



# Situation Analysis of Youth in the I.R. Iran

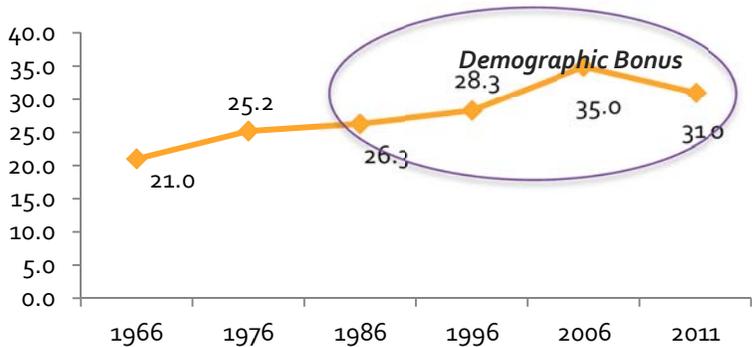
## BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, I.R. Iran has experienced a so-called 'youth bulge.' Today, around 50 percent of the population is under the age of 30, and the country's large cohort of people between 15 and 29 makes up around one-third of the population. Iran's young population presents an opportunity to accelerate the country's socio-economic development. However, a large youth cohort also places major strains on educational facilities, the labour market and social services, creating a need to address this issue.

I.R. Iran is experiencing rapid socio-economic and demographic changes. In collaboration with the Demography Department of the University of Tehran and the Statistical Center of Iran, UNFPA Iran has conducted an extensive mapping on youth in Iran, as one of four key emerging population issues. It will assist policy and decision-makers to effectively develop national policies

and plans in order to cope with the implications of this issue in the country. The analysis will be used in a series of advocacy and policy dialogue meetings with relevant stakeholders to further strengthen the capacity of the government.

**Youth population (%)**



# KEY FINDINGS

## ECONOMIC

- Around 70% of those unemployed in Iran are young people, and **youth unemployment** has become one of the country's main economic and social challenges.
- Youth unemployment is highest **among university graduates** (37%), at 29% for men and 48% for women. Significant provincial differences exist with regard to the youth unemployment rate.
- The rate of **economic participation** of young men is nearly five times that of young women.

## HEALTH

- Young men aged 15-24 account for 10.6% of registered **HIV/AIDS cases** and young women account for 15.4%. There is a low level of awareness among youth on HIV/AIDS prevention.
- **Deaths** due to accidents (such as car accidents) and intentional events (such as suicide and murder) are highest among young people compared to all other age groups, particularly amongst men.

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC

- From 1966-2006, the **proportion of youth** in Iran increased rapidly, with a slight decline from 2006 onwards.
- Youth typically live in **urban areas**. Of these, one out of six live in Tehran province.
- In the past two decades, the proportion of **youth migration** has been between 46-50%, with employment and, to a lesser degree, education, cited as the main reasons for migrating.
- Between 1986-2011, the percentage of **unmarried young men and women** rose from 9.4 to 26.2% (women) and from 18.5% to 40.5% (men).
- For every 100 marriages among youth, 16.3% end in **divorce**.
- Between 1956-2011, **literacy rates** among young men increased from 28 to 96%, and that of young women increased from 10 to 97%.
- Despite **women in higher education** being a relatively recent phenomenon, the sex ratio of university students has changed in favor of women in later years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Iran must **harness the demographic window of opportunity** presented by its large youth cohort by gearing policies towards addressing the needs of youth, including education, employment, housing and health.
- **Improve human capital and increase opportunities for women in the workforce.** An educated and self-sufficient young population increases social and economic development.
- In recent years, many youth programs and policies have been culturally focused, even though many of the challenges facing young people relate to their **economic situation**.
- Certain youth policies and programmes on **marriage promotion** have not been effectively implemented and should be revised.
- Make use of **international experience** to further strengthen Iran's response to the growing youth population.