



**Islamic Republic Of Afghanistan
Kabul Municipality**



THE YOUTH POLICY
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AFFAIRS

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Background

Afghanistan is emerging from three decades of conflict which has left much of the country with a destroyed infrastructure, weak institutions and a lack of basic health, education and sanitation facilities. These burdens fall heavily on Afghan youth which comprise 68% of the population, or 22 million people. Due to the volatile security situation and the shrinking economies in Kabul and other provinces that have more youth than jobs, there is a pressing need to provide youth with education and skills for work and life. In addition, the exclusion of females from educational and economic opportunities deprives young women of the chance for personal and professional development, eliminates an important source of income for the family, and excludes their contributions to their communities.

Addressing the needs of youth for increased access to better education and employment opportunities is crucial to the development of Afghanistan. Additional factors such as youths' social isolation leading to lack of self-esteem, financial dependence on their family and not being able to speak in front of elders require an integrated and comprehensive program of formal and non-formal education, life skills development, job skills training, work readiness skills, employment accompaniment, and youth community engagement activities. Many community elders, sadly, look at youth as a threat (EDC, 2010 Assessment Report). As a result, youth are not involved in decision-making, governance process and out-of-school youth generally do not even participate in community youth groups. For young illiterate females, social and cultural isolation results in extremely low quality of life. There are few economic opportunities for young women, and those that do exist are usually restricted to the home. Because of culturally mandated gender separation, there are few opportunities for female youth mentoring.

Since 1380 (2001), the Afghan nation is emerging from the ashes of conflict to stand today as a beacon of hope to Afghan nationals and the world. Much has been accomplished, but far more remains to be done. People in Kabul, in particular youths, now have real hope of living in a time of peace, stability and economic development. The Government must fulfill that hope by planning with vision, leading with strength, and investing with wisdom.

Rationale for the Kabul Municipality youth Policy

The need for Kabul Municipality youth policy is made apparent by two major factors: first, the sheer number of youth, which in itself merits careful consideration; and second, that the youth are a cross-cutting constituency, vital in the achievement of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Afghanistan Compact and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Since 2001, efforts are being made to draw a policy document which can inspire and facilitate the multi-dimensional and integrated approach towards development of Youths of Kabul; as



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national progress depends, crucially, on them. However, a comprehensive National youth policy is not in place.

In 2004, H.E. Hamid Karzai became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan. While announcing his cabinet in 2005, Karzai established the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MYA). However, the MYA lacked a coherent vision and had low capacity and a bare minimum operational budget (with no development budget assigned to it). In 2006, following a cabinet reshuffling, youth, culture, information and tourism were merged into one agency, designated as the Ministry of Culture and Youth (MCY) with Youth Affairs as a department in charge of a Deputy Minister.

Therefore, it is essential to have an appropriate policy framework for KM in place to develop multiple programs for youths of in Kabul to harness their resources for social, economic and political development. All agencies managing the youth's programs in Kabul shall also devise their youth program keeping the features of this policy framework in mind.

Preamble

The KM youth policy covers key sectors, which have been identified through Deputy Ministry youth affairs as well as based on critical reviews of past studies and assessments conducted by the international donors. These key areas of youth policy are aligned with ANDS, Afghanistan Compact and MDGs which indicate Economic and Social Development, and provide employment opportunities for youth to accomplish national goal.

1. Education
2. Promotion of Good Governance
3. Youth civic participation and empowerment
4. Social environment
5. Recreation and sports
6. Health and well being
7. Employment and training
8. Socio-Economic development

KM youth policy, has been developed to ensure that the critical issues affecting youth within mentioned points have been listed along with strategic objectives.

The KM Youth Policy, is committed for all-round development of the youths in Kabul and seeks to establish a perspective based on Islamic, national and international values to fulfill their legitimate aspirations and improve the status of youths in economic, political, cultural, and social aspects, so that they are strong enough to accomplish the challenging tasks of national reconstruction, peace-building, good governance and economic Development.

The KM youths policy is designed to stimulate the youth to rise up to the new challenges, keeping in view the existing circumstances in the country which has seen 30 years of conflicts,



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and aims at encouraging them to be active and committed participants in the exciting task of reconstruction, peace-building and National Development.

The Policy is based on recognition that there will be effective co-ordination between the policies, programs and delivery systems of the various Departments in Kabul Municipality.

The policy firmly believes that the country's fragile peace and security rests upon the ability of youths of Afghanistan therefore they should be encouraged and motivated to be an active partner in the National development and shall be engaged in socio-economic and political development, decision/policy making of the Country. Such engagements should be through identifiable structure and wider representation of youth in appropriate bodies.

The Definition of youth

For the purpose of this policy, the persons of age group between 15 and 24 will be considered youth and municipal youth program will be designed to address needs of this age group. Furthermore, it should be thoroughly considered at all times that youth do not comprise a homogenous demographic group. Rather, they form a heterogeneous group, representing a cross-section of society, strongly shaped by factors including their communities, ethnical backgrounds, urban or rural locations, gender, social-economic status, and disabilities.

The number of youth in the age group of 15-24 years is estimated at 68% of the total population. The availability of a human resource of such magnitude for achieving socio-economic change and technological excellence needs commensurate infrastructure and suitable priorities to maximize its contribution to Provincial and National Development.

This KM Youth Policy thus implements differentiated methodologies and approaches while addressing the needs of youth in general, it also recommends unique and diverse interventions to be instituted for prioritized target groups in Kabul City;

Objectives of the KM youth policy

The objectives of the KM youth Policy are:

To sustain and strengthen the spirit of volunteerism amongst the youth in order to buildup individual capacities and generate a sense of commitment to the city development programs; and recognizing contributions and unique assets of youths in Kabul city in socio-economic development;

To instill in the youth an abiding adherence to the Islamic, national and international values and the values enshrined in the constitution of Afghanistan with unswerving commitment to Patriotism, National Security, National Integration and Non-violence;



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To strengthen the acquaintance of the values of national culture and the history of Afghanistan and dedication to Community Service amongst all sections of the youth in Kabul city;

To support the capacity building, raising awareness to promote youth personality and their efforts in the reconstruction of the country;

To provide the youth with proper educational capacity building activities and training opportunities and to facilitate access to information in respect of employment opportunities and to other services, including involvement in governance structure of KM, entrepreneurial guidance, short-term leadership trainings and basic education, life skills, and workforce readiness lessons delivered in Non-formal Education and Workforce and Employment Opportunities elements.

Ensure that all agencies working on the youth networking and engagement and accompanying instructional packages/materials based on an adaptation of existing donor or NGO/ Community Based Offices (CBO) youth training materials, government and other infrastructure, partnerships, and physical spaces;

To boost the involvement of government & NGOs, private sector, formal and non-formal groups of young people of; assist in solidification and strengthening the capacity of these key youth development institutions and ensure all youth related programs are coordinated while providing new and effective mechanisms to build partnership between other youth empowerment, and development stakeholders; facilities as constructive outlets for the abundant energy of the youth;

To create opportunity for wide participation and active presence of youth in social, economic, political and cultural aspects of life;

To facilitate knowledge building regarding human rights

Privileges of youths

The KM youth policy acknowledges that the youth in Kabul should be assured of the following:

- Provide them with proper education and training which enables them to concentrate on socially useful and economically productive;
- Rewarding employment and adequate opportunities for their personal development and improvement for those not currently in employment;
- Provide them with internship opportunity to build their capacity; Internships could be a stepping-stone into the labor market and the pathway to temporary or permanent work, particularly for young people who lack work experience.
- Requisite shelter and a clean environment, as also basic health services of quality;
- Social defense, Social Security, Social Stability and protection from all manner of exploitation;



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- Appropriate participation in decision-making bodies which are concerned with issues relating to the youth and with socio-economic and cultural matters;
- Sufficient allocation of KM funds for youth development;
- Access to Sports, Physical Education, and Adventure and Recreational opportunities.

Responsibilities of youth

The KM youth policy urges the youth to fulfill their responsibilities, as are mentioned below:

- To extend respect to KM staff members, parents and the family, in consonance with values of Islam and Afghan cultural norms and traditions;
- To promote social and inter-generation understanding and gender equality;
- To uphold the unity and integrity of the Nation, maintain peace and harmony, observe Fundamental Duties and respect the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution to all sections of the people
- To promote proper values of ethical conduct in individual and social life, to maintain honesty and integrity of character and are committed to fight against all forms of corruption, social evils and practices.
- To preserve and protect the Environment; and
- To commit themselves to create a discrimination and exploitation free environment and to devote their time and energy in nation building activities.

Engaging youths in local governance

To involve the youth in governance KM consider different issues and capacities of youths. As each and every young person is unique and will have diverse needs and abilities to involve. The prime principle is to employ diverse strategies for engaging youth in governance.

“*Youth councils*” and “*youth representation*” on boards are typically thought of in relation to youth governance. Develop a district level youth council organizational capacity building training & community engagement action plan.

KM youth empowerment and participation program under the municipality coverage will allow youth participation in municipality activities to target youth in Kabul including non-literate and low-literate youth in all 22 districts of Kabul.

KM seeks to raise awareness among different youth group through providing them a platform to share ideas about municipal activities, discuss and debate. This will allow them to identify ways to increase the active youth participation in municipality affairs as well as decision making process and community development.



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The program aims to generate discussion and raise awareness around all aspects of municipality affairs, elevate youth participation in decision making processes as well as implanting their role in the community and socio-economic development.

The overall objective of this activity is to develop awareness among youths to participate in municipal activities in the society and also

Having their Presence in

- Promoting Good Governance through civic activities.
- Strengthening the quality of life of youth and provide alternatives to illicit activities.
- Increase youth participation in community development.

The Youth participation in municipality will reinforce democratic principles and processes, create a forum for youth to come together to determine how to positively influence and meet needs within their communities and will enable them to develop their individual talents in all fields including: governance activities, democratic principles, socio-political process, community development, economics, education, sports and arts and how to be engaged in the municipality affairs. This will also increase the spirit of voluntarism among youth.

Civics and Citizenship

Human behavior is significantly shaped by norms and values, which are a basis for attitudinal growth. The dominant features in the Afghan Society, which impinge on the cultural and other values of young people, include areas such as family life, education, work and occupational activities, gender, class and ethnic relations, mass communication, artistic and creative expression, sports, recreation, politics and the economic environment.

Anti-social behavior is a manifestation of the absence of well-accepted values, attitudes and norms in the individual and in society which can reflect itself in crime, violent action, breakdown of parental authority in family life, corruption in public life, obscenity in the media, indiscipline in schools and in sporting activities and low productivity at the workplace.

The Policy, therefore, envisages the following strategies:

- Embodying instruction in the values like respect for teachers and parents, adolescent and the aged besides religious tolerance, and compassion towards the poor and the needy. The concept of family as the basic and most important asset of Indian Society will be strengthened.
- To motivate the youth to resist fragmentation of society on the basis of caste, religion, language and ethnicity and for promotion of democratic values enshrined in our constitution.



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- To mobilize the youth to create local pressure groups within the community to fight corruption at all levels and to ensure that the benefits of development reach those for whom they are intended and are not siphoned off by middlemen and the powerful.
- Laying emphasis on the economic and social security of the youth belonging to underprivileged sections of our society and those who are mentally and physically challenged.

Youth networking and community

In KM youth policy, “Youth Networking & Community” refers to activities that provide out-of-school Afghan youths (ages 15-24) with opportunities to engage positively in their communities in 22 district level office, to socialize and work together, and to learn basic concepts of and strategies for civic responsibilities and local governance. They do so through community development projects that contextualize short-term leadership trainings and basic education, life skills, and workforce readiness lessons delivered in Non formal Education and Work Force and Employment Opportunities elements.

In KM youth policy youth networking and engagement activities involves the following lines of activity:

Integrated Programmatic Approach

The youth networking and engagement activities will be integrated into each of the delivery models utilized in the KM; one to three days per month will be devoted to a relevant youth networking and/or community engagement activity. The activity to be implemented could be as short as one hour or as long as one day with the remaining period of the allocated time devoted to identifying and planning the activity, orientation and preparation, and developing a brief action plan.

Built on Existing Assets and Resources

The youth networking and engagement accompanying instructional packages/materials will be based on an adaptation of existing CBO youth training materials, government and other infrastructure, partnerships, and physical spaces.

Consultations and Partnerships

KM will consult and partner with government ministries (Education, MoLSAMD, and Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs), youth directorates, community coordinating bodies, and local NGO/CBOs in all community networking and engagement activities.



Thrust Areas of the Policy

Youth empowerment:

The KM youth policy recognizes that in order for the youth to effectively participate in decision-making process, it is crucial to equip them with proper education and skills; development of physical and mental potential through proper nutrition; protection and prevention from diseases, creation of an environment which promotes good health, development of youth leadership and its involvement in program and activities pertaining to National Development, equality of opportunity and respect for Human and Fundamental Rights without distinction of sex, language, or geographic location and access to facilities relating to Sports, Cultural, Recreational and Adventure activities.

Gender Justice

The KM youth policy recognizes the elimination of gender discrimination in every sphere of life and envisages that every girl and young woman has access to education, skill development, training, health, and protection from domestic violence, access to decision-making process, to professional positions and to productive resources and economic opportunities. Adolescent male shall be properly oriented, through education and counseling to respect the status and rights of women. Concerted efforts shall be made to promote a family value system that nurtures a closer bond between men and women, and ensures equality, mutual respect and sharing of responsibility between the sexes.

Information

Youth development efforts in Afghanistan have been hampered by lack of adequate information. The Policy, therefore, suggests the establishment of a well-organized Information & Research Network in regard to various areas of concern to the youth to facilitate the formulation of focused youth development schemes and programs. The District level Youth Centre, Resource Center and the KM Youth Centers will also serve as store houses of information for the youth in Kabul and other cities if possible.

Key Sectors of youth Concerns

The Policy recognizes the following areas as key sectors of concern for the youth:

- Education;
- Training and Employment;
- Health
- Preservation of Environment,
- Peace building and security
- Recreation and Sports;
- Arts and Culture;
- Science and Technology;



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- Civics and good Citizenship.

Education

Addressing the needs of youth for increased access to better education and employment opportunities is crucial to the development of Afghanistan. Additional factors such as youths' social isolation leading to lack of self-esteem, financial dependence on their family and not being able to speak in front of elders require an integrated and comprehensive program of non-formal education, life skills development, job skills training, work readiness skills, employment accompaniment, and youth community engagement activities. Many community elders, sadly, look at youth as a threat (2010 EDC, Youth Survey). As a result, youth are not involved in decision-making, and out-of-school youth generally do not even participate in community youth groups.

KM youth policy acknowledges that the objective of providing appropriate education based on Islamic values which enable the youth to develop into good citizens. The policy acknowledges the equal education opportunity for young women, youth returnees, rural youths and disabled/disadvantaged youths.

In addition, it highlights that the learning process should minimize the stress and strain and outdoor learning as an integral part of the educational process and on Physical Education, Sports, Games and Adventure activities. Academic institutions should be equipped with adequate sports and recreational facilities.

For young illiterate females, social and cultural isolation results in extremely low quality of life. There are few economic opportunities for young women, and those that do exist are usually restricted to the home. Because of culturally mandated gender separation, there are few opportunities for female youth mentoring.

Education, above the secondary level, should have a high degree of vocationalisation so as to enable the youth to acquire such requisite skills as would augment avenues of employment for them. Emphasis should be given learning of Information Technology.

Programs should be undertaken to upgrade the existing skills of young artisans of traditional handicrafts and other products and for those who may wish to take up the same as a vocation. Education system should also have a rural orientation to address the varied needs of agriculture, agro – processing and other areas of rural economy. The policy recognizes the importance of higher education for youths to provide them quality higher education in Afghanistan.

Progress in terms of access to education over the last ten years has been considerable. While there have been extensive resources provided to deliver basic education, there are still issues in relation to provision, access and quality of education across the country particularly for young women. These issues include literacy levels (lower for women especially in rural areas), access



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to higher secondary school and tertiary education (lower rates of access for young women), costs of education and the delivery of life-skills and livelihood skills within the curriculum.

Training and employment

This Policy recognizes that the question of employment is a very serious concern for the Afghan youth and the incidence of unemployment is more pronounced in the rural areas and calls for appropriate strategies to deal with it.

The opportunities for self-employment need to be created. A network of youth skill training centers would need to be established to build up the capacities of the young people for income generation activities.

Adequate funding for both pre-job and on-the-job training for youth by KM as well as other stake holders should be ensured. For proper vocational guidance and career counseling, schools and colleges should pay adequate attention to this aspect as part of their co-curricular activities.

Kabul Municipality, in conjunction with youth organizations, will develop training programs for youths in the district level offices, based on their needs. Special schemes would also be developed for young women, youth with disabilities and for young returnees.

A Data Bank will be created to keep abreast of the employment opportunities being generated, as also the availability of young people, with the requisite skills, for the same;

Environment

The Policy recognizes that children and young people are particularly vulnerable to the ill effects of environmental degradation. Deforestation which leads to pollution and to degradation of rivers, forests and land, adversely affects the young who have a vital stake in a healthy environment.

Considering the importance of community involvement in preservation of the environment, the Policy exhorts young people to play an increasingly significant role in mobilizing the public, at large, in this national endeavor. The Policy also advocates motivating the youth to develop respect for Nature and to lead lifestyle which are less resource consumptive and more source conservationist.

Having regard to the above, the Policy highlights the following lines of concrete action:

- Greater emphasis should be placed on environmental education in school curricula. Environmental education should also be a part of the outdoor learning process;
- The participation of Youth Organizations in gathering environmental data and in understanding environmental issues would be encouraged.



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- Motivating the youth to establish nature and adventure clubs in districts.
- Vocational training, in recycling of materials and managing waste materials, would be promoted so as to ensure that more young people may find a local source of livelihood.
- Youth Organizations, at the grass root level, would be assisted in provision of training in agro-forestry, agriculture and traditional agricultural practices.

Reconstruction of the city

The three decades of wars had devastating effects on the country and the country needs to be rebuilt. The policy recognizes that Afghan Youths have responsibility of reconstructing their country.

The policy recognizes that Kabul Municipality has to play a vital role in engaging youths in socio-economic and socio-political process of the Country. KM invest in Youth with wisdom and prepare them to take control of the country at appropriate time.

Peace building and security

The policy recognizes that peace and security are complementary for development and reconstruction of the country which has seen three decades of war.

The policy recognizes that youth at the center stage of peace and security of the country.

Sports and Recreation

This Policy strongly supports Sports, Physical Education, Adventure, Recreation and related activities as important areas of human resource development. No system of education could be considered successful, unless it addresses the urges and aspirations of the youth to be creative and appreciative of the manifold facets of nature and of social life.

The Policy, accordingly, enunciates that:

- Sports and games be promoted as a mass movement by making it a way of life;
- Sports, Games and Physical Education, should be compulsory in all Educational Institutions in Kabul;
- Every educational institution in Kabul should have adequate facilities for recreation, adventure and sports activities, including playgrounds;
- Provision be made for common play grounds in the master plans of all civic and municipal areas;
- At least one-fifth of the time spent by a student in an educational institution should be earmarked for outdoor activities;



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- Geographically disadvantaged areas would be extended additional support for the promotion of Sports and Games;
- Youth Hostels would be constructed in as many places of historical and cultural interest as possible, to promote youth tourism;
- Youth Organizations devoted to such activities will be encouraged; and
- Adventure activities among the youth be promoted to inculcate qualities of leadership, resilience, courage, discipline and love for nature and the environment.

Implementation Mechanisms

22 districts level communities in Kabul city will be targeted. Target communities will be determined in consultation with local partners. Only 5 males and 5 females per community will be permitted to take part in each training cycle. They will be selected randomly from those interested and permitted. Youth will gather for two hours in each district level community, once a week, for four weeks to discuss topics such as voluntarism, unity, honesty, peace, responsibility, charity, and respect. In addition, they will also discuss municipality issues and how to actively participate in the municipality affairs and how to keep their city clean and be a good citizen. One male and one female community mobilizer/facilitator for all communities who has been trained by KM will conduct the trainings. A new training will take place every month after the youth participation activities. 10 trainings will be held each year in each targeted districts. After each training cycle, the most promising youth will be selected to be peer coaches the following training cycle. This approach aims to build a cohort of trainers in each community. However, at this period, the same 22 communities in each district/Nahia will be targeted. The youths community established by KM will also sponsor youth sport activities, organize a youth volunteer work day and participate in the city cleaning public campaigns, hold a youth picnic in which youth meet and share ideas on how to work to improve community resources for youth in the other urban areas. The youth's community members will be encouraged to develop activities and initiatives. The youth initiatives (small grants) will be funded by KM which can be put to a good use that what they have learned.

Youth teams will receive monitoring visits once a week for the subsequent four weeks from the facilitator to support their initiatives. These chats will ask participants to reflect on how they are putting into practice their lessons, what problems they have encountered and how to solve them how is organization and scheduling of event coming.