



Human Resources and
Social Development

The General Policy for Youth Development

A Guiding Policy for Youth Work



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Definitions



Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the following terms and expressions, wherever mentioned herein, shall have the meanings set out below, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. **Policy:** This General Policy for Youth Development
2. **Ministry:** The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD)
3. **Directorate:** The General Directorate for Youth Development
4. **Youth:** Individuals aged between 15 and 39 years old, as defined in the Youth Development Strategy
5. **Youth Development:** A comprehensive approach aimed at empowering youth to actively participate and integrate positively into society
6. **Youth Frameworks:** Formal and informal entities and organizations (such as clubs, forums, etc.) that work with and for youth
7. **Youth Workers:** Individuals who work directly with youth, or within entities whose work impacts youth



02

Foreword



Foreword

Foreword by His Excellency the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

The youth of the Kingdom stand at the very heart of our national ambitions, and investing in them represents one of the most significant commitments pursued by our wise leadership, guided by a clear recognition of their vital role in building the future of the nation and shaping the course of its progress. Youth are the beating heart of society, and they will be the driving force for development and prosperity as we move forward toward realizing Saudi Vision 2030.

To further develop Saudi youth into active and influential contributors across all walks of life, we must ensure an enabling environment that empowers them to fulfill their role and expands their engagement in advancing society, thereby helping them realize their aspirations and ambitions.

It is in this spirit that this Policy has been developed, to support youth and strengthen their meaningful participation in building the nation.



03

Introduction



Introduction

Youth represent the primary driver of innovation and change in modern societies. They play a defining role in shaping the dynamics of society, and are the most capable of adapting to technological and social developments. Youth are characterized by immense creative energy that opens new horizons for progress, and therefore investing in them becomes an imperative to ensure economic growth and social stability. Globally, the age range used to define youth varies across countries. The United Nations notes that its member states adopt differing definitions; for example, Singapore applies a broad range covering individuals aged 15 to 35, while Hong Kong defines youth as those aged 12 to 39. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, youth are considered to be individuals aged between 15 and 34 years. They are an integral part of the Kingdom's vision for the future, and this underscores a clear commitment to strengthening their role in sustainable development and effective participation in policy-making.

Vision 2030 aims to transform the Kingdom into a global hub across various fields, and youth constitute the foundational pillar of these aspirations. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, has affirmed: "You are the nation's investment in the future", which underscores the importance of empowering youth as one of the Kingdom's most vital national resources. His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, stated: "Our foremost and incomparable wealth lies in the ambition of our people—most of whom are youth—who are the pride of our nation and the guarantee of its future". These statements underscore the Kingdom's steadfast leadership commitment to reinforcing the role of youth and supporting them in achieving Vision 2030 targets.

In 2024, the Youth Development Strategy was launched, followed by the establishment of the General Directorate for Youth Development within MHRSD, reflecting the Ministry's commitment to empowering people and society as part of its mission to achieve a prosperous and sustainable future through agile and effective policies and legislation.

This Policy stands as a testament to the Ministry's unwavering dedication to youth, providing the support they need to enable them to drive progress and shape the future. Youth Development is not simply a pillar in Vision 2030, but rather a strategic priority at the heart of our national journey, aimed at empowering young people, expanding their capabilities, and equipping them to meet the challenges of today and the opportunities of tomorrow, locally and globally. These efforts constitute a cornerstone for a cohesive society and a knowledge-based economy founded on innovation. They also contribute to strengthening youth capacity to participate effectively in sustainable development, ensuring the realization of their aspirations alongside the ambitions of the nation.



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Institutional Frameworks for Youth Development

Institutional Frameworks for Youth Development

At the beginning of 2024, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development established the General Directorate for Youth Development, with the aim of strengthening and expanding the opportunities and options available to youth, in a manner that maximizes their interests and capabilities, through:

- Set youth development plans and programs, and measure their impact
- Identify legislation and policies related to youth development
- Raise awareness of youth development topics
- Incentivize relevant sectors to develop youth-focused programs and initiatives aligned with national development objectives, in coordination with relevant entities
- Conduct research and studies on youth development themes and fields

In line with the Directorate's role, the future vision for youth development has been set to: "Ambitious youth driving progress, leading with purpose, and inspiring locally and globally".



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Key Policy Elements



Policy Objectives

This Policy builds on the Youth Development Strategy developed by MHRSD, which positions youth as a driving force capable of generating impact at both local and global levels across multiple fields. The Strategy is structured around a set of core pillars:

- Assigning youth development affairs to a dedicated Directorate, reducing legislative gaps, encouraging the publication of thought leadership and research on youth-related themes, and developing an index to measure the Kingdom's performance
- Supporting youth frameworks (such as youth entities and youth-led initiatives and projects), as well as youth development practitioners, to build a youth ecosystem that is capable and empowered both financially and technologically
- Enhancing youth quality of life through supportive and enabling environments that promote safety, peace, justice, and social cohesion
- Instilling national identity and religious and social values among youth, and strengthening their role by increasing their social and economic engagement
- This Policy focuses on empowering youth and enhancing their effective contribution to national development.
It establishes a clear strategic framework that addresses key challenges and aspirations within the social development sector.
- In particular, this Policy aims to:
 - Define a strategic roadmap for youth development, ensuring alignment with national priorities
 - Unify stakeholders' efforts within the youth development ecosystem to ensure coordination and effectiveness in achieving shared objectives
 - Raise public awareness and reshape perceptions regarding youth challenges and aspirations, in order to provide the support needed and strengthen community participation

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles provide a clear framework in which youth needs, safety, and development are placed at the forefront of priorities. By engaging youth and providing them with a supportive and enabling environment, the Policy seeks to foster a generation capable of making a positive impact on society.

- **Prioritizing youth voices:** Actively engaging with and responding to youth needs and aspirations
- **Ensuring a safe, supportive environment:** Providing reassuring and nurturing spaces that promote youth wellbeing
- **Enabling growth:** Helping youth realize their potential by equipping them with the support and opportunities they need

Policy Focus Areas and Interventions

This Policy serves as a guiding instrument that supports the implementation of youth development areas.

Its interventions are expected to be implemented in coordination with relevant entities, in line with the applicable laws and regulations.

National Belonging and Religious & Social Values

Saudi youth are increasingly exposed to a rich diversity of cultures, which broadens their horizons and deepens their engagement with the world. This cultural diversity also constitutes an opportunity to strengthen their national identity and reinforce religious and social values by connecting youth to their cultural and social roots in a dynamic and renewed way. This approach enables them to preserve national heritage, strengthen social cohesion, and respond with agility to rapid societal change, while remaining firmly anchored in their identity and values.

National Belonging and Saudi Culture

Strengthening national identity and culture among youth in order to preserve heritage, instill a sense of national pride, and reinforce social cohesion. It further safeguards the sustainability of shared values and social unity, and contributes to promoting these values in other societies. This can be achieved through:

- Establishing partnerships to integrate national and cultural education programs into school curricula, including customs, traditions, and folk heritage
- Organizing national and cultural events across the Kingdom
- Launching awareness campaigns on Saudi culture through social media platforms

Religious and Social Values

Instilling religious and social values among youth to raise a generation grounded in ethics and responsibility, with strong roots in its heritage, thereby strengthening loyalty to the nation and social responsibility. This can be achieved through:

- Developing standards for public, private and nonprofit sector institutions relating to promoting religious and social values within their workplace
- Integrating religious and social programs into school curricula
- Equipping families and teachers to enable them to instill these values in youth
- Organizing religious and social events, in partnership with the various relevant entities across the Kingdom
- Launching awareness campaigns on best practices for filling youth's free time with activities that support their personal development

Social Protection and Wellbeing

As youth horizons in the Kingdom expand amid a rapidly evolving digital and social landscape, it becomes essential to strengthen protection mechanisms to ensure a safe and supportive setting. In alignment with Saudi Vision 2030, advancing social wellbeing presents an opportunity to protect youth from abuse, bullying, and misinformation, while also reducing social stigma. This contributes to building a more inclusive and safer society in which youth have the confidence and the ability to engage positively.

Protection from Violence

Creating safe and nurturing environments that contribute to building a more secure society, reducing physical and psychological abuse, and strengthening social resilience. This can be achieved through:

- Developing an effective regulatory framework to protect youth from abuse, building on existing laws, such as the Child Protection Law and the Law of Protection from Abuse
- Conducting awareness campaigns to help individuals identify cases of abuse and report them
- Launching prevention and response initiatives to provide immediate support to affected groups

Protection from Discrimination and Bullying

Protecting youth from all forms of discrimination, bullying, and social stigma supports an inclusive and supportive society for all, strengthens social cohesion, and advances national progress. This can be achieved through:

- Organizing workshops for teachers, employers, and community leaders to equip them with the skills needed to support youth
- Launching awareness campaigns highlighting the harmful effects of discrimination and bullying, and the importance of inclusion
- Establishing support groups that provide safe spaces for youth to share experiences and strengthen their ability to cope with stigma

Digital Safety

With the growing reliance on digital solutions and smart systems, the imperative to safeguard youth in cyberspace intensifies, enabling them to interact in a safe and informed manner. This can be achieved through:

- Collaborating with social media platforms to develop age-appropriate content guidelines and adopt transparent reporting mechanisms, in line with cybersecurity and personal data protection laws and regulations
- Implementing legislation and policies to monitor content and filter out inappropriate material
- Launching educational campaigns targeting teachers, employers, and community leaders to raise awareness of digital risks

Social Justice

Saudi Vision 2030 aims to enhance equal opportunities among youth in education, employment, and recreational activities, regardless of gender, location, or special circumstances. Empowering youth across their various segments is a fundamental pillar for building a more inclusive and harmonious society. This can be achieved by reducing barriers preventing youth from realizing their full potential and by driving sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

Fair Opportunities for Youth in Rural Areas

Empowering youth in rural areas by ensuring equitable access to opportunities and services, which is essential for reducing regional disparities and fostering balanced, sustainable development across the Kingdom. This can be achieved through:

- Establishing partnerships with relevant entities to provide employment, education, and recreational opportunities in alignment with the needs of each region
- Providing career and educational guidance to youth outside urban areas, thereby reinforcing their access to high-quality services
- Developing regulatory frameworks that contribute to providing flexible employment opportunities

Fair Opportunities for Both Genders

Empowering youth of both genders to access equal opportunities aligned with their capabilities and needs, to strengthen a more cohesive, vibrant, and progressive society. This can be achieved through:

- Developing legislation and policies that promote equal opportunity across the public, private and nonprofit sectors
- Conducting awareness campaigns to address stereotypes associated with youth of both genders
- Providing training for employers to help them accommodate women's needs in the workplace

Fair Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities

Empowering youth with disabilities is essential to building a more inclusive society. Equal opportunities contribute to developing their capabilities and reinforcing their role in the Kingdom's growth and prosperity. This can be achieved through:

- Enhancing infrastructure and facilities, and leveraging existing laws and regulations to ensure their equitable access to all services and opportunities
- Simplifying access procedures for disability support services through transparent, user-friendly processes that enable families and youth to benefit from them
- Strengthening partnerships with relevant institutions to develop specialized educational and vocational programs that support academic and workplace inclusion of youth with disabilities

Fair Opportunities for At-Risk Youth

Empowering at-risk youth including juveniles, youth affected by substance abuse, and youth experiencing psychological challenges that may affect their wellbeing, to enable or rehabilitate them in order to build safer and more resilient communities. This can be achieved through:

- Enacting and implementing legislation that ensures fair opportunities for these youth groups
- Strengthening youth access to rehabilitation and recovery programs to facilitate their recovery and reintegration and enable their positive contribution to society

Community Engagement

Saudi Vision 2030 has strengthened youth engagement in society by encouraging them to participate in volunteer and recreational activities. This nurtures their sense of social responsibility and equips them with advanced skills that support their personal development across various aspects of life. It also supports youth in innovating sustainable solutions to the most pressing challenges in society, with positive impact on social cohesion and national development.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a fundamental pillar of youth empowerment. It strengthens leadership skills, deepens social responsibility and nurtures empathy, and enables youth to address local challenges to build a more cohesive society. This can be achieved through:

- Establishing partnerships with relevant entities to develop professional volunteerism curricula and frameworks, thereby fostering a community culture of participation and service
- Launching awareness campaigns that highlight the benefits of volunteerism, supported by incentives such as certificates and scholarships

Youth Environments and Spaces

Providing youth-dedicated environments and spaces to strengthen social connectedness and creative expression, thereby improving their wellbeing and increasing their community engagement. This can be achieved through:

- Developing standards for establishing safe, supportive environments, and forming partnerships to fund them and ensure their sustainability
- Raising awareness of available spaces and the services they offer

Youth Associations

Encouraging the establishment of youth associations, and maintaining their role, to enable youth to acquire skills and contribute to the long-term development of their communities. These associations provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and for creating lasting, positive social impact. This can be achieved through:

- Raising public awareness of the importance of youth associations and their role in community development
- Providing guidance on establishing and maintaining youth associations, and clarifying procedures for obtaining support from the Associations Support Fund
- Facilitating partnerships with relevant entities to ensure their continuity and strengthen their impact

Youth Workers

Empowering youth workers and developing their skills to enhance the quality of services delivered and support their professional pathways, thereby ensuring a positive and sustainable impact on youth and society. This can be achieved through:

- Developing professional and technical standards for youth workers to raise the level of service in the sector
- Assessing the capacities of youth workers to identify skill gaps
- Establishing partnerships to design and deliver specialized training, qualification, and academic programs
- Raising awareness of available programs to support the professional development of youth workers

Youth Participation in Policy-Making and Expression of Opinions

The Kingdom is witnessing growing youth engagement in policy-making through established, official channels, in line with its vision to empower the rising generation, which constitutes the majority of the population, and to advance national development. Accordingly, the Ministry is committed to enhancing the effectiveness of youth engagement in expressing their views and shaping policies that affect their lives, thereby contributing to the development of a more inclusive, aware, and responsible society.

Youth Voice

Empowering youth to participate meaningfully in expressing their views, thereby strengthening their role in shaping policies that affect their future and contributing to the development of their leadership skills. This further enhances their engagement to ensure more inclusive governance. This can be achieved through:

- Developing legislation that ensures youth engagement in policy formulation processes
- Training youth to ensure their effective participation in expressing their views
- Organizing events to enhance dialogue between youth, leaders, and decision-makers
- Launching awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of youth participation in shaping the future

Youth Councils in Public, Private and Nonprofit Sectors

Establishing youth councils across various sectors enhances effective youth participation in expressing their views. These councils provide a platform that brings youth together and enables them to discuss the issues that matter most to them, as well as the changes they aspire to achieve. This can be achieved through:

- Establishing youth councils in the public, private and nonprofit sectors in accordance with mechanisms defined by the General Directorate for Youth Development
- Developing legislation and policies that ensure youth councils are engaged in providing input and expressing their views
- Raising youth awareness of the availability of these councils and the importance of participating in them



06

Governance of Youth Policy

Implementation:

Institutional Roles and Mechanisms for Coordination and Integration



Governance of Youth Policy Implementation: Institutional Roles and Mechanisms for Coordination and Integration

Given the multiplicity of entities involved in youth development and the overlap in their roles, this Policy adopts clear mechanisms to guide, coordinate, and enable relevant players across the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The General Policy for Youth Development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is anchored in five core groups that work together to support youth, strengthen their role in sustainable development, and achieve Saudi Vision 2030 targets:

- **Sector Steering Entities:** focus on setting policies and strategies that steer youth sector efforts toward comprehensive development and alignment with the Kingdom's objectives
- **Effort Coordination Entities:** focus on collaboration between government and non-government entities to ensure that resources and activities are directed efficiently
- **Sector Enablement Entities:** work on building capacities of public and private institutions to provide the support youth need through training and qualification
- **Sector Activation Entities:** lead the implementation of programs and initiatives by strengthening cross-sector partnerships to achieve tangible impact
- **Beneficiaries (Youth):** contribute to implementing programs and initiatives, and help raise awareness of the Policy and its benefits



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Policy Review



Policy Review

Periodic review of this Policy document is necessary to enhance its effectiveness and ensure its continued alignment with global best practices in youth development. The review should incorporate input from relevant entities to assess the challenges they face and to draw on lessons learned from the design and implementation of youth development policies.

Accordingly, the Directorate shall review the Policy every two (2) years, based on the following:

- Periodic reports issued by the General Directorate for Youth Development
- Periodic reports received by the General Directorate for Youth Development from all relevant entities
- Surveys of youth and partner entities engaged in youth development
- Findings from analytical studies conducted by the Ministry and relevant partners on youth development



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References



Legal Framework Related to Youth Development

There are numerous legislative instruments that refer to specific youth groups or to the youth age range. These laws and regulations span various areas, including protection, media, juveniles, and the rights of persons with disabilities, and each contributes to creating an enabling environment for youth.

Key instruments include:

Law of Protection from Abuse of 1434 H, issued by Royal Decree No. (M/52) dated 15/11/1434 H. Article (7) thereof stipulates that: “The Ministry shall immediately, upon receipt of a case of abuse and upon ascertaining the report and assessing the case, take any of the following interventions:”

- Take necessary measures which ensure the provision of necessary health care to victims of abuse, and make a medical evaluation of the case, if needed
- Take necessary arrangements to prevent the continuation or recurrence of abuse
- Provide family and social counseling to the parties involved if the Ministry decides to address the case within the confines of the family
- Summon any of the parties to the case or any relative thereof, or any person involved to take their statements. Necessary measures and undertakings shall be taken to ensure the necessary protection for the victims of abuse
- Subject the parties of an abuse case to psychological treatment or rehabilitation programs as appropriate for each case

Paragraph (6) was added to Article (7) pursuant to Royal Decree No. (M/72) dated 06/08/1443 H, stating:

“Enable the person exposed to abuse, or their representative, to enter their place of residence, obtain their identification documents, and take their personal belongings.”

Furthermore, Article (8) of this Law stipulates that “the Ministry shall, if it appears from the report that the case is serious and poses a threat to the life of the victim of abuse or their safety or health; take all necessary measures to deal with such case in accordance with its degree of seriousness, including:

- Notifying the governor or the relevant security authorities to take necessary measures, each within their respective jurisdiction, and coordinate with said authorities to ensure the safety of the victim of abuse including their transfer or the transfer of the aggressor - if necessary - to a proper place until the danger has passed
- Enable the person exposed to abuse to enter their place of residence, obtain their identification documents, and take their personal belongings”

Media Policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of 1402H, which aims to guide the media in serving society, with special attention to youth due to the importance of this stage in their lives. Article (11) stipulates that: “Saudi media shall accord youth special care, arising from an informed awareness of the critical stage they undergo from the onset of adolescence until reaching adulthood. Carefully designed programs shall be dedicated to youth to address their problems, meet their needs, protect them from all deviation, and prepare them in a sound manner that is strong in faith, morals, and conduct.”

Juveniles Law of 1439 H, issued by Royal Decree No. (M/113) dated 19/11/1439 H, which includes several provisions relevant to youth, with a particular focus on ensuring they are treated in a manner that safeguards their rights and takes due account of their circumstances. Article (4) for example stipulates that procedures for recording reports by juveniles and the hearing of juvenile witnesses shall be held in an appropriate place, in the presence of their guardian or a person acting in such capacity and that the juvenile is not required to appear for any future action unless otherwise required. Article (5) sets out how to deal with the juvenile upon arrest, whether in flagrante delicto or otherwise, with the mandatory presence of their guardian, a person acting in such capacity, or a representative from the home, or in a manner that ensures the presence of more than one person. Article (17) stipulates that: “If a juvenile reaches the age of 18 before their detention term expires, they shall be transferred to prison to serve the remainder of their term, unless the court, at its own discretion or upon a motion by an interested party, decides otherwise.”

Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 1445 H, issued by Royal Decree No. (M/27) dated 11/2/1445 H. Article (2) thereof stipulates that “This Law aims to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities and to ensure their access to all services on an equal basis with others, and affirms the following basic principles:”

- Non-discrimination on the basis of disability and the provision of equal opportunities
- Providing accessibility requirements and reasonable accommodation
- Including the requirements of persons with disabilities in governmental and non-governmental legislation, strategies, policies, activities, programs, plans, and designs
- Enabling persons with disabilities to participate in the management of their affairs in accordance with governing provisions
- Enabling persons with disabilities who have reached the age of majority to make legal transactions, unless their disability prevents them from making such transactions in accordance with relevant legal provisions
- Adopting alternative and appropriate methods of communication with persons with disabilities, including verbal or written communication, sign language, or any other method of communication
- Training individuals in all entities who are entrusted with serving persons with disabilities on ways to deal with and communicate with such persons as well as raising awareness of their rights

Volunteer Service Law of 1441 H, which defines a volunteer in Article (1) as “A person who carries out voluntary service without requiring financial or moral compensation.” Article (2) stipulates that “this Law aims to:

- Promote voluntary service in the community
- Regulate the relationship between the parties to voluntary service, and determine their rights and duties
- Promote patriotism, humanitarian work, and social responsibility in the community
- Develop and direct the capabilities of volunteers toward serving national priorities

