

**"Youth Political Empowerment
In Egypt
Through Information Technology"**

Policy Paper

Content

Abstract	3
Logical Framework	3
Existing public policies and government political empowerment programs:	6
Alternatives	9
First Alternative	9
Pros of First Alternative	10
Cons of First Alternative	10
Short-term interventions	10
Long-term interventions	11
Second Alternative	11
Pros of Second Alternative	12
Cons of Second Alternative	12
Short-term interventions	12
Long-term interventions	13
Third Alternative	13
Pros of Alternative	13
Cons of Third Alternative	14
Short-term interventions	14
Long-term interventions	14
Evaluation of alternatives	15
Recommendations	16
Acknowledgements	17
Reference List	18

Abstract:

This policy paper is one of the Watan Development Association for Local Communities and the Center for Development Services policy papers.

The use of social media had an important impact on two youth revolutions in 2011 and 2013, although there has been a gradual decline in youth participation in the political and public spheres in recent years, and opinion polls have shown that despite the high awareness of young people about the importance of this participation, participation rates have been and still are relatively low, and with the increasing public use of technology and social media there is potential to implement new measures that empower young people politically. Through information technology.

This policy paper explores the limited use of technology in the political empowerment of Egyptian youth, and the need to unite efforts in order to establish mechanisms that can help increase youth political awareness and political participation, and prepare a cadre of youth capable of assuming public executive power and legislative functions at the local and national levels.

The paper proposes three alternatives to promote the political empowerment of young people. The first alternative proposes a national campaign to encourage and support young people to stand in local and parliamentary elections. The second alternative concerns the establishment of operational leadership programmes at the local and central levels. The third alternative includes revitalizing Egyptian political life through technology and establishing roles for young people in politics after assessing the country's current situation according to the proposed alternatives. The first alternative to a national campaign using information technology to support young people to run in /local and parliamentary elections was selected as the best alternative to empowering young people politically in Egypt.

Logical Framework:

Young people are an essential component of society, having characteristics that distinguish them from other age groups. There are some differences in the determination of young people's age groups, with the United Nations identifying those groups between 18 and 24 years of age. The Egyptian Constitution extends the age of youth to 35, thus reaching about 60% of Egyptians. Hence the importance of youth empowerment for building good governance institutions and achieving society's inclusive development.

The acquisition of political awareness is achieved through the growth of political knowledge, which includes all political issues and developments addressed in this policy paper, such as:

- Increase their political awareness.
- Inform them of their rights and duties.
- Emphasizing the need for their participation in the political sphere.
- Give them the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.
- Enabling them to compete for public office.

Over the past decade, the use of information technology "social media platforms" has led to the growth of the political scene and the creation of new and unprecedented opinions and trends, such as the concept of "freedom" among young people in Egypt, and that social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and many blogs, as well as text messages have enabled audiences who had difficulty communicating in the past to be connected with each other faster and more comprehensively despite distances, and to share with each other their perceptions and ideas.

Although the use of information technology as a virtual public space has enabled many people to easily express their opinions and ideas directly, whether with decision-makers or with the public, and despite the recent

increase in the use of social media and online platforms among Egyptian youth, its impact on political empowerment remains weak.

The following are some of the reasons behind the limited involvement of young people in political life despite their general interest in the subject:

- The large number of alliances formed among young people in Egypt as a result of the revolutions of 2011 and 2013, which led to increased competition between those alliances and the weakness of organization and coordination within those alliances, and the lack of clear and implementable programs, all of these factors led to the disintegration of those alliances in a short period of time .

- Inadequate representation of young people in both executive and legislative institutions .

- The lack of comprehensive government policies to empower youth, focusing only on university students, who constitute a small percentage among young people compared to the large number of students in technical schools and uneducated youth who lack political awareness.

- The government's agenda is currently focused on entertainment and service delivery rather than on the political awareness of youth.

- The underrepresentation of young people in political parties because the older generation acts as an obstacle to young people, making them unable to reach leadership positions in those parties.

- Poor coordination between government agencies and initiatives put forward by civil society organizations that focus on developing political awareness of young people.

- Lack of initiatives related to the empowerment of Egyptian youth.

There is no doubt that the continuation of this situation may lead to serious repercussions, as it can lead to a decline in the sense of importance of young people within the country, and the weakness of their national belonging,

which may negatively affect the future of political life within the state, hence the importance of working on the political empowerment of youth, and technology can be used to achieve a large part of that goal, and therefore the focus was on the political empowerment of youth, where technology can be a means to achieve this goal.

Existing public policies and government political empowerment programs:

The successful use of the media in the January 25 and June 30 revolutions demonstrated the media's ability to strengthen opposition movements, which provided an opportunity for young political activists to produce innovative media content in an unprecedented way.

Through this, we believe that the State can successfully deal with this issue by:

- The State's possession of advanced technological potential through its various institutions, where such institutions can be directed to use that potential and mobilize public opinion in order to achieve the goal of promoting the political empowerment of young people.
- The State's ability to enact laws regulating the use of technology in general, including social media, in order to achieve societal interests and objectives, including the goal of empowering young people politically.
- The possibility of using academic and administrative staff through public lectures that can be broadcast via the Internet and the media in order to increase young people's political awareness, train them to participate in political life, review the most important problems in achieving their political empowerment, propose solutions and activate communication between them.

The State's ability to coordinate efforts to activate the political empowerment of young people, carried out by government agencies, civil

society organizations and private and individual initiatives, and this coordination can be carried out using information technology.

There are several targeted government programs to empower young people in which technology is used to select enrolment by registering each program through a dedicated site and publicizing the results of those admitted to that site. Some of these programs also use technological tools and means to train and evaluate enrolment at the end of each program, the most important of which are:

- The Presidential Program for Youth Leadership Qualification, where the program's website announces the conditions for admission to the program, which include that the applicant has a university qualification, that the applicant is 20 to 30 years old at the time of application, that the applicant is Egyptian, that the applicant is a national, and that the applicant is a well-functioning and well-behaved (He has never been charged with honour offences), the submission is made via the website, as well as those admitted to the program are notified by emailing the software on the site.
- The National Academy for Training, as can be seen from the Academy's website, carries out a lot of training programs for Egyptian youth. Young people are contacted at different stages to run for the programs and accept the required number of applicants through the email on the Academy website.
- Youth conferences and forums, where young people record their data on the National Youth Congress website, and those selected to participate in youth conferences and forums are contacted by the website's e-mail.
- Nasser High Military Academy courses, in which those wishing to obtain courses in the areas of interest of the Academy such as strategy and national security courses are communicated through the Academy's website, and a separate email is often allocated to each of those programs.

- Programs of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, including training of trainers in the area of confronting rumors and their impact on national security; The Vanguard Parliament, the Youth Parliament and community leaders of youth centers, some of which are implemented centrally through the Ministry of Youth and Sports and are advertised on the Ministry's website and implemented centrally through the Ministry of Youth and Sports These are advertised on the Ministry's website, and others are implemented through civil education departments spread across Egypt's governorates.
- The Coordinating Committee for Youth Parties and Politicians, which was proposed during a youth conference, received the support of President El-Sisi, and the Committee has a "Facebook" account through which its members communicate with members of political parties.
- Simulation models in Egyptian universities. These programs are implemented in a number of Egyptian universities, such as Cairo University and Assiut University, where a website is prepared for each form that communicates with the members of the form and gives some electronic lectures through that site.

Although there are many such programs, there is a small group of young people benefiting from these programs, largely because of the qualifications and skills set out in the terms of admission in programs that narrow the field to a large segment of young people. For example, the number of young people who have been qualified and graduated from the presidential programs in its multiple versions is only 3,000. Most of them were represented in youth conferences and some leadership positions in 2014-2019. In other words, these young people represent the youth elite on the Egyptian political scene without other young people.

While many government programs do not require specific qualifications and skills for applicants to their programs, they have not exploited the knowledge gained by young people who participated in their programs, for example, courses offered by the Nasser High Military Academy in cooperation

with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in which some 3,600 young people participated during 2016-2019, were not benefited after graduating from the Academy.

In addition, these government programs are not coordinated with civil society programs and private and individual initiatives undertaken by entities and individuals concerned with the issue of young people's political empowerment, which sometimes leads to duplication of efforts and failure to achieve the required accumulation leading to improved performance.

Alternatives:

This paper aims to identify a number of alternatives to address the problem of weak political empowerment of youth, using technology that has an impact on youth, in order to achieve the goal of political empowerment of youth announced by the political leadership and the Egyptian government, and programs have been developed to achieve it.

The paper came up with the following three alternatives:

The First Alternative: Organizing a national campaign to support young people to run in local and parliamentary elections.

The Second Alternative: Organizing a program to prepare executive leaders at the local and central levels.

The Third Alternative: the use of technology to stimulate party life in Egypt and activate the role of youth in partisan work.

The pros and cons of each of these alternatives, the short- and long-term interventions that help to achieve each alternative, and the evaluation of each of these alternatives are analyzed below.

First Alternative:

The first alternative: Organizing a national campaign to support young people to run in local and parliamentary elections:

In light of the constitution's stipulation that there is a 25% representation of young people in local people's councils, and in light of the imminent issuance of the Localities Law, the Parliamentary Elections Law, and the subsequent holding of local and parliamentary elections, it is important to organize a national campaign to support young people to run for elections, where part of the campaign is organized using social media, and another part is through organizing training courses for young people, and then this alternative aims to provide services to young people that help achieve the goal of Political empowerment of them.

Pros of the First Alternative:

- Familiarize young people with new electoral laws.
- Training young people wishing to stand in local or parliamentary elections on how to campaign.
 - Familiarize young people with the functions of Parliament and local people's councils.
- Lectures at designated venues, or via the Internet, to raise awareness of current laws through experts and specialized professors.
- Use experts and professors specializing in giving lectures directly or online to explain laws and raise young people's awareness.
 - This alternative allows access to large numbers of young people, whether wishing to participate in political life, who need to refine their skills in this area.
 - To try to convince them of the importance of political and community participation in general and the role of such participation in the country's overall development.

Cons of the First Alternative:

- Young people's interest in following up political education websites is weak.
- The voluntary nature of membership of local people's councils may result in youth reluctance to stand in local elections.
- Difficulty in finding funding for courses to be organized directly.

Short-term interventions:

- Social media is used to create a training, awareness-raising and political education forum that will serve as a tool for the implementation of public policy for the empowerment of young people, through which the Government and youth will communicate, stimulate young people's political and community participation and interest in participation in public work and refine their skills as a prerequisite for the political empowerment of young people.
- Conduct training courses for young people wishing to run for local people's councils and parliament, in which academic professors specializing in political science and constitutional law are lectured. These lectures can be used by current or former members of the House of Representatives and local people's councils, with a view to familiarizing young people with the competencies of both local people's councils and parliament and the rights and duties of members, and how to prepare election campaigns.

Long-term interventions:

- Amend the Parliamentary Elections Act to create a relative quota for young people in the next House of Representatives.
- Adherence to constitutional texts that have already approved a quota for youth in local people's councils of 25% of seats in local councils, which should be adhered to in the new law.

Second Alternative:

Organizing a program to prepare executive leaders at the local and central levels

The main objective of the political empowerment process, as mentioned above, is not related to giving young people employment opportunities in leadership positions, but rather to provide a fair opportunity to compete for those positions, and this can only be done by qualifying young people to assume those positions, and one of the mechanisms that can be carried out is to organize a program to prepare leaders at the local level to qualify them to assume executive positions at the local and central levels (executive positions in local units in villages, cities, centers, neighborhoods and governorates), as well as at the central level (through young people assuming greater executive positions such as minister or assistant minister) .

Part of this program is organized using the Internet, especially through various social media, and another part through courses organized directly.

Pros of the Second Alternative:

- The training courses organized within the framework of the program help to raise the awareness of young people and educate them politically.
- The use of specialized professors within the framework of the program to give electronic lectures (Online), which helps in reaching large numbers of young people.
- This program can be coordinated with similar leadership development programs implemented by other government agencies, such as universities and some ministries, such as the Ministry of Youth.

Cons of the Second Alternative:

- Surveys conducted in Egypt indicate that the degree of trust in incumbents decreases as they get older, and therefore there may be no strong societal support for this alternative.
- The spread of a culture of "seniority" in government departments may lead to resistance to the idea of empowering young people or allowing qualified youth to assume leadership positions.
- Setting a fair standard for selecting those who will be trained and followed up after completing their training and benefiting from the experience they have gained.

Short-term interventions:

- Creating a high-potential website that communicates with young people wishing to participate in public work and aspiring to hold political office.
- Organizing training courses to increase young people's skills in areas required by administrative work and familiarizing them with the Local Administration Act and its Executive Regulations.

Long-term interventions:

- Modify the conditions for holding senior executive positions and not place the age or seniority factor within the criteria for holding such positions.
- Set a relative quota (Quota for young people in executive institutions).
- The ongoing experience of selecting assistant ministers and deputy governors is young, with young people to be selected for these positions being graduates of leadership programs.

Third Alternative:

Using technology to revitalize party life in Egypt and activate the role of young people in Party Work.

Political parties remain far from the Egyptian street, and their programs are undeclared, unclear or non-existent. Hence the importance of using technology to revitalize party life in Egypt political leadership has shown interest in the subject, as evidenced by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's call at a youth conference to form a coordinating committee for parties' participation in Egyptian party life and political education for young political parties in Egypt.

Pros of the Third Alternative:

- Activating the role of parties is important in the process of democratic transition .

- This alternative provides an opportunity to increase the number of members of political parties.

- This alternative provides an opportunity for political parties to publicize their programs among large segments of the population.

- This alternative allows easy communication between the party base of each party and the leaders of the party and its various committees.

Cons of the Third Alternative:

Youth representation in political parties is low, and this alternative does not provide a guarantee of an increase in such representation .

- The majority of parties are unknown to citizens and need a long time to publicize themselves.

- The large number of parties and the similarity of their platforms make it difficult for young people to choose which parties to join .

- Some partisan malpractices in the period following the events of the revolution of January 25, 2011 weakened citizens' confidence in partisan work.

Short-term interventions:

- Create websites for parties that have not yet created sites, which must contain basic information such as basic data, identification of party leaders and basic ideas adopted by the party.
- Activating existing websites and increasing their efficiency and possibilities of communicating with young people through them.
- The Coordinating Committee of Parties shall communicate with parties through a website established by the Committee for this purpose .
- Encouraging party cadres to engage in political education activities for young members of those parties.

Long-term interventions:

- Work to convince parties with similar platforms to merge with each other.
- Amending the Parties Law and increasing the minimum number required to establish a new party, in order to ensure that the party is serious and has a real desire to compete with other parties and prepare to form a government.

Evaluation of Alternatives:

The first alternative has the ability to accept the executive authority; because it is compatible with the programs set for this purpose. Due to the increasing use of technology and social media by young people and the low cost of their implementation, the first alternative is a suitable option, as data indicates that before the January 25 revolution, only 4.5 million Egyptians had accounts on Facebook, but during the first four months of 2011, nearly two million new accounts were created on Facebook. This reveals that social media has been able to provide a platform for Egyptian citizens who want to engage more in political life in an easy, free and convenient way, and in terms of sustainability this alternative can be easily implemented, and it is also possible to continue to benefit from this alternative until it achieves its purpose, it is likely

that this alternative can achieve the targeted results and reach the target audience with high efficiency due to the use of online platforms that will allow a sense of comfort and security for interested youth.

Given that the political leadership and the Egyptian government stated that the political empowerment of youth is the goal of the state, the second alternative can be accepted politically, but in terms of appropriateness this alternative may not be effective due to the existence of similar government programs, such as the Presidential Leadership Program and other programs such as those offered by the National Training Academy, which have the same objectives as the alternative, and with regard to the sustainability of this alternative, Its implementation requires funding resources that may be difficult to secure for a long time, and for its effectiveness, this alternative can only be effectively implemented if it is implemented by external specialists, and if it is announced appropriately, moreover, the implementation of this alternative depends on the unification of all government efforts aimed at empowering youth, and effective coordination between all government agencies in order to avoid duplication of efforts and save time and resources.

The implementation of the third alternative could be successful, especially since the political leadership was eager to establish the coordination of young parties and politicians. In terms of relevance, the application of this alternative may not be appropriate due to lack of communication between political parties. The difficulty that coordination will face in carrying out this task owing to its modernity and inexperience, and the success and sustainability of this alternative depends on the level of response it receives from the leadership of political parties. This alternative may not lead to the expected results because of the apparent clamor in the party life of Egypt, and with regard to the effectiveness of coordination with all political parties in Egypt may reduce the possibility of implementing this alternative successfully.

Recommendations:

Based on the assessment of the three alternatives using the criteria of political acceptance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, relevance and applicability, it is recommended that the State adopt the first alternative: Organize a national campaign to encourage and support young people to run in Parliament and localities as a solution for the political empowerment of Egyptian youth. This alternative will be the most effective because of its global success before with regard to democracy and the political empowerment of young people. Previous implementation processes revealed that participation in local councils provides a basic education in which young people learn to engage in public work, and increase their knowledge of the political affairs, problems and challenges facing their country. Through this it works to develop young people's sense of commitment and responsibility to develop their country. In addition, they acquire qualifications for higher positions and assume more functions in the future in both the legislative and the executive sphere and once established, the national campaign can coordinate with existing programs in the field of youth political development organized by government agencies, civil society organizations or individual initiatives, These different actors can collaborate together to promote political awareness and youth participation through the use of technology. which, in turn, will enable them to express their views more openly and in the exercise of their political rights.

Acknowledgements:

This paper is one of the Watan Development Association for Local Communities and the Center for Development Services policy papers.

Reference List:

1. Arabic References:

1. أبو اليزيد، أسماء (٢٠١٩). دور منظمات المجتمع المدني في التحول الديمقراطي في مصر (٢٠١١-٢٠١٦). المركز المصري للدراسات والأبحاث الإستراتيجية. القاهرة.
2. إسماعيل، داليا (٢٠٠٩). دور الجمعيات الأهلية الشبابية في تمكين الشباب : الحالة المصرية، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الاقتصاد والعلوم السياسية، جامعة القاهرة.
3. البصراي، محمد. دور التمكين السياسي للشباب في فاعلية التنمية السياسية في مصر، جامعة بني سويف [www. Platform.almanhal.com](http://www.Platform.almanhal.com) ، تاريخ الدخول ٢٠٢٠/٢/٢ .
4. الزغبي، هبة (٢٠١٤). مشاركة الشباب في الانتخابات البرلمانية وصنع القرار بين الممكن والمستحيل. مقترح ورقة سياسات. مركز هي للسياسات العامة.
5. الشبكة العربية للمنظمات الأهلية (٢٠٠٧). التقرير السنوي السادس (الشباب في منظومة المجتمع المدني). القاهرة.
6. بلال، علاء (٢٠١٩). العوامل الاجتماعية والثقافية وتأثيرها في اتجاهات الشباب نحو المشاركة السياسية في الريف المصري. رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآداب. جامعة الإسكندرية.
7. نور، شعبان (٢٠١٩). ثورة الخامس والعشرين من يناير والمشاركة السياسية للشباب (دراسة ميدانية لعينة من الشباب الجامعي في جامعة بني سويف).رسالة دكتوراه غير منشورة، كلية الآداب-جامعة بني سويف.
8. على، عادل (وآخرون) (٢٠١٩). تمكين الشباب (رؤية مصرية حديثة).الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات.
9. ورداني، يوسف (٢٠١٤). نحو سياسة عامة جديدة للشباب في مصر. العدد ٥٢، مجلة أحوال مصرية. القاهرة.

2. English References:

1. Sabry, Sarah (2005). **Funding for Youth Development Work in Egypt**. Ford Foundation. Available at:
<http://www.mogtamana.org/UserFiles/Funding%20for%20youth%20work.pdf> 13
2. Tayie, Sally Samy, **Impact of Social Media on Political Participation of Egyptian Youth**. The American University in Cairo. Available at: <http://dar.aucegypt.edu/handle/10526/4250>
3. Sparre, Sara (2008). **Muslim Youth Organizations in Egypt: Actors of Reform and Development**. Danish Institute for International Studies. Denmark.
4. world Bank(2007).Youth in Egypt Capacity-Building and Knowledge-Sharing Partnership Program for Youth Organization Available at
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEGYPT/Resources/Youth_Report.pdf
5. Bailly, Jordan(2012),”Impact of Social Media on Social movements: A Case Study of the 2009 Iranian Green Movement and the 2011 Egyptian Revolution