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NET MED YOUTH
NETWORKS OF MEDITERRANEAN YOUTH

PRESS RELEASE
2017/12
Bethlehem, 14 September 2017

Successful NET-MED Youth Day Event held at Bethlehem University



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Bethlehem, 14 September 2017 – Within the framework of the EU-funded project, **Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth)**, UNESCO organized the **NET-MED Youth Day – an event in partnership with the Bethlehem University**. The event provided a platform of dialogue and policy debate among key actors working in the field of Youth and relevant decision and policy-makers to exchange ideas and views on issues and priorities of concern for youth in Palestine.

The event was attended by Ministers, UN and EU Representatives, universities and academic institutions, the Higher Council for Youth and Sport and a number of representatives from national and international organizations working in the field of youth in Palestine, and of course hundreds and hundreds of students of the University of Bethlehem, Birzeit University and An-Najah National University.

In his opening remarks, Brother **Peter Bray, Vice Chancellor of the Bethlehem University,** highlighted the importance of quality higher education and preparing Palestine's youth *to be committed and capable critical thinkers who can become leaders in their society*. Active participation of youth was further reiterated by **Dr. Ehab Bessaiso, Minister of Culture,** who stated the importance for the

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Palestinian people *to maintain and protect their national identity and the key role that youth can play in shaping the future of the country*.

Dr. Sabri Saidam, Minister of Education and Higher Education, emphasized that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has taken big steps towards improving the employment of youth, by adapting education to the labour market needs, such as *the integration of TVET in the general education for grades from 7-9 and the establishment of a higher council for TVET.* **Mr. Samer Salameh, Deputy Minister of Labour,** stated that skills development is essential *to increase opportunities in finding a job and to successfully compete in the Palestinian labour market*.

UNESCO Representative to Palestine, Dr. Lodovico Folin Calabi, said that UNESCO is proud to support Palestinian youth *engaging as active citizens of their society*, *as the development of Palestine and of any society will also depend on how youth can effectively become a driving force of positive change*. He recalled that for the past three years, thanks to NET-MED, youth networks from across Palestine *sat together and contributed to the development, implementation, revision and evaluation of public policies and strategies on youth, youth skill development needs and labour market transitions, youth-generated media content on freedom of expression, media and information literacy*.

During the event, four roundtable discussions presented several key and unique studies carried out and produced by NET-MED Youth, highlighting youth issues with regards to policy and decision making, media, employment, and civic participation.

Since 2014, the NET-MED Youth project helps young women and men develop their competencies, claim and exercise their rights and meaningfully engage as active citizens, particularly in decision-making relating to youth policies. It provides national youth organizations with opportunities to supporting the revision process of policies and programmes focused on youth employment and transition to the job market, to participate in the production and dissemination of prospective diagnosis findings about the national skills challenges, and to reinforce their capacity to influence national dialogue with stakeholders.

For further information, please contact **Ms Majd Beltaji**, Public Information Officer, UNESCO Ramallah Office: m.beltaji@unesco.org

For more information about NET-MED Youth, please visit www.netmedyouth.org

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