



Arab youth - do they have a future?

Girls' soccer - shameful?

Reaching Yemeni and Saudi women – but how?

Arab youth - do they have a future?

The Arab World, spread out over 17 Arab nations in the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf, has about 200 million young people between the ages of 18 and 24. Annually research results are published on topics including willingness to migrate, unemployment, views on the government and on identity.

In 2020 42% of Arab youth who took the survey indicated to have considered emigration, while 32% responded 'never to leave their home country'.

Unemployment is a top issue. About 87% of these young Arabs are afraid of unemployment at some stage.

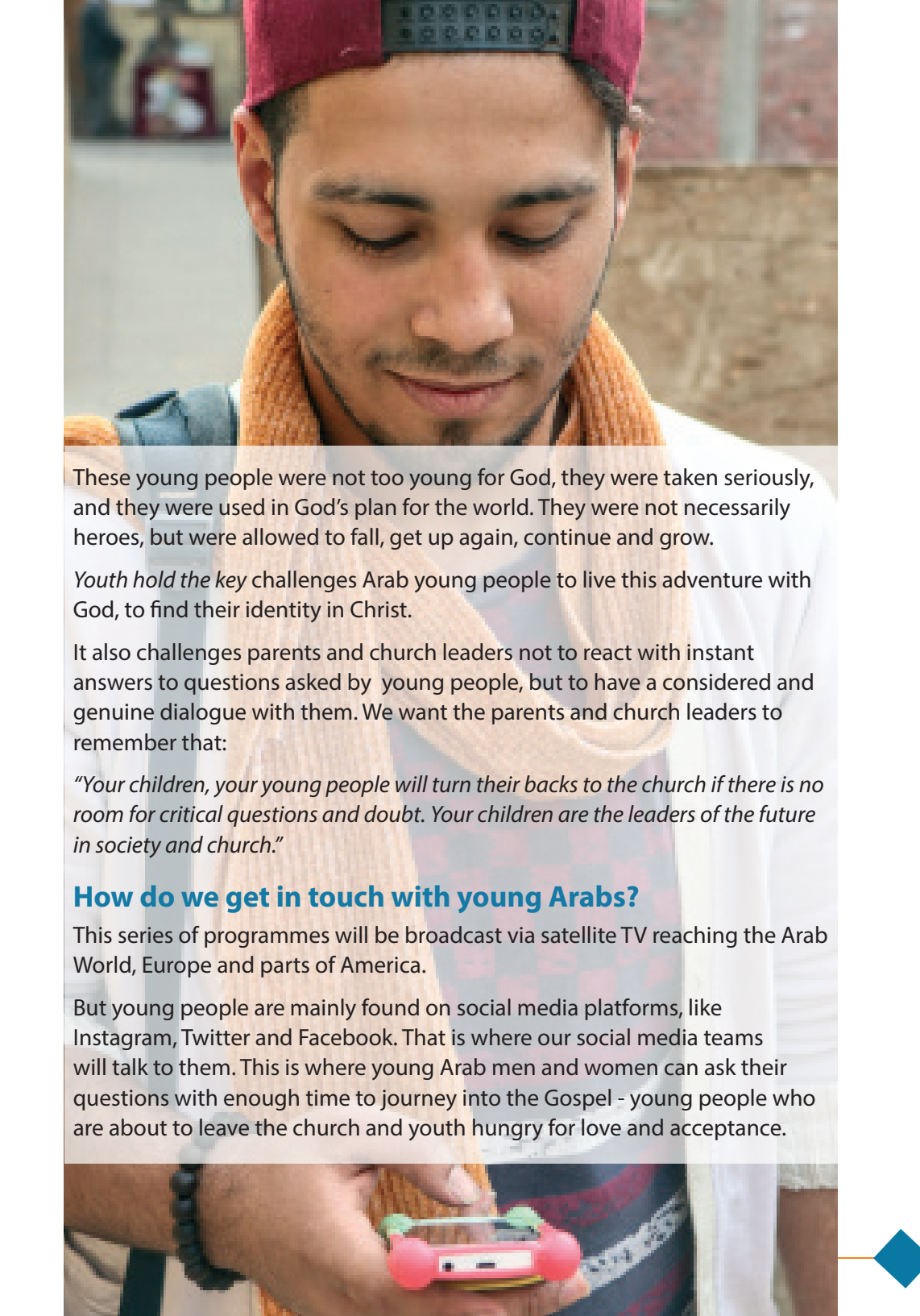
Interesting feature in this research is that an average of 40% of the respondents indicates that their religious conviction is central to their personal identity, compared to 'family' (19%) and 'nationality' (17%). That percentage is even higher in North Africa (61%) and in Saudi Arabia (60%). At the same time an increasing number of young Arabs are embracing atheism, most notably in Tunisia where 46% of the youth claim to have no religion. (Source: arabyouthsurvey.com)



Many young people in the Arab World are disillusioned and have given up hope to see change in their country, their region. What is left of the promising 'Arab Spring'?

Arab Vision wants to show that the God of the Bible believes in young people. We want to show this in a drama series of 26 episodes, *Youth hold the key*. What message and challenge have young people like Joseph, Ruth, Jeremiah, Daniel and Mary for today's youth?

But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. – Jeremiah 1.7,8 (NIV)



These young people were not too young for God, they were taken seriously, and they were used in God's plan for the world. They were not necessarily heroes, but were allowed to fall, get up again, continue and grow.

Youth hold the key challenges Arab young people to live this adventure with God, to find their identity in Christ.

It also challenges parents and church leaders not to react with instant answers to questions asked by young people, but to have a considered and genuine dialogue with them. We want the parents and church leaders to remember that:

"Your children, your young people will turn their backs to the church if there is no room for critical questions and doubt. Your children are the leaders of the future in society and church."

How do we get in touch with young Arabs?

This series of programmes will be broadcast via satellite TV reaching the Arab World, Europe and parts of America.

But young people are mainly found on social media platforms, like Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. That is where our social media teams will talk to them. This is where young Arab men and women can ask their questions with enough time to journey into the Gospel - young people who are about to leave the church and youth hungry for love and acceptance.

From our follow-up team

'Such love makes me cry...'

After a long time of searching in the Bible and many telephone conversations, 18-year-old Dahlia from Egypt, was ready to submit her life to Christ. She said 'Such love like that of Christ makes me cry. I believe he is God and now I can say I am Christian.' Soon she will meet face to face with one of our team members.

The Spirit as a dove

Bahiq gets in touch with us. He is 22 years old and is from Algeria. He tells us something special: every time he thinks about Jesus, he feels that a dove flies over him. We tell him that the dove is a sign of the Holy Spirit and share the story of Jesus' baptism, how the Spirit descends from heaven on Jesus as a dove. Bahiq wants to be baptised immediately. We explain to him that it is important to get to know Jesus better. He is surprised and says: *'I am sinful, I don't deserve that.'* After a while Bahiq opens his heart and prays: *'I believe with all my heart that Jesus is God, Jesus please forgive me for all my sins and own my life, give me eternal life.'* We still follow up with him to help him grow in his new faith.

Some statistics from our Facebook page for young people (Q1-2021)

Number of Arab young people who connected with our page	33,490
Engagement with posts (likes, comments, shares)	44,447
Private Messages	8,481
Sent a Bible or Christian materials	564
Gospel Presented in a Private Message	71
Profession of faith	7

Themes we highlighted during the first three months of 2021 were: Jesus, the Son of God; Jesus, the Good Shepherd and Jesus, the Saviour.

Good people with kind hearts

Anis is 28 and comes from Morocco. He tells us that he wants to be a Christian as he feels that Christians are good people with kind hearts. We share the Gospel message with him. He gets even more convinced that he wants to become a Christian and accepts Jesus in his life. We pray with him and help him grow in discipleship.

Tell me more, please!

Salwa is Tunisian, 19 years old and has a Muslim background. The first time we talk to her, she unburdens herself with a lot of questions. She wants to know all about the women in the Bible and we discuss the story of the woman caught in adultery. Salwa tells us that she recently left Islam and is now researching other religions. Nadine, our follow-up worker, encourages her to search more and find the truth herself, not based on what she has always been taught, but on her own conviction. Nadine also explains that Christianity is not just a religion, but is about a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Then Salwa asks Nadine about her view on Islam...

After many conversations about faith and religion, Salwa wants to know more about the Holy Spirit and Nadine has the opportunity to share more about who Jesus wants to be for us and what He has accomplished for us. Salwa is very open to listen and to know more. How and what do you pray and how do you dress as a woman, with a hijab or without one. And is the God of Christianity the same as in Islam?

Would you like to know more about project Youth hold the key?
Email us – contact@arabvision.org

Can you contribute to the production of the 26 episodes or to our follow-up work? Give via Paypal on our website:
www.arabvision.org or send your gift to our bank: Bank: Lloyds Bank Plc,
Account: Arab Vision, Sort code: 30-97-24, Account no: 49415760

Alternatively, cheques can be sent to: Arab Vision, 23 Mill Lane, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2AS

Will you pray for Anis, Salwa, Bahiq and other young people in the Arab World? Sign up for our digital prayer letter via the contact form on our website or send us a message via the mail.

Docudrama: Girls' soccer in Egypt

Arab Vision has a long history of producing TV programmes focusing on the rights of girls and women in the Arab World. The right not to be mutilated (circumcised), the right to be a child and not to be married off as 14 year old girl, the right to attend school.

We read in a newspaper about the *Empower Football Academy* in Egypt and decided to help promote them by producing a short film. In the article, Farida, the founder, says that many girls are quite enthusiastic and would like to learn to play soccer well, but that the parents are often an obstacle. She considers it her mission to help clear the obstacles and it is her dream that ultimately girls soccer will reach the level of a national team. In the meantime she gives soccer training in four different places in Cairo; she is not only a trainer, but also a role model for the girls, who can discuss anything with her.

We would like to produce this short film as part of a series of programmes with and for Arab women. Our focus is the lack of equality between men and women in the Arab World.



Bron: Nederlands Dagblad

Will you help us make this film possible?

Give specifically for 'Film girls soccer in Egypt'

'I would like to become a Christian,' says Nour from Saudi Arabia, after she has been reading in the Bible we sent her.

'Why? What appeals to you?' asks Maryam from our follow-up team.

'Freedom and justice,' answers Nour. She says she is impressed with Jesus' teachings in the Gospels.

Nour is responding to our social media platform, which has a specific focus on Saudi and Yemeni women. We know there is much brokenness and loneliness amongst women in these countries.

Our teams in the Arab World have a good understanding of the position of women in the Gulf region and many years of experience in follow up ministry to these women. But it appears to be tricky to find the right medium to get them involved in a conversation.

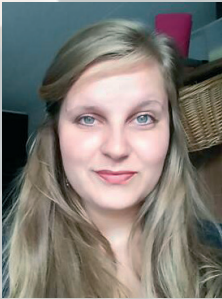
The content of our posts on social media platforms has focused on themes like love and safety, acceptance and self-confidence and healing from past hurts.

It is striking that many requests are to provide a Bible. In 2020 we received 773 requests via our Facebook page for Arab women from Saudi Arabia and Yemen. In the first quarter of 2021, we have already received 537 requests. Will you pray with us that we will be able to reach those women, so we can offer them a listening ear and assistance?

Amina is 36 years old and has been suffering from traumas for 15 years. Some of them originated from her marriage to her cousin, who forbids her to connect with her own family. She feels terribly alone. Fortunately she got in touch with our follow-up team. We listen to her and try to help her get out of her deep depression. We have started helping her work towards accepting herself because she doesn't see how much value her own life has. She is cautiously taking steps to not view herself as worthless and as an orphan who has nobody who cares for her. Will you pray for Amina?

Over the last year we have watched the coronavirus change our society and we realise that it might be a long while until life returns to the way it was. Throughout, our youth has been greatly affected by the insecurities and changes that coronavirus has brought us.

Across the Middle East many of the youth have been struggling, even since before global lockdowns. It is difficult to find security and safety in a world that keeps changing politically and economically, resulting in uncertainty and stress. Arab Vision's focus on reaching out to the youth is so very important – even just someone to talk to can make a difference. Our Follow-Up team works hard to connect with all the young people who encounter Arab Vision's work through the Facebook page.



Rosemarie Strengholt

Amongst other things, this newsletter gives an update on the Follow-Up team's work in contact with the young people who approach them through Facebook – both the statistics and the personal stories. That is really what all this work is about – to provide content for people. To read Bahiq and Salwa's response to this work is very encouraging.

Please continue to pray for the youth in the Arab world, and for the work the Follow-Up team can do to help them. Thanks for taking the time to read this newsletter – we appreciate your support and interest in the work of Arab Vision!



contact@arabvision.org

www.arabvision.org

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