Istikshaf: Exploring Mobility

Regional Mobility and Freedom of Movement Policy Agenda

2012 – 2015

This policy agenda is adopted by

The Arab Education Forum – Jordan

IACT – International Association for Creation and Training – Egypt

Roberto Cimetta Fund – France

October 2013

ADVOCATING FOR MOBILITY AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Istikshaf Advocacy Coalition: The Arab Education Forum – Istikshaf Program, in collaboration with a number of social and cultural organizations, initiated this coalition in order to develop a policy agenda and to create a platform for interested individuals and civil society organizations working under the theme of mobility, arts, culture, and social entrepreneurship.

This regional mobility and freedom of Movement policy agenda aims to develop closer links between a range of stakeholders including government agencies, foundations, voluntary and community sector in delivering specific policies and positions in areas affecting mobility with a focus on arts, culture and social entrepreneurship. It also helps people to better understand the policy issues and their impact and provide tools to influence them.

The Methodology: The Arab Education Forum – Istikshaf Program – is using the best international practices in developing this agenda and its supporting strategies. In June 2012, the AEF commissioned Rami Takrouri, Policy Advisor, to lead the process with Istikshaf Policy team. A problem identification survey was sent to a number of mobility operators, NGO, and international organizations, followed by a workshop that was held in Alexandria in order to define the policy issues, agree on specific positions, and set and prioritize their initial strategies. In addition to that, two focus group meetings were held in Amman to complete this important exercise. The work will continue in order to develop an advocacy and communications strategy in order to support the execution of this agenda.

Our **Values and Guiding Principles** are as follows:

- **Participation**, where we commit to ensure the participation of all stakeholders.
- **Transparency and Accountability**, where we commit to work according to a well defined and clear process, and constantly evaluating our strategies, tool and effects.
- **Evidence based approach,** where we commit to use the best practices in policy development process to gather information and support our positions with evidence and data.
- **Proactive approach,** where we commit to present solutions and ideas in order to try to solve the policy issues and challenges.

The **Scope of this Policy agenda** has two levels:

- **Regional - International Level,** where all involved stakeholders can work collectively on cross cutting issues that have regional and international impact.

- **Country Level,** where mobility operators and NGOs in each country can use this regional agenda as the base to further develop their own specific national policy agendas.

POLICY ISSUE I: MOBILITY ON THE NATIONAL AGENDA

Challenges: There is a growing concern about the lack of mobility within the Arab World, and with other countries around the world. The concept of mobility of people, artists, and initiatives is not well defined and recognized by institutions in the public sector, the private sector, and NGOs, as a learning tool and as an integral part of social, economic, and political development.

We aim to ensure true engagement of all key stakeholders in order to promote and adopt the concept of mobility within the national agendas in the region, with a focus on influencing the cities' agendas and private sector strategies to acknowledge it as a central theme within its long term vision and strategies.

Positions / Recommendations

1. **Governments should support all stakeholders to freely engage in participating and developing the national policies, discussing the concepts and definitions of mobility, and promoting its positive role in the society, in order to adopt it as part of the national development agendas in the region.**

2. **Arab Cities should work to promote the mobility concepts, and officially adopt and include it within its national and local agendas, and provide the linkages needed to allow for better interaction and integration of cities and people.**

3. **In recognizing the important role of the civil society, Governments should facilitate the work of NGOs, artists and youth groups that are working to improve cultural and social mobility by reducing regulatory constrains.**

4. **Artists, Social Entrepreneurs, Mobility operators, NGOs, Foundations, civil society organizations, and private sector companies should work to introduce the concept of mobility within their development and human resources strategies in order to encourage mobility of employees.**

Stakeholders	Advocacy Strategy / Tools
- The Arab League - Central Governments - Municipalities - Private Sector companies - Foundations and NGOs (Local, Regional and International) - Mobility Operators - Academia - Citizens - Artists and social entrepreneurs - Media	1. White paper on the concepts and definition of mobility 2. Regional and national conferences and workshops 3. Position paper on the role of Arab Cities in supporting mobility 4. Research on social and economic impacts of mobility and creative economy 5. Regional / national campaigns to promote and encourage the concepts of mobility 6. White paper on mobility vacation concept and process.

POLICY ISSUE 2:   FINANCING MOBILITY

Challenges: Mobility operators along with social and cultural NGOs are now facing a bigger challenge in providing and sustaining programs to support the mobility of social entrepreneurs and artists (men and women) in the region. There is a growing need for governments, donors, and private sector companies to set a clear budget and allocate funds that have clear and simplified processes.

We aim to work with public and private sector institutions and the donor community in the region, in order to agree on clear and transparent mechanisms for allocating budgets and distributing funds to support mobility initiatives with no restrictions on receiving funds and donations.

Positions / Recommendations

5. **Governments and Municipalities should invest in mobility by allocating a clear percentage of their budgets needed to provide a sustainable support for developmental projects related to mobility.**

6. **Governments, in collaboration with the civil society and the donor community, should work to develop a clear and transparent funding system and procedures, to allow NGOs, mobility operators, groups, artists and entrepreneurs to freely access the available funds.**

7. **Governments should adopt a progressive tax and benefits system to encourage socially responsible private sector corporate and NGOs to establish mobility funds and provide donations to support mobility initiatives.**

8. **Mobility operators and NGOs should work with all stakeholders including the governments in order to establish friendly spaces and facilities to support the mobility of people, initiatives and activities.**

Stakeholders

- Central Governments
- Parliaments, and elected officials
- Municipalities
- Private Sector companies
- Foundations and NGOs (Local, Regional and International)
- Mobility Operators
- Donor organizations
- Artists and social entrepreneurs
- Media

Advocacy Strategy / Tools

7. Impact assessment study/position paper on allocating government mobility funds, and tax incentives for private sector
8. Position paper on funding systems and procedures
9. White paper on "the use of regional friendly spaces to support mobility"
10. Regional conferences and national/city debates
11. Regional / national campaigns to promote and encourage CSR and government funding

POLICY ISSUE 3:   CROSSING BORDERS

Challenges: The right to free and responsible movement within national and international borders, as described in the international declarations, can have profound effects on societies and people. During the past years, the concept of free mobility of people has been faced by unexplainable social behaviors and legal systems that aimed to place artificial boundaries between Arab countries and also the world.

We aim to reach for a free movement of people and ideas across the Arab Countries, where all borders are open without limitations, and to ensure all Arab citizens including artists, social entrepreneurs, men and women are capable of spreading social and cultural initiatives.

Positions / Recommendations

9. **Governments in coordination with local and international organizations and activists should work to ensure free mobility between Arab countries for all Arab citizens, and should also work collectively to ensure the freedom of movement of people in Palestine.**

10. **Governments, on the short term, must set new policies that are in line with the human rights principles, in order to better govern the movement of artists, social entrepreneurs across borders, and create an effective, efficient and transparent visa system and procedures.**

11. **Governments should work to ensure the availability of information on laws and regulations related to movement across borders, and visa procedures and costs.**

12. **Local, regional and international organizations should work in cooperation with individuals and communities to provide all the necessary travel and movement information by developing a comprehensive travel guide for the Arab countries and cities.**

13. **Governments and NGOs should work to encourage foreign authorities to set clear, simple and cost effective international visa procedures in order to facilitate the movement of artists and social entrepreneurs to their countries.**

Stakeholders	Advocacy Strategy / Tools
- The Arab League - Central Governments - Foundations and NGOs (Local, Regional and International) - Donor organizations - Artists and social entrepreneurs - Mobility Operators - Citizens - Media	12. Benchmarking research to compare the visa laws and regulations against the Human rights declarations 13. Legal and technical research on visa procedures/cost and impact on movement of artists and social entrepreneurs 14. White paper on Low risk-high risk visa system - security system. 15. Regional and national conferences and public debates 16. Regional / national campaigns to support the movement of people, artists and social entrepreneurs in the Arab world

POLICY ISSUE 4: MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES

Challenges: Mobility was an integral part of the development of Arab societies, cities, culture and people. Although we are living in a mobile society where technology plays a major role in exchanging information and ideas, Arab societies, cities and people are not fully engaged in supporting the concepts of mobility, cultural exchange, and arts. Social constrains and negative behavior is still discouraging people and especially women to engage in such endeavors.

We aim to fully engage people to be supportive of art & culture, mobility initiatives, and the development of their societies, and to reduce the fear factors that limit the participation of men, women and youth from different backgrounds in developing their societies and engage in mobility and artistic initiatives.

Positions / Recommendations

14. **Creating Partnerships between governments and the civil society organizations and societies in order to ensure a national endorsement of "learning" as a tool for creativity and innovation, and "mobility" as a tool for acquiring experience.**

15. **Creating Partnerships between governments and the civil society organizations and societies in order to reduce the gaps, and encourage the involvement and participation of women, youth, artists and social entrepreneurs in mobility and cultural initiatives by eliminating social and economic constraints.**

16. **Governments should invest in the voluntary and community sector's work in building bridges within and between communities, through local infrastructure networks and partnerships.**

Stakeholders

- Central Governments
- Municipalities
- Political Parties
- Community leaders
- Private Sector companies
- Foundations and NGOs (Local, Regional and International)
- Mobility Operators
- Universities and Schools
- Citizens
- Artists and social entrepreneurs
- Media

Advocacy Strategy / Tools

17. White paper on Learning and link with mobility
18. Regional and national conferences and workshops
19. Position paper on the legal constraints facing Arab women in mobility and arts and culture and social initiatives.
20. Regional / national campaigns to encourage participation of women, youth, artists, activists in mobility.
21. Disseminating "Jeera" Initiative to Arab cities, municipalities, institutions and individuals in order to adopt and implement.
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How Can you Support Istikshaf Policy Agenda

As an individual or an organization, you can support this initiative by:

1. Adopting the Policy agenda by joining the group and signing the MOU.

2. Supporting the coalition in advocating related issues to you or your organization.

3. Providing your expertise, skills, and time as an advisor to the coalition.

4. Providing feedback, information, and data to support the positions and advocacy strategy.

5. Provide financial support or in-kind support to execute the technical and legal research, papers, and campaigns that will be implemented according to this agenda.

I adopt this policy agenda :

Logo	Organization name

Feedback and Contact Information

For more clarifications and information related to this agenda, please contact Istikshaf Policy Team at policy@almoultaqa.com , or call us at 00962-6- 568 7557.