



MENA YES! Call for Solutions

Proposals due by 11:59 pm EST on August 9, 2024

About MENA YES!

MENA YES! is a solution-oriented youth employment summit focusing on the Middle East and North Africa region. The 2024 Summit will be held in Casablanca, Morocco on October 7-8, 2024. Expert panels, interactive sessions, workshops, and roundtable discussions will cover a diverse range of topics relevant to youth employment and entrepreneurship. It will bring together 200+ stakeholders to co-create solutions to the region's most pressing issues impacting youth employment outcomes. Attendees will include private sector employers, government representatives from the region, youth, multilateral organizations, donor community, implementing organizations, local civil society organizations, academic institutions, think tanks, and others. The two-day event will culminate with the development of a shared action and advocacy agenda aimed to improve youth employment outcomes across the region.

Themes:

The Summit's themes have been selected based on survey responses from various stakeholders involved in youth employment in MENA, including youth themselves. The 2024 MENA YES! Summit will focus on the following four themes:

- Women's Economic Opportunity and Labor Market Participation
- Jobs in the Green and Circular Economy
- Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Cross-Cutting Themes:

The 2024 MENA YES! Summit will also focus on the cross-cutting theme of disability inclusion. Sessions will be expected to integrate and discuss intersections between the four major themes and the inclusion of youth with disabilities in all aspects of society, but especially in the workplace.

MENA YES! Goals:

MENA YES! will be a uniquely solutions-focused event that will focus on identifying and operationalizing solutions to critical issues related to youth employment in the MENA region. The Summit will utilize four Solution Teams, one for each of the Summit's themes. These teams will consist of a diverse pool of attendees whose goal for the Summit will be to gather learnings and solutions and develop action plans to present at the end of the Summit.

The first day of the Summit will focus on identifying solutions to critical issues related to the four major themes. There will be up to 15 breakout sessions on the first day. Each breakout session will feature one or two presentations of solutions to specific guiding questions related to the major themes.

The second day of the Summit will focus on operationalizing solutions identified during the first day. Following the breakout sessions, the Solution Teams will work together to develop action plans which will be presented at the end of the second day. These action plans will be discussed and then finally, attendees will be asked to make commitments, on behalf of themselves and/or their organizations, to support and implement these solutions.

Call for Solutions:

The call for solutions for MENA YES! will be open from May 31, 2024 until 11:59 pm EST on August 9, 2024. Solutions must be submitted using this digital form: <https://forms.office.com/r/vjdfk9d6P>. Submitted session proposals are expected to fall under at least one of the four major themes of the Summit and include considerations for the Summit's cross-cutting themes.

Each of the 15 breakout sessions will be 55 minutes and feature one or two presentations of solutions addressing guiding questions related to the Summit's themes. Presentations will be 5 minutes in length followed by a discussion facilitated by event staff. All presentations must be framed around a guiding question. Details about guiding questions can be found in the section below. In addition to presenting a solution, presentations must also pose 3-5 questions that address the solution's potential impact and feasibility. The goal of these sessions is to present solutions and allow the audience to complicate or elaborate with suggestions and concerns.

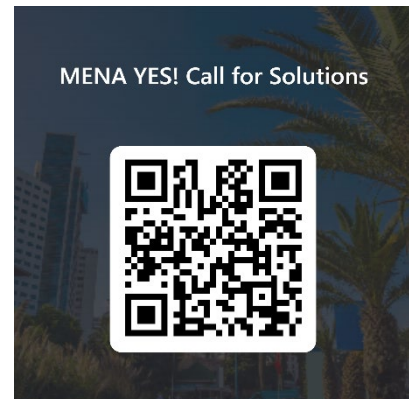
If you are interested in submitting a solution and would like assistance in applying for this opportunity or if you have any questions about the application process please email us at MENAYES@efe.org

Submission Guidelines:

The call for proposals will take place over two phases. During the first phase, applicants will be asked to fill out a short virtual form with some basic information and a brief description of their presentation ideas. These submissions will be reviewed by the MENA YES! steering committee and a list of finalists will be selected. During the second phase, selected applicants will be asked to submit a more detailed proposal for a second review where 15-30 solutions will be selected to be presented at MENA YES!

The first submission will require the following information:

- **Session Title:** A brief and descriptive title for your session.
- **Major Themes:** Which of the Summit's four major themes will your solution address?
- **Guiding Questions:** What guiding question(s) does your solution seek to answer?
- **Solution Description:** A 250-word description of your solution. The selection committee will take particular consideration of the following criteria:
 - How will your solution support youth employment in MENA?
 - Has this solution been implemented before? Has it been implemented in MENA?
 - Can the solution be scaled across the MENA region?
 - What challenges have you faced or do you expect to face when implementing this solution?
 - How will you incorporate youth voices and engage youth in your solution?



- Are there any considerations for the cross-cutting theme of disability inclusion in your solution?
- **Questions for the Audience:** What are your 3-5 questions for the audience that address your solution's impact and feasibility to implement?

Guiding Questions:

The following are examples of guiding questions which Solution Teams may choose to focus on for their action plans. Applicants may select one of the guiding questions below to frame their presentation around. Applicants may also develop their own guiding question related to one of the four major themes of the Summit. If developing your own guiding question, try to be specific about a critical issue related to youth employment in MENA. The question should not be too broad since the goal of the Summit is to identify and operationalize solutions for these issues.

- **Women's Economic Opportunity and Labor Market Participation:**
 - How can we ensure the safety of women on their commutes to work?
 - How can we promote the financial inclusion of women in formal financial institutions?
 - How can we promote pay transparency to reduce gender pay gaps?
 - How can we break down traditional gender norms that prevent women from working in specific sectors?
 - How can we prevent childcare needs of parents from becoming a barrier to work?
 - How can we adapt traditional models of work to be flexible to the needs of caregivers, parents, and youth with disabilities?
 - How can we address the intersectionality of gender with other identities, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, or disability, in promoting equitable employment opportunities?
 - How can we foster mentorship and networking opportunities for young women to advance their careers and access leadership positions in traditionally male-dominated sectors?
 - How can we foster opportunities for growth of women-owned businesses? How can we take initial entrepreneurial ventures to the next level?
- **Jobs in the Green and Circular Economy:**
 - What are the skills needed to enter the green labor market and how can the education system support building those skills?
 - How can messaging on climate awareness and sensitization be improved? What is missing from current messaging?
 - How can we create more green jobs for youth?
 - How can the NGO, private sector and government support youth entry into the green economy?
 - What is needed to support the growth of young, green entrepreneurs?
 - How can we adequately prepare youth to be part of the climate change dialogue and to be leaders of climate action?
 - How do we make sure the voices of the youth climate constituency are heard during climate negotiations and intentionally engage the next generation of climate change leaders?

- How can we integrate traditional knowledge and indigenous practices into climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, particularly in rural communities?
- What role can the arts and creative industries play in raising awareness about climate change and inspiring youth engagement in environmental conservation efforts? (The orange economy)
- How can we ensure that green jobs are accessible and inclusive for youth from marginalized communities, including those living in informal settlements or rural areas?
- Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy:
 - How can we ensure that underprivileged youth have access to the resources needed to participate in digital work?
 - How can we expand access to AI tools that can support youth entrepreneurship and innovation?
 - How can we prepare youth to address the ethical issues of AI misuse and abuse?
 - How can we prepare youth to compete for virtual work at a global level?
 - How can we encourage investment in the IT infrastructure necessary to provide broad access to the benefits of the AI-revolution?
 - What measures can be taken to mitigate the potential displacement of workers by automation and AI technologies, particularly in low-skilled sectors?
 - How can we promote digital literacy and critical thinking skills among youth to navigate the ethical implications of AI technologies and combat misinformation?
 - What policies and regulations are needed to ensure the ethical development and deployment of AI systems, with a focus on protecting privacy and human rights?
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support:
 - How can we address stigmas related to MHPSS in the MENA region?
 - How can we address the intersection of MHPSS and youth's intersectional identities (e.g. gender, sexuality, age, religion, etc.)?
 - How can we increase access to MHPSS services for youth in underserved and hard to access communities?
 - How can we better incorporate resilience and coping skills into youth education?
 - How can we work to support youth mental health during their transition to work and within the workplace?
 - How can we promote self-care and resilience-building among youth to cope with stress and uncertainty in an ever-changing job market?
 - What role can peer support networks and community-based interventions play in providing mental health support for youth, especially in areas with limited access to professional services?