

MENA SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK NEWS



Welcome to the MENASP Network v. 2.0

By: Rana Jawad, network convener

Dear colleagues, welcome to this first issue of the MENA social policy network newsletter which launches what may be dubbed, a “2G” MENA social policy network. This will be a quarterly English language newsletter (for now). We invite you to share your news with us (see pg. 6 for more details).

To mark the occasion, I should start by thanking all colleagues who joined the network in 2012 and have taken part in its conferences over the years. The study of social policy and welfare systems in the MENA region was perhaps not an obvious choice for academics in the social and political sciences, but as has become clear from the activities of the network’s members, an epistemic community does exist: there is commitment and expertise among both researchers and practitioners both in and out of the MENA region to share ideas, experiences and strategies for effective social welfare action.

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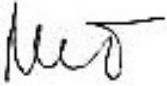
The purpose of this newsletter therefore, is to be a communication vehicle for the global, interdisciplinary and forward-looking network that it represents.

We are also witnessing changing policy paradigms around the theme of social protection which now dominates international development and humanitarian interventions both in the MENA region and beyond. This new policy context clearly shows how relevant the knowledge and skills of the MENASP network are in addressing some of the most urgent social problems that the MENA region faces; whether these range from poverty-reduction to youth unemployment to the reform of food and fuel subsidy programmes.

To this end, the original mission of the MENASP network has never been more relevant than it is today: to support a new infrastructure of policy-relevant scholarship that can promote a more comparative, interdisciplinary and welfare-centred understanding of the MENA region.

Thanks you for your support in being a friend of the MENA social policy network. Please use it as a space where many of the fundamental social ideas of our times can be shared, improved, or just debated (that is a good thing too!).

With best wishes for a happy Christmas and new year 2019!



Best wishes,
Rana Jawad PhD.



Visiting scholars at the network relaunch meeting at the University of Bath

"The MENASP network has never been more relevant than it is today"

Project Update

Upgrading the Network

Recently, the University of Bath team, led by Rana Jawad, began a two year partnership with the Friends of the British Council to relaunch and update the network with generous funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

A number of exciting events and initiatives are planned for 2019, the second year of project, including a new website and digital strategy (see page 6). We will also be introducing a new series of Policy Innovation Case Studies (see page 4), as well as co-hosting conference and policy lab events with our British Council and Cairo University partners in Egypt (see page 3).

We are also grateful for the ongoing support of the British Council teams both in the UK and Egypt, including Society Egypt, Global Digital, Marketing, Education & Society.

The University of Bath hosted a group of scholars from around the region for a week long residential (10-14 September 2018) to discuss their experiences and explore how an upgraded MENASP network can support research and teaching throughout the region. We would like to thank the following delegates for their valuable input: Ibrahim Alhawarin (*Al Hussein Bin Talal University, Jordan*); Ghada Barsoum (*AUC, Egypt*); Anis Ben Brik (*DIFI QF Qatar*); Hicham Ait Mansour (*Mohammad V University, Morocco*); Elie Mekhael (*Lebanese University, Lebanon*); Walid Merouani (*CREAD, Algeria*); Nasser Yassin (*AUB, Lebanon*)

2019 MENA Social Policy Network Conference

**October 30-31 2019 @ the American
University in Cairo**

The post-2015 Social Development Agenda firmly established the provision of effective systems of social protection as a key function of the contemporary state. We are in an era of policy change in the MENA region: under the new paradigm of social protection, countries are undergoing reforms in social policy provision with major implications for both policy-making processes and citizen rights and welfare.

In response to this dynamic context, this conference seeks to engage with the following questions: How do we as researchers, policy-makers and practitioners make sense of the social protection discourse in the MENA region? Does it replace or reinforce pre-existing social policy structures? What are the implications of these regional changes for vulnerable groups such as women, children, and minorities? How does policy learning happen in order to foster more effective, efficient and inclusive policies?

We welcome papers on the following themes.

Actors and institutions

Discourses and policy ideas

Policy fields

(such as health, education, employment)

Political economic perspectives

Implications for social groups

(such as women, children, and ethnic minorities)

Cultural perspectives

Historical perspectives

Policy outcomes

(such as poverty, cohesion, empowerment, inequality)

Comparative perspectives

(with other countries or regions outside of MENA)

Policy analysis processes

End-user perspectives

Methodological perspectives

How to submit your abstract

We are looking for two types of submissions:

1. Individual papers
2. Panels of 2 to 4 papers

Please submit both individual papers and panels at the following link.:

http://bit.ly/menasp_conference2019_submit

The **deadline** for abstract submission is **March 31, 2019**.

All submissions will be required to indicate which of the conference themes (listed to the left) they address.

Conference organisers will notify submitting authors of their acceptance by the end of May 2019.

There are no conference fees, but participants will be required to register for the conference after acceptance.

Participants who need support obtaining a visa to enter Egypt should write to MENASP_network@bath.ac.uk and are urged to begin the process as soon as possible.

Due to limited translation availability, the conference language is English. However, a few spaces will be reserved for Arabic presentations. Speakers who want to present in Arab should write to MENASP_network@bath.ac.uk to submit an abstract in Arabic and/or to state their preference to present in Arabic.



Introducing PICS

Capturing best practices in social policy

The MENA social policy network organised by the University of Bath team will launch a new series of short policy papers called Policy Innovation Case Studies, or PICS.

Starting in 2019, PICS will offer analytical insights into the social policy-making process by discussing social policy innovations across the MENA region. The aim is to highlight a thought-provoking example of problem-solving or policy action that advances social welfare or social justice in some way. PICS can also highlight ways in which policy failure has occurred and how lessons might be extracted to improve problem-solving.

PICS will follow basic principles of policy analysis, as such they will highlight matters such as political agency, drivers of policy change, and contextual and structural factors. They will use effectiveness, inclusiveness and efficiency as benchmarks for success. The series will explore advances in social welfare, empowerment or social cohesion broadly defined.

Each case study will be translated into Arabic and posted online where it can be easily accessed by policy practitioners, researchers and teachers. The University of Bath team will serve as editor of the PICS series, coordinating their publication and dissemination. If you are interested in writing a Policy Innovation Case Study, please contact Rana Jawad or email the network coordinators at MENASP_network@bath.ac.uk.

Tackling tough problems

During its first year (2019), the series will present case studies dealing with some of the most pressing issues in the region, including youth unemployment, the humanitarian response to conflict-stricken populations, and the reform of social assistance and safety nets.

We will explore these themes across a broad range of countries in the region. The following PICS* are scheduled for release in 2019:

Basic services and social policy challenge: Refugees and humanitarian needs for Lebanon and Jordan

By: Nasser Yassin

Family policy in Qatar

By: Anis Ben Brik

Social assistance and safety nets for Egypt and Morocco

By: Rana Jawad and Bethany Shockley

Social accountability and local government in Morocco

By: Sylvia Bergh

*Titles subject to change

Recent Publications

Barsoum, Ghada. 2018. "Women, Work and Family": Educated Women's Employment Decisions and Social Policies in Egypt". *Gender, Work and Organization*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12285>

Barsoum, Ghada. 2018. "Can youth activation policies be central to social policies in MENA countries?" *International Social Security Review*. Vol. 71, Issue 2, pages 39-56.

Barsoum, Ghada. 2018. "Egypt's Many Transitions: Public Administration Reform Vision and implementation Challenges" *International Journal of Public Administration*. DOI: 10.1080/01900692.2017.1387145

Barsoum, Ghada and Rashad, Ahmed. 2018. "Does Private Higher Education Improve Employment Outcomes? Comparative Analysis from Egypt". *Public Organization Review*. Vol. 18:1, pp 125-142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-016-0367-x>

Bin Brik, Anis. 2018. "Policies and programs to promote child well-being in the Gulf countries" Accepted. *Early Child Development and Care* (GECD). DOI : 10.1080/03004430.2018.1552949

Loewe, Markus, and Rana Jawad eds. 2018. "Special Issue: Social protection in the MENA countries: Prospects for a new social contract?" *International Social Security Review* 71(2): 3-18. DOI: 10.1111/issr.12163.

Jawad, Rana. 2018. "Is social protection becoming more solidary in Middle East and North Africa?" in *Policy in Focus: Social protection after the Arab Spring* IPC-IG 14(3) December 2017: <http://www.ipc-undp.org/publication/28434>.

Shockley, Bethany. 2018. "Competence and Electability: Exploring the Limitations on Female Candidates in Qatar", *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, DOI: 10.1080/1554477X.2018.1511125.

New website coming soon

As part of the collaboration between University of Bath and British Council, a new website is being developed for the MENA social policy network.

The MENASP website will be a digital space for the exchange of ideas and capacity building related to social policy in the Arab region. It will provide a place for policy makers to access tools, content and data created and shared by academics as well as find out about the latest conference and training opportunities. It will engage both academic and practitioner audiences with multimedia, including videos and webinars, and provide a space for discussion and interaction between network members.

Those looking for policy expertise on the region will be able to access the UNICEF database which contains contact information for experts in multiple policy areas. Users unfamiliar with the MENASP network will be able to join the group easily by signing up for a regular newsletter. In short, the MENASP website will help to disseminate the information and expertise necessary to support progressive policy making in the region.

We will share more details about the website as they become available. At the moment, we would love to hear any ideas you have about how we can use the website (and digital media) to reach relevant policy actors across the region. Contact us at MENASP_network@bath.ac.uk to share your thoughts.



SEND YOUR NEWS TO
MENASP_NETWORK@BATH.AC.UK



Get involved with the MENA Social Policy Network!

Want to get more MENA social policy news?

You can subscribe to network updates by filling in your details at the following link: <http://bit.ly/moreMENASPnews>

Want to get in touch with the MENASP network organisers at the University of Bath?

Email us at MENASP_network@bath.ac.uk

Want to stop getting updates from the MENASP network?

Unsubscribe from the MENASP network by sending a brief email to MENASP_network@bath.ac.uk

Want to share your news, events, and publications in our quarterly newsletters?

We are looking for the following items:

News about the policy impact of your research or your international advocacy and engagement

Upcoming events of interest to the network

Calls for papers for conferences and journals

Recent publications (should be available online)

While we will do our best to accommodate all network members, our newsletter has limited space. This means we will make editorial decisions about content based on its relevance to the broader MENASP network.

(Send to MENASP_network@bath.ac.uk)

Network News

Employment Creation through Industrial Policy in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Countries, Bonn, German Development Institute, Germany, 21-22 September 2018
Rana Jawad presented *Winners and Losers in the Policy-Making Process: Job Creation and Social Policies*

World Innovation Summit for Health 2018, Doha, 13-14 November 2018
Anis Bin Brik participated at a panel discussion on Innovation in the Delivery of Health Education (Pictured above)

Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, San Antonio, 15-18 November 2018

Bethany Shockley participated at a panel discussion on Politics & Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf.

Upcoming Events

The Youth Forum in the Arab Region, Asilah, Morocco, 19-21 December 2018
Anis Bin Brik will present at a meeting hosted by UNFPA and WOSM

Call for papers:

Anis Bin Brik is organizing a panel entitled "Family Changes in the Context of Social Changes in the Gulf Region" for the 2019 Gulf Research Meeting to be held from 15-18th July 2019, at the University of Cambridge. He seeks papers focusing on: Family relationships, household structures, fertility, household labor/market labor, parenting, marriage and divorce, contemporary family policies, gender relations and child well-being and protection. See <http://gulfresearchmeeting.net>