with higher educational levels.
- The percentage of those willing to become LGU members was 25% in villages which was much higher than the percentage in cities where it did not exceed 14%. 38% of youth in villages also believe they possess qualifications for LGU membership compared to 23% in cities.
- The percentage of those willing to become LGUs members was higher among the employed (compared to the unemployed), those of higher income as well as employees of Non-Governmental Organizations and Governmental sectors (compared to the private sector).

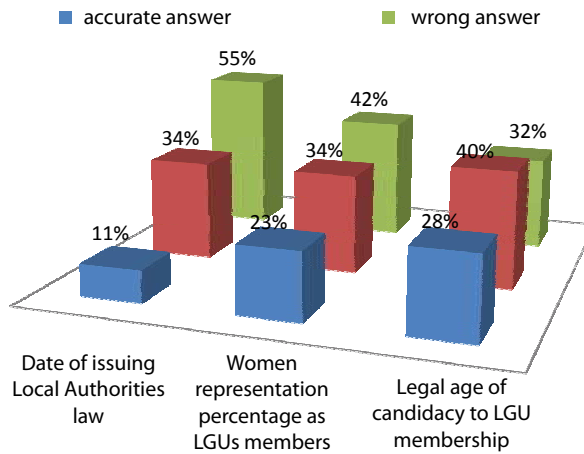
4.3 Levels of Knowledge among Youth regarding Palestinian LGUs Related Laws

Only 7% of youth declared they have knowledge on LGUs- related laws and functions, 37% said their knowledge is limited while 56% said they do not have such knowledge. As diagram (13) indicates, when youth have been asked about certain articles in Local Authorities Law and Election Law, only 11% provided accurate answers regarding date of issuing Local Authorities Law, 23% provided accurate answers regarding percentage of women representation "quota" in LGUs' membership while 28% provided accurate answers regarding candidacy age to these LGUs in accordance with these laws.

Regarding knowledge of LGUs-related laws, according to sex and age, data show that young men have more knowledge on these laws than young women. While

16% of males provided accurate answers on the date of issuing Local Authorities Law, accurate answers among females did not exceed 7%. Moreover, 29% of males provided accurate answers on the percentage of women representation in LGUs compared to 17% among females. Finally, 35% of males provided accurate answers on candidate's age to LGUs membership compared to 23% of females. It was also noted that youth's knowledge of LGUs-related laws and the percentage of their accurate answers on specific laws was higher among higher age groups.

Diagram (13): Youth's Knowledge of LGU;s - Related Laws



Framework (14): Knowledge of LGUs-Related Laws

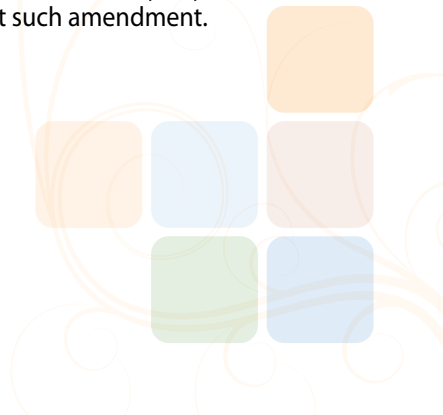
Low knowledge of LGUs-related laws is not limited to youth only, but it applies to youth organizations due to the experience they acquired through their work. 40% of organizations respondents' sample said they have sufficient knowledge on LGUs- related laws while 43% said they have limited knowledge. When certain questions have been asked, 24% of them provided accurate answers on the date of issuing Local Authorities Law, 57% provided accurate answers on women representation in LGUs' membership while 63% provided accurate answers on the age of candidacy to LGUs

4.3.1 Youth Opinions toward Amending Palestinian LGUs Laws

Opinions and calls to amend Local Authorities Laws appear every now and then in order to enhance youth participation and role in LGUs work, such as calling for reducing voters and candidates' age stated in the applied law to 18 and 25 year old respectively. The study attempted to explore youth's opinion on such proposed

amendments through asking them about this issue. Generally, and as indicated in diagram (14), the results presented below were not homogeneous toward all issues under discussion. While the majority of respondents support allocating a quota for youth in LGUs, forming youth-based electoral bloc and nominating women for LGUs membership and presidency. Only a minority support changing the legal age of nomination and voting. Respondents were also divided toward voting to a young candidate (less than 35 year old) as LGU Chairman:

- **Youth Quota:** a sweeping youth majority expressed their support to allocate a percentage of seats for youth in LGUs. The percentage of supporting this option was 96% (63% expressed their “strong” approval). The percent of supporting youth quota was higher among young men compared to young women as it was 66% against 59%.
- **Formation of Youth Electoral Bloc:** a majority of youth has expressed “full” support of this idea and 18% said they support it “to some extent”. On the other hand, 87% said they will support such bloc while 8% will not. Percentages of males and females in terms of supporting this idea were close (with three percent more among males).
- **Voting for a Young Candidate (less than 35 year old) as an LGU Chairman:** 44% of youth said they will vote to a young candidate as an LGU chairman, 35% said they will not while 21% said they are unsure about their position in this regard.
- **Supporting Young Women as LGU Members or Chairwomen:** 72% of youth expressed their support for nominating women for LGUs membership while 23% rejected this issue. The percentage of supporting females for LGUs membership was higher among young women as it was 78% compared to 67% among young men. On the other hand, the percentage of supporting females heading electoral blocs was declined to 58% (14 percent less than supporting females as members) while one third of youth respondents did not support an electoral bloc headed by a female.
- **Amendment of Candidate’s Legal Age (Existing Law: 25 year old):** 35% of youth support amending legal age of nomination compared to 58% who did not see a need to amend this item of Local Elections Law.
- **Decreasing Voting Age (right to vote) from 18 to 16 year old:** only 20% of youth supported such amendment against 69% who rejected it. It should be noted here that the percentage of those who support the idea of decreasing voting age among youth organizations’ sample was equal to the percentage among youth at 20%. Therefore, it can be concluded that a minority of youth and their organizations, about only one fifth, support such amendment.



Framework (15): Women and Youth Representation in LGUs

Younger youth expressed more liberal and enthusiastic opinions to some extent toward women and youth representation in LGUs compared to older youth:

- The percentage of youth supporting the quota system was higher among younger youth category (18-24) reaching 69%, against 59% of youth category aged (25-35).
- The percentage of supporting the formation of youth bloc was close among various youth age categories. 90% of (18-24) age category said they are ready to support this bloc against 83% of older age categories.
- The percentage of youth support to nominate young women for LGUs membership rises among youth of lower age category reaching 77% for youth (18-24) 73% among for youth (25-29) and 65% among (30-35) age category.

Diagram (14): Youth's LGU and Youth Organizations' Positions in Supporting Certain Issue

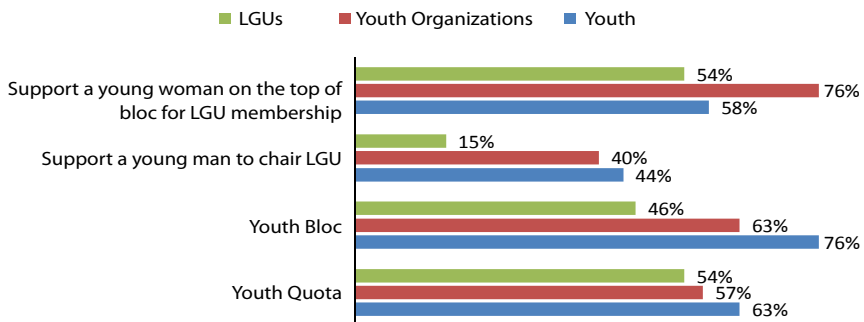


Diagram (14) also presents a clear comparison between the three respondent positions (youth, youth organizations and LGUs) on the issues above discussed. Respondents' positions toward the idea of supporting a bloc headed by a female were varied. The percentage of this idea's supporters among youth organizations was 76% against 58% and 54% among youth and LGUs respectively. Supporting this idea was the highest among youth organizations while it was close among youth organizations and youth.

Regarding the formation of youth bloc, supporting this idea was the highest among youth (76%) followed by youth organizations (63%) while it was (46%) among LGUs. The percent of supporting a young man to chair LGU was (44% and 40% respectively) among youth organizations and youth while supporting the idea among LGUs' members was much lower as it was only 15%. Regarding the fourth issue (supporting youth quota), the opinion of LGU members was in agreement with their relatively conservative opinion toward the other three issues. While 63% of youth support the idea of youth quota, its support among youth organizations was 57% and 54% among LGUs.

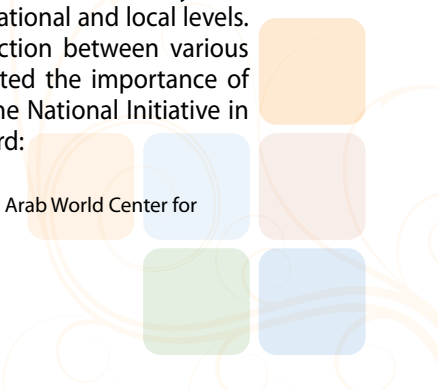
4.4 Youth Initiatives: Seeking New Means


Due to the current technology advancements and the decrease of youth confidence in traditional organizations⁴ especially political parties, governmental organizations to some extent as well as NGOs by a lower degree, new forms of youth engagement appeared using new mechanisms in order to expand their independency. Because major issues at the national level are considered as priority issues among youth, social groups have been formed through internet. These groups have worked on youth advocacy and mobilization to raise internal issues, namely, the current political division. 83% of youth evaluate the role of youth movements as very important or to some extent important. Other 50% of youth believe these groups have a real ability to make concrete change on the ground while 35% of youth consider this phenomena as “temporary and will disappear soon”. Although these groups focus their action on general national issues, there is a majority of youth organizations respondents reaching 73% (38% to “high extent” while 35% to “some extent”) believe these youth groups are expected to assume tasks and initiatives that may play an important role at the local level and promote youth participation in local governance.

It is worthy to mention that 9% of youth said they used the internet or modern communication means to communicate with their LGU. The percent of males who said so was 12% among males against 5% of females. Other 10% said they joined social internet groups to call for developing their locality’s LGU. Young men seem more active than young women in social groups relevant to LGUs work. The percentage of male participation in social groups was 15%, which is a three-fold percentage than females. 67% of youth organizations’ sample said these modern communication and influential technologies are “very important” while 25% said they are “important”. These opinions may reflect positive approach by youth organizations toward these modern means to activate youth participation, especially in local governance. It is natural that youth initiatives at the local level are not restricted to mobilizations and social networking. There were practical initiatives implemented by youth such as visiting LGUs, attending meetings and contacting LGU members to influence LGU-related affairs. 21% of youth said they implemented such activities and 17% were part of a youth group that implemented activities to influence LGU’s work over the last year. These percentages were significantly doubled among youth organizations staff. 77% of youth organizations respondents’ sample said they implemented a real initiative to influence LGU’s work (compared to 21% of youth’s sample). 66% of youth organizations respondents’ sample said they were part of local youth groups that have implemented similar activities. Possibly, this is indicative of youth organizations’ noticeable role in urging and mobilizing youth to influence LGU-related affairs.

Youth initiatives have played significant role in promoting positive community view of youth’s role and their relation to their community at the national and local levels. These initiatives have also created a state of active interaction between various social segments on various issues. They have also highlighted the importance of youth mobilization and collective work. Representative of the National Initiative in Bethlehem, who is responsible for youth file, says in this regard:

⁴ Based on the results of various opinion polls. See opinion polls issued by Arab World Center for Research and Development (AWRAD) on their Website (www.awrad.org).





«Youth initiatives have led to the enhancement of organizing youth through joint teamwork, gave the community a positive impression and enhanced community communication. A youth group in Bethlehem, of which some members were independent while the others belongs to factional bodies or NGOs, has worked on important initiatives such as supporting Student fund, Palestinian Youth Parliament, awareness campaigns to raise awareness on early marriage, land cultivation and protecting lands threatened by settlement. Some groups have prepared development projects to provide job opportunities for youth through implementing small businesses and operating cooperatives for youth.»

Referring to the results of this study, the majority of the youth sample (59%) reported that an independent youth group had been working independently to become influential at the local level. This is followed by the role of local NGOs (27%), then youth organizations working at the national level and international organizations (6% each). As part of youth activities to make influence/change in LGUs work in their areas, 41% of youth stated that they heard about meetings between youth and youth organizations on the one hand, and LGUs in their areas on the other hand. Among these meeting attendees, 40% are youth (i.e. 16% of the total sample). It seems that interaction with LGU in different areas is male predominated due to prevailing culture as their percentage of attendance was 49% compared to 28% among females. The evaluation of youth who attended these meetings was generally satisfactory since the majority (65%) considered these meetings meaningful and influential on LGU's programs and work compared to 26% who considered them formal and useless.

In order to highlight the importance of youth organizations' role, 73% of respondents from these youth organizations' sample said they have heard about meetings held with LGUs. 86% of those respondents said they have attended these meetings, which is a higher percentage than the youth sample. Regarding usefulness of such meetings, there was convergence between youth and youth organizations' samples as 62% of youth organizations' sample believe that meetings with LGU are «useful» compared to 32% who considered it as «formal and useless.»

4.5 Evaluation of Youth's Role in Bringing About Change: Views of Various Stakeholders

There was no controversy in principle among the stakeholders regarding the importance of youth participation, but controversy revolved around youth and youth organizations' ability to bring about change and distributing roles and responsibilities to do so.

Framework (16): Target Groups' Views on Youth Role in Bringing About Change

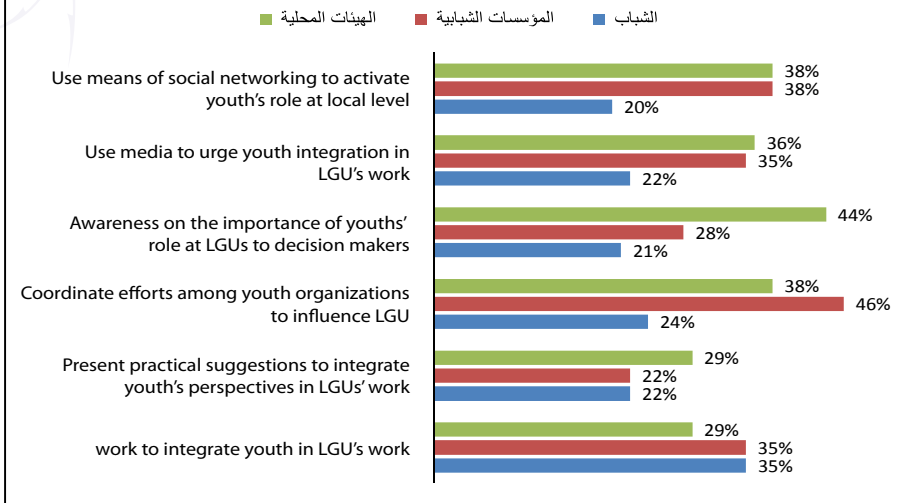
Frankly, we, the youth, and youth organizations, are divided and each one works based on his/her interests as well as his/her family and political party's interests. Without agreement among youth on what their needs are, nothing will change (a young man, 27 year old, Qalqilya area).

- Youth do not care, they want rights to everything, but they do not want to meet their duties. Where are youth today and why don't they take initiatives to change the situation if they are not satisfied (LGU's representative, 55 year old, Nablus area).
- Sure youth have great ability, they are definitely able to make change and they are willing to work voluntarily in their community, but they need support from ministries and organizations (Young woman, 22 year old, Bethlehem area).
- Youth are going to participate in elections and change the existing situation. We want to vote and run elections, but we want training and awareness on how to make change (young man, 19 year old, Salfit area).
- Youth always take initiatives and try to make change. We tried to establish a YSLC in the town, but the LGU and elders have rejected it (Representative of youth organization, 29 year old, Nablus area).

In this regard, survey's results have shown, as expressed in diagram (15), that there are differences between groups covered by the study (youth, youth organizations, LGUs) in terms of evaluating the extent of success in using specific mechanisms and activities to integrate youth and bring about the required change. The (good) evaluation of youth themselves was the lowest compared to the other two groups. Percentage of youth who expressed "good" evaluation in all the above-mentioned fields did not exceed a quarter, except on «using social networking means to activate the role of youth at the local level» as the percentage of "good" evaluation was 35%. This may indicate that the new trends of advocacy, mobilization and organization have started making their way among youth strongly.

Youth organizations' evaluation, in general, was more positive and optimistic than youth's evaluation. The highest «good» evaluation was by youth organizations' sample, specifically with regard to LGUs decision makers' awareness on the importance of youth's role in LGUs, as the percent was 46% which is consistent with some roles played by youth organizations in the field of pressure and advocacy. In contrast, the lowest percentage of «good» evaluation at this level was on the use of «media to push youth integration in LGUs' work» which was 22%. Here, a noticeable paradox should be addressed; it is apparent in advocacy and support. Since it is one of the most important activities emphasized by youth organizations, it necessarily requires active use of media, which has not been sufficiently emphasized by these organizations. This means there is a gap between advocacy activities on the one hand, and the means required to intensify and strengthen these activities to reach the largest youth segment on the other hand in order to convey their voices to decision makers and concerned stakeholders.

Diagram (15): Youth, Youth Organizations and LGUs' "Positive" Evaluation of the Contribution of Certain Means and Mechanisms to Change



Results of LGUs' sample were higher than the youth's sample in terms of "good" evaluation in some of the above-mentioned fields. Results were higher in the fields of coordination efforts between youth organizations to influence LGUs as well as using media, while the results of the two samples were convergent in the field of integration and providing practical suggestions for integrating youth's visions. However, youth organizations' "good" evaluation percentage was higher compared to LGUs in the field of using media and means of social communication.

One of the most important determinants of change is the evaluation of change by stakeholders. The assumed stakeholder in this regard is youth for their current position in terms of influencing LGU's decisions and estimating the available possibilities and required means of change. 12% of youth stated they have the ability to influence LGU's decisions in their area, 27% stated they have a limited influence, but the majority (61%) stated they have no ability to influence LGU's decisions.

Framework (17): Required Means for Change

The study revealed several key issues that youth considered require discussion, evaluation and review, including: law, discriminatory perspective against youth, poor coordination between relevant institutions, and absence of work mechanisms that complement the current technological advancements, as well as the extent to which LGUs represent the general population. The following is a record of some views expressed by youth towards these issues:

- Certainly law discriminates against youth as if young people do not understand anything. What is the problem in changing the law? Why voting and nomination age is not lower? And why don't youth have a quota in LGUs? (Representative of youth organization, 26 years old, Hebron area).
- We have no problem; we want to coordinate and unite efforts with youth organizations. Even concerned PA organizations do not coordinate with each other (LGU's representative, 44 years old, Tulkarm area).
- LGUs, especially in villages, do not have any modern means to communicate with youth, but some LGUs have a web page. Why don't we use Internet and Facebook groups to inform the public about what we are doing and ask for their opinions (Young woman, 23 years old, Ramallah area).
- The problem is that the LGU in our town is doing nothing; may be it does not have capabilities, but when LGU's Chairman works, he works for his family and the street next to his house (Young man, 21 years old, Qalqiliya area).

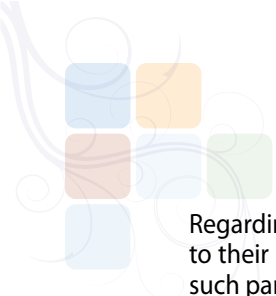
Section 5: Toward Activating the Role of Youth at the Local Level: Challenges and Opportunities

This part provides an analysis of the challenges facing youth and the available opportunities to achieve better integration for them, their interests and perspectives in all fields of local governance. It also provides specific recommendations towards promoting participation, belonging and role distribution.

5.1 Political and Social Structure: Culture, Family and the Political Party

33% of young people believe that social structure with its familial and tribal dimensions restricts youth participation at the local level; other 22% believe that prevailing parental community culture is an obstacle to such participation. The percentage of females who believe that community culture is an obstacle to their participation was 26% compared to 19% among males.





Regarding political and factional considerations, 19% of youth believe it is an obstacle to their participation in LGUs while 12% and 11% of youth attribute the difficulty of such participation to the “complications” in LGUs functions and Election Law.

LGUs Respondents’ sample corresponds with the youth’s sample regarding the general framework of obstacles facing their effective engagement in LGUs, with varied percentages. The percentage of those who consider the dominant culture as a barrier to youth participation is higher compared to the lower percentage of those who believed that family structure and political considerations were the main obstacles. Youth organizations’ opinions seem closer to the opinion of youth in terms of their understanding of the role of different factors in restraining youth participation at the local level.

Although one third of youth see familial and tribal structures as an obstacle to their participation in LGUs, 26% of them believe that families positively support youth participation, 40% as medium while 27% as negative (i.e., a restraining, not a supporting factor). LGUs sample respondents also agree with these percentages with slight variations.

5.2 Laws, Policies and Institutional Practices

As mentioned above, the complexity of LGUs functions was considered an obstacle to youth participation in LGUs according to 11% of youth who participated in the survey; other 12% consider the Election Law as an obstacle to their participation. This raises some concerns regarding the sensitivity of various laws and legislations towards various community groups and sectors.

As such, it is necessary to re-think, in depth, the meaning of having laws/legislations, or even texts in the Basic Law or other various laws and legislations related to youth as a social segment. The Basic Law is the law from which the rest of laws are derived. It should be in conformity with its provisions, identification of the political system as well as its formulation of political, economic, social, cultural philosophy. A set of Basic Law articles have indirectly addressed the most important youth rights represented in the right to housing, education and employment, as well as the right to freedom of assembly, expression and opinion.

In other words, many of the Basic Law stipulations target youth more than other citizens on the one hand. On the other hand, the Basic Law or other legislation, are not supposed to deal with citizens as separate segments or sectors, but must take into account the sensitivity of the laws to certain groups/categories of citizens (such as youth, women, and people with special needs ...), especially when it comes to inter-sector legislations. For further clarification, legislations on employment and education actually affect youth as they affect others. It is better not to develop separate legislations regarding education and youth, education and women, rather, all legislations and legal provisions (policies and strategies emerging from them) should take into account the interests, needs and variables relevant to various segments of citizens. Therefore, the required legal change is not related to developing legal materials on the youth segment, but laws should reflect the diverse interests of various community groups, including youth⁵.

⁵ Dr. Nader Said, “Overview on Integrating Youth in Human Development”, Birzeit Development Study Center, 2004-2005.

5.3 Integration of Youth's Role: from a Local to a National Role

Integrating youth and activating their role at the local level is the responsibility of a number of organizations. For example, it is the responsibility of the LGU, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) as the key governmental body responsible for the entire sector, in addition to the Ministry of Youth and Sports as the governmental body responsible for developing strategies for the entire youth sector in its intersections with other different sectors and fields of interest. Furthermore, the responsibility falls upon other non-governmental organizations, local organizations as well as the ones working at the national level.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has received the highest percentage among youth who considered its work sufficient in building qualified youth leadership to play positive roles in LGU. This was evident through youth's responses through five options including (Yes to a large extent, yes to some extent, no to a large extent, no to some extent and not sure), the. The percentage of youth who chose the option "Yes, to a large extent" reached 22%, followed by youth organizations at the national level (18%), youth organizations in each area (15%), while the percentage for each of the MoLG and LGU in the area did not exceed 10% and 9% respectively.

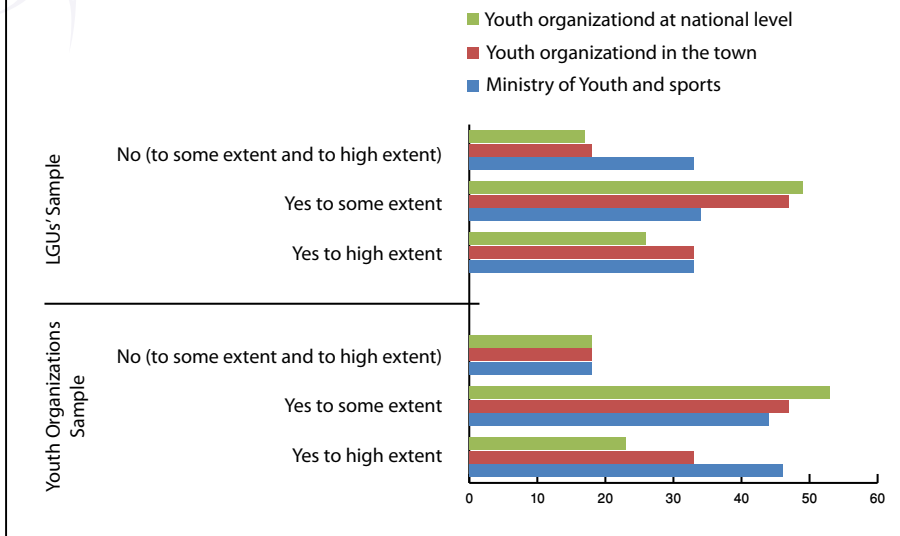
Youth organizations gave a high evaluation rate for all institutions excluding MoLG, as the percentage only reached 9% among respondents who believed that those organization play an important role in enhancing the capacities of youth as well as preparing them in playing an active role in the LGU. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has also achieved a high percentage reaching to 36%, followed by youth organizations in local areas at 33%, youth organizations at the national level 24%, while LGUs received 22%.

Finally, LGUs sample evaluation was higher or slightly more positive than youth organizations sample evaluation of the aforementioned organizations' role in promoting youth's role in local governance. There was also a significant increase in LGU's role evaluation and the MoLG as percentages were as follows: the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as youth organizations in local areas were 33% each, followed by the LGU at 28%, youth institutions at the national level at 26%, and finally the MoLG at 18%.

The following diagram presents an essential outlook on how the three samples evaluated the role of these organizations in enhancing the role of youth as well as preparing them to undertake positive roles within their respective LGUs.



Diagram (16): Youth, Youth Organizations and LGUs' "Positive" Evaluation of Certain Organizations' Role in Youth Rehabilitation to Play Positive Roles in LGUs



5.3.1 Youth Belonging to the Local Context: Key Indicators

Belonging to the local community, an issue with many intricacies is one of the most important pillars of integrating youth participation at the local level. The general trend regarding the level of belonging to the local context does not necessarily lead to the actual expression of this belonging, especially since there are indications of high percentage of willingness among youth to immigrate abroad to search for jobs or stability. The phenomenon of internal movement/migration from villages to cities in the Palestinian territories, where job opportunities are resolute, is also on the rise. Young men and women in one of the focus groups have voiced some reasons that could lead to low percentage of belonging to the local context although its current status may change as indicated by the survey.. The following was reported:

"There is a lack of community interest in youth, family pressure, high unemployment in the community, high cost of living, community negative culture towards youth as well as the absence of many services add to that, pressures imposed by the Israeli Occupation."

In terms of trends and attitudes, the majority of youth expressed belonging to their community, either in full (67%) or to some extent (26%). At the same time, 51% said they are doing their duty towards their local community while 37% said they do so to some extent. The picture seems relatively different for youth when they were asked if local organizations meet their obligation towards them. 23% of youth said local organizations are meeting their obligations towards them, 41% agree with their positions to some extent while a slightly higher percentage than one third (36%) said LGUs are not meeting their obligations towards them.

Framework (18): Youth Belonging to the Local Context: Economic Conditions - A Negative Factor

Data confirmed youth's weak belonging to the local context based on the economic situation. By examining various variables, it was found that more than two groups have expressed weak degree of belonging to the local context. These categories were those of the lowest income and unemployed.

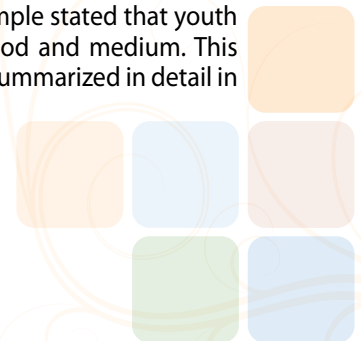
5.4 Future Trends for Change

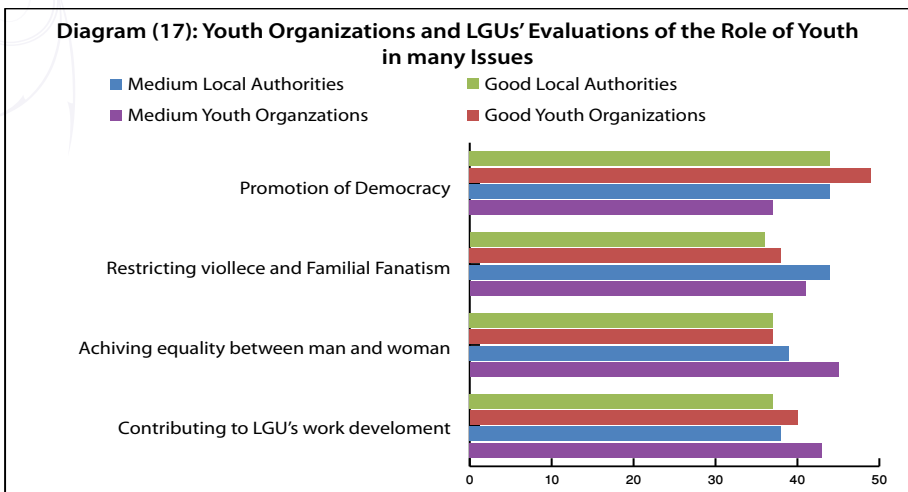
The needed change cannot be understood independently from its general context, in which various community and youth issues and priorities interrelate. The majority of youth at the internal local level (56%) believe the main priority is related to providing employment opportunities. Then youth suggest other issues such as democracy, public freedoms, educational system and domestic political affairs as well as the local context. This means that the local participation level, away from quantitative data indicators, is to some extent, one of the suggested priorities even if it is not as important as other issues. However, there is awareness that the value of youth participation at the local level is subject to other limitations relevant to the general Palestinian context.

Here, it is important here to address the gap between social attitudes and social practices since some attitudes and general trends appear positive and carry signs of change since attitudes are an essential lever of change as practice on the ground. However, solid structures hampering change and the existent "separation" state between theory and practice, especially in a community undergoing a transitional phase (like Palestinian community). In such a situation, cultural forms are not been formulated due to weakness of institutional incubators, which results in some percentages provided by survey data being not reflective of concise data as they are mixed with reality evaluations, wishes, actual trends and aspirations.

For example, regarding the way youth organizations and LGUs view youth contribution to achieving positive change in certain fields; the study concluded that there is a large majority that believes youth play an active or medium role in contributing to change. However, actual practices, "not limited to youth organizations and LGUs, but also include the general context of all their actors", do not indicate that there is an enabling environment for youth allowing them to contribute effectively to lead the change and determine its destination. Here, we present specific examples concluded by survey data:

A percent ranges between 80-87% of youth organizations' sample stated that youth contribute to positive change in a way ranging between good and medium. This percentage rises up to "90%" in LGUs' sample. These fields are summarized in detail in the following diagram:





5.4.1 Means of Promoting Youth Participation at the Local Level: Views of Various Stakeholders


Table (9) below indicates a convergence in views of the three main groups covered by the study; youth, youth organizations and LGUs, in terms of their evaluation of certain tools to enhance youth participation at the local level, specifically through LGUs, with some disparities in the degree of importance of each tool. For example, youth organizations consider laws amendment pertaining to the incorporation of youth participation, as the most important tool. LGUs consider it as less important than other issues, but they consider community dialogue at the local level to support youth participation as the most important. Youth, themselves, gave equal importance to various tools.

Table (10): Promoting Youth Participation at the Local Level

	Youth	Youth Organizations	LGUs
Training provided for youth by youth on lobbying, advocacy and mobilization campaigns	83%	86%	91%
Incorporating legal amendments to ensure youth participation	83%	89%	75%
Community awareness and lobbying campaigns on political and familial bodies to ensure youth representation	83%	80%	87%
Conducting community dialogue to support youth participation at the local level	81%	88%	94%

5.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- The results of this study confirm that the success of promoting youth participation at the local level, especially in LGUs' work, is subject to the extent MoLG's success in implementing its strategic vision for the local government sector. Particularly, the two components related to development and enhancing citizens' representation and participation. Poor youth participation at both local and national levels is part of a general weakness in practicing democracy and the exclusion of wide social segments from action and decision-making bodies.
- The developmental perspective of local governance, lest other policies, projects and programs, should be based on recognizing subsidiary disparities within the same society. This would lay the foundations for practicing a process that begins by setting priorities and needs of different social segments on the basis of equality, social justice, equitable distribution of resources, wealth, services and targeting. This will necessarily result in considering youth interests and priorities as one of the largest vital and productive social groups.
- The transition from policy-based level of numerous shortcomings to another polity level related to youth requires revisiting various assumptions that have become institutional de facto over a period of time. One of the most important de factors is targeting youth through programs and services that address youth as an isolated segment from its community context and all its cultural, economic and political interactions. The idea of integration or inclusion here seems as the basis of starting a new perspective dealing with youth as part of their community and as a changing sector. Youth are not a fixed community segment (like women, for example), but people enter or exit this segment according to age, which means that integration here is based on communication between generations as well as developmental and institutional sustainability.
- Another issue also requires revision represented in dealing with youth as one body, without taking into account the surrounding differences and contexts. The study pointed out earlier that youth vary according to their existing disparities and contexts, therefore, gender, age category within the wider youth sector, the level of education, place of residence as well as business status should be taken into account.
- Developmental perspective sets basis for the local government and youth while taking into consideration the disparities among this wide social sector. This perspective allows for further understanding of youth representation based on integrating their interests and priorities in institutional structures as well as interpreting them in policies and programs. This should be implemented in parallel with an an increased level of youth representation in different organizations, which necessarily entails increasing the capacity of institutional structures to accommodate more youth expertise and energies in decision-making positions.
- Promoting youth representation is not restricted to the development of institutional structures, but existing legal systems require reform in a way that ensures fair representation of different community groups and sectors. In

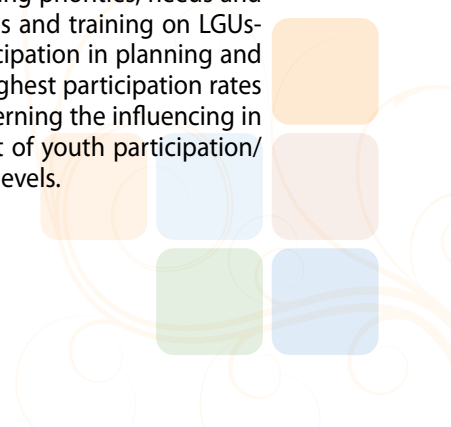


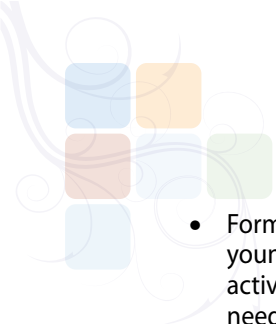
parallel, there is a need to promote community awareness on the importance of youth representation, their belief in youth capabilities as well as enhancing the capacity of youth themselves particularly the fields of legal awareness, teamwork, and lobbying and advocacy campaigns and decision making. The issue of representation, here, seems to be interrelated and cumulative. It starts with youth representation at the lowest institutional levels as well as simple project activities, ending with representation in advanced activities, i.e., starting from the needs identification phase, , planning, implementation, control, supervision and effective participation in decision-making.

- The YSLC's experience, despite its modernity, is considered a model capable of supporting youth representation and participation at the local level, after it's been tested and evaluated scientifically. They constitute a space for youth participation in LGUs' work, provided that it does not result in isolating them from LGUs as a representative body of the interests of various categories of citizens. This means that YSLCs should assume complementary functions or perhaps parallel to LGUs' functions in an integrated manner while continue working on ensuring broader youth representation in LGUs themselves.
- It is essential to ensure active youth involvement as citizens in the development of programs, policies, decision-making and assuming senior leading positions at official and unofficial levels as well as integrating their perspective in all community operations: economic, social, political and cultural. To safeguard their participation, youth must have full right to possess and access information, influence and control on the results of community operations through their organized work as well as their role in planning, control and impact measurement. Youth participation does not only contribute to the success of programs and plans, but also encourages sense of identity, ensures social communication and interaction and develops a sense of responsibility and belonging.
- Youth membership of various organizations is one of the most important determinants of their active participation, as such organizations can be considered as an expressive broker and body of their affiliates' interests, desires and aspirations. These organizations are also a mechanism and organized means of expression channels for different social groups; it is also considered as one of the most important inputs to policy-making in any democratic political system. This explains the need and importance to encourage youth to participate in such organizations. This process remains limited, if not accompanied by institutional structures reform in order to strengthen internal democratic practice and undertake a clear and influential role in policy making at local and national levels.

Framework (19): Recommendations of Focus Groups and In-Depth Interviews Participants organized by «AWRAD»

- Youth integration and participation process in all LGUs activity levels is still in its infancy stages and requires joint efforts among governmental, non-governmental, local and international organizations, to achieve the desired development.
 - The importance of integrating youth's present and future views and interests in local governance through the expansion LGUs activities from service-provision to comprehensive and sustainable development.
 - The importance of awareness and dissemination of knowledge on the significance of youth's role among both youth themselves and the community and its organizations. This will ensure youth's knowledge of different laws particularly ones related to LGUs.
 - The importance of developing youth skills in the fields of local governance and LGUs, advocacy and lobbying campaigns.
 - Development of LGUs' work by obtaining and using modern technology like the Internet to promote communication with the new generations.
 - Applying practical models to fully integrate youth in LGUs' work as well as disseminating the current experience following proper scientific testing.
 - Training of LGU members on work methods with youth and mechanisms of their integration in LGUs' work.
 - Using media in raising awareness on youth's rights and their relationship to LGUs' work.
 - Accelerate holding local elections while ensuring families and parties support in electoral blocs.
 - Promoting youth belonging by ensuring the provision of proper education for them as well as proper places (organizations and clubs) to express their talents and creative energies.
 - Evaluating and disseminating YSLCs experience with emphasis on the importance of youth representation not only in YSLCs, but also in LGUs.
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- Youth participation at the local level takes many forms that can be summarized as follows: first, activities and events related to identifying priorities, needs and demands; second, activities related to raising awareness and training on LGUs-related topics; third, voluntary campaigns; fourth, participation in planning and finally participation in implementation. However, the highest participation rates are associated with the lowest participation levels concerning the influencing in decision-making. This indicates an inadequate concept of youth participation/involvement in LGUs' work concentrating it in the lower levels.



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- Forms of youth participation vary by sex, so that there is a tendency to give young men a broader role (despite its limitations) than young women in various activities associated with LGUs' work. On the other hand, the study shows youth's need for capacity building in fields such as planning, project implementation and improved expertise in the overseeing public institutions, which require integrity and transparency-based standard procedures as well as flexible channels for citizens, especially youth, to access information.
 - Despite youth organizations' awareness of the importance of LGUs' work at the local level, particularly LGUs' functions and different work aspects, and despite the relatively high rates of their participation in local activities carried out by LGUs and initiatives launched by youth organizations themselves through development of projects and activities at local level, the influence scope is still limited and restricted due to limited resources and narrow youth base participating in these organizations and activities. In addition, the influence of these organizations passes through channel of coordination and integration with LGU, which is still below the required level.
 - Although the results revealed in this study reflected relatively good rates of youth self-confidence or LGUs' and organizations' confidence in youth, these rates were not reflected sufficiently on the ground. It seems that expressing trends does not necessarily coincide with actual practice, or at best there are certain parties hindering the process of change. This clearly shows that there is some contradiction between respondents' positive attitudes towards their belief in youth and their role in change and what they have considered as a hindering community culture. Sometimes these organizations practically agree with the prevailing culture despite them criticizing it.
 - In this context, the evaluation of family social structure at the local level and the factional structure expressed by the main groups included in the study can be viewed in two dimensions. On the one hand, they constitute, to some extent, an obstacle to youth participation; on the other hand, they represent channels that can be used to activate their participation. This means that dealing with the existing structures socially and politically does not necessarily mean facing them or looking for immediate alternatives, but they can be invested, reformed and their destination can be changed towards achieving certain parts of the required and accumulated agenda for change.
 - Promoting youth participation in local governance is not an isolated issue from the general context. This means that the boundaries of youth participation at the local level interact with change at various levels. In other words, political, institutional, economic, legal, social and cultural context impose various determinants on promoting youth participation in general. However, this does not mean that there isn't any potential to penetrate prevailing structures or change them in a gradual cumulative manner, within a comprehensive vision of a responsible active community capable of determining, planning and implementing their priorities. Youth participation in this sense is a first-degree developmental and national need; its key objective is to invest in humans for the sake of humanity.