Socio-Economic challenges and governance transformation in the Arab world

Implementing Agenda 2030: Economic Governance and National Development Planning in the Arab Region

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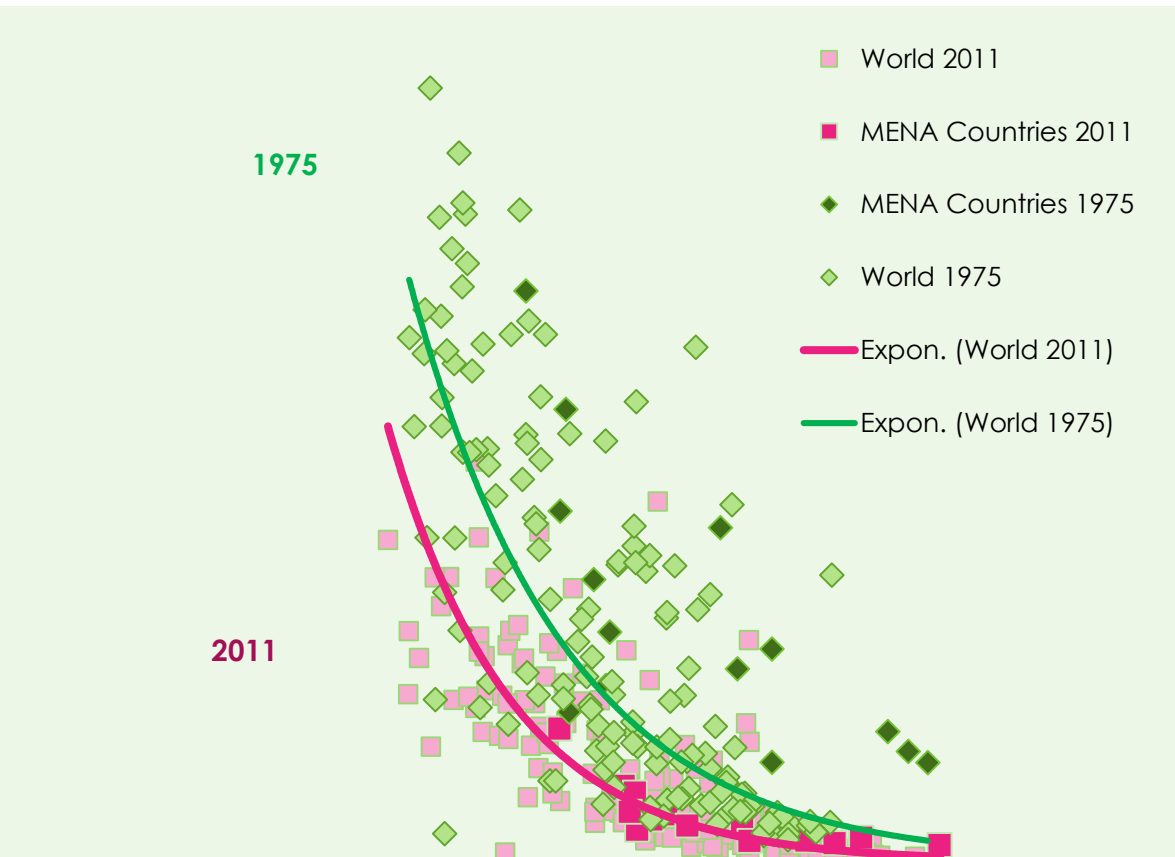**University of Gothenburg**

Objectives

- ▶ **Overview of governance and service provision in the Arab world**

- ▶ **Challenges for national planning and Agenda 2030**
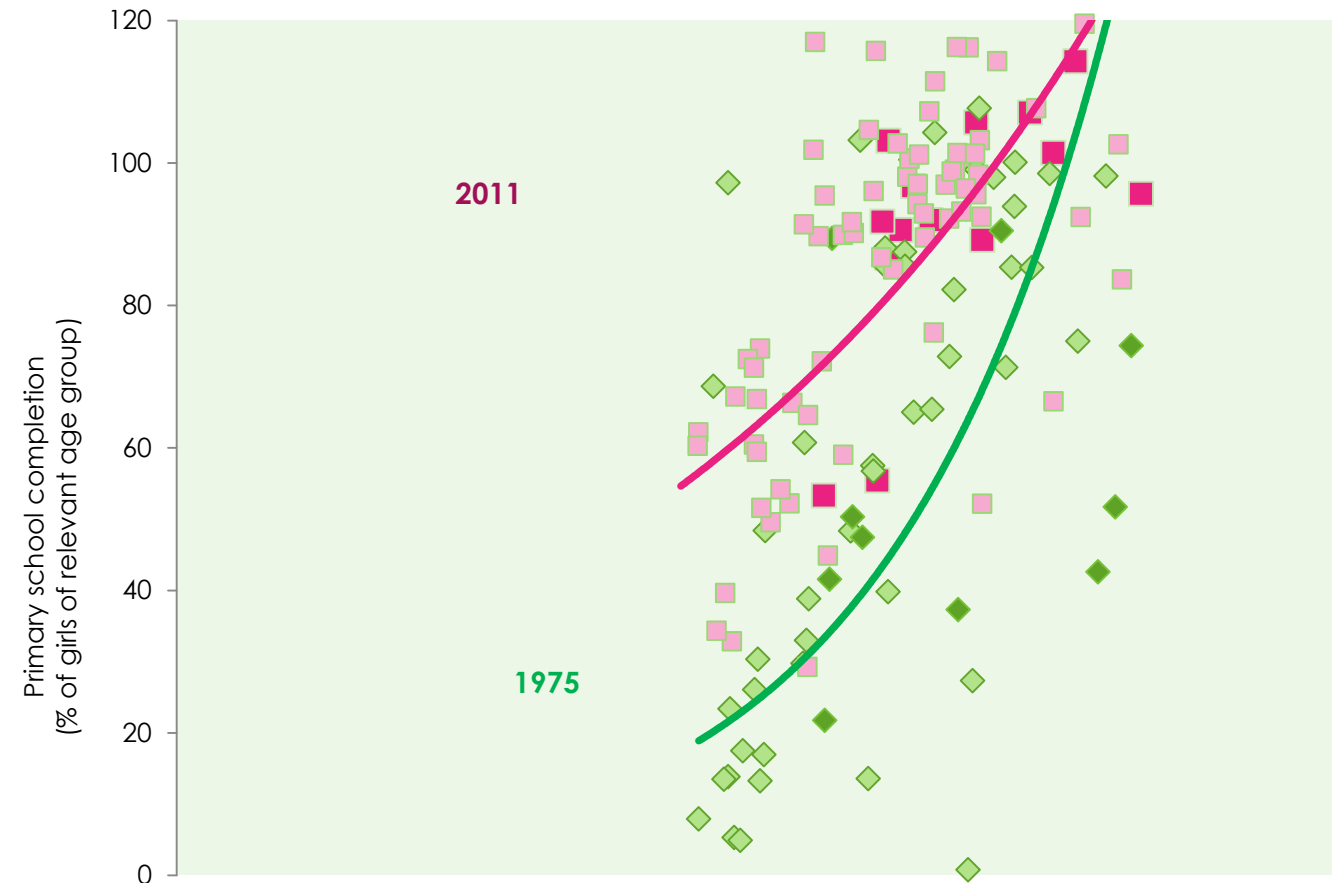
- ▶ **Proposed considerations in moving ahead**

Since independence, the Arab world has seen growth of state and services

Child Mortality (0-5 year olds dying per 1,000 born)

Female Primary School Completion (% of girls of relevant age group)

Legend:
- World 2011
- MENA Countries 2011
- MENA Countries 1975
- World 1975
- Expon. (World 2011)
- Expon. (World 1975)
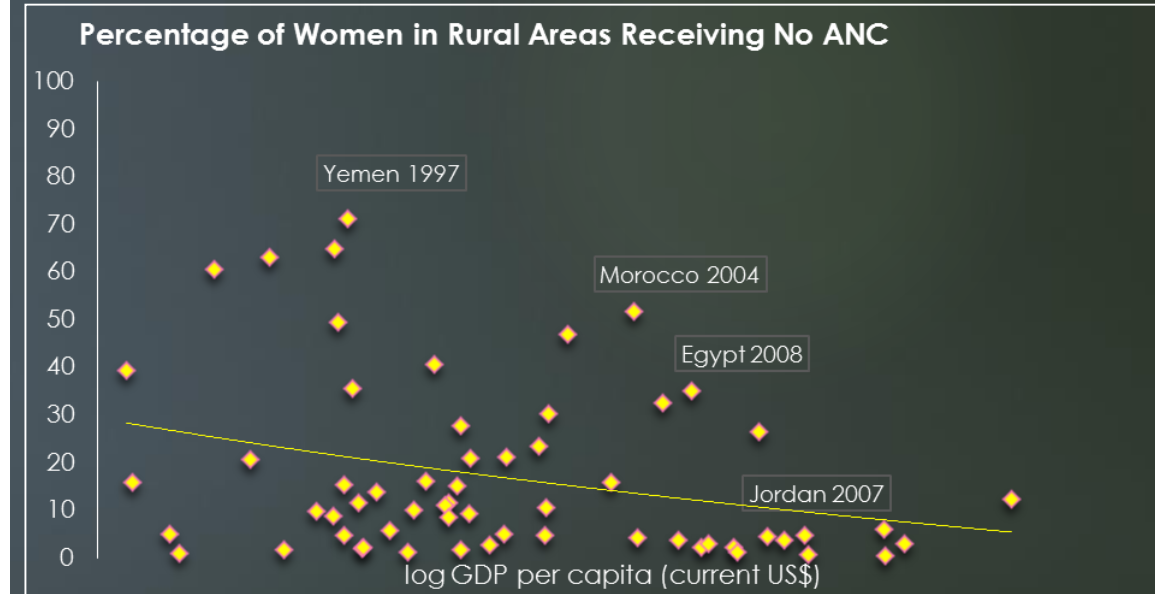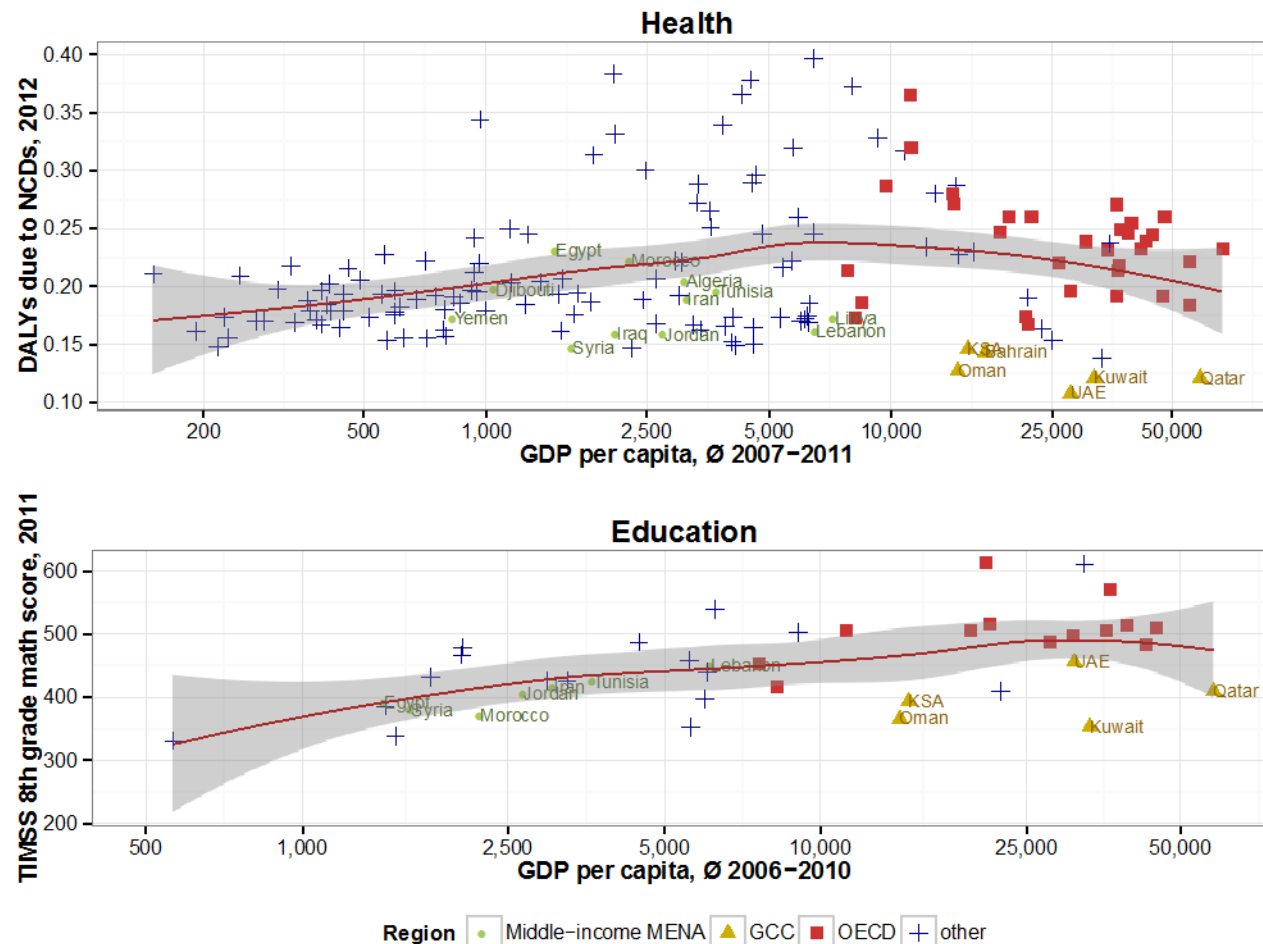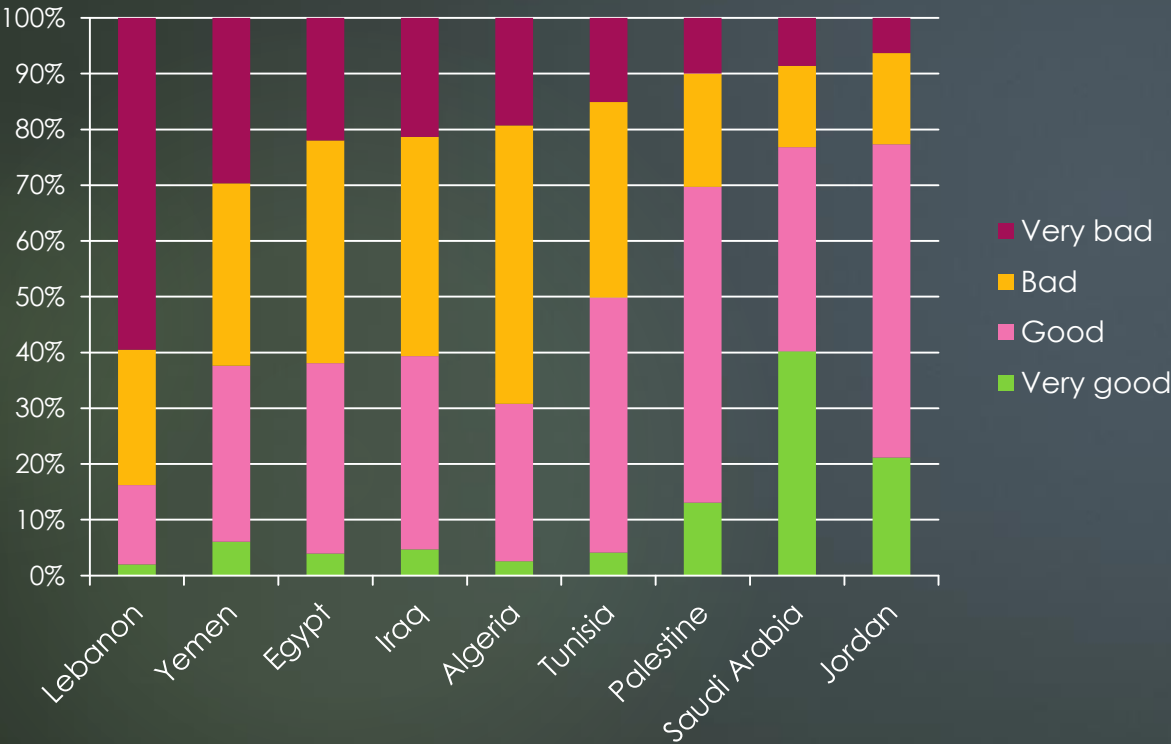
Primary school completion (% of girls of relevant age group)

GDP/capita PPP$ inflation-adjusted (log)

MENA citizens expect state services, but outcomes fall short

Health

DALYs due to NCDs, 2012 vs GDP per capita, Ø 2007–2011

Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Djibouti, Iran, Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Syria, KSA, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar

Education

TIMSS 8th grade math score, 2011 vs GDP per capita, Ø 2006–2010

Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Jordan, Iran, Tunisia, Lebanon, KSA, Oman, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar

Region: Middle-income MENA, GCC, OECD, other

Percentage of Women in Rural Areas Receiving No ANC

Yemen 1997, Morocco 2004, Egypt 2008, Jordan 2007

log GDP per capita (current US$)

Citizens view as state failure and lack of accountability
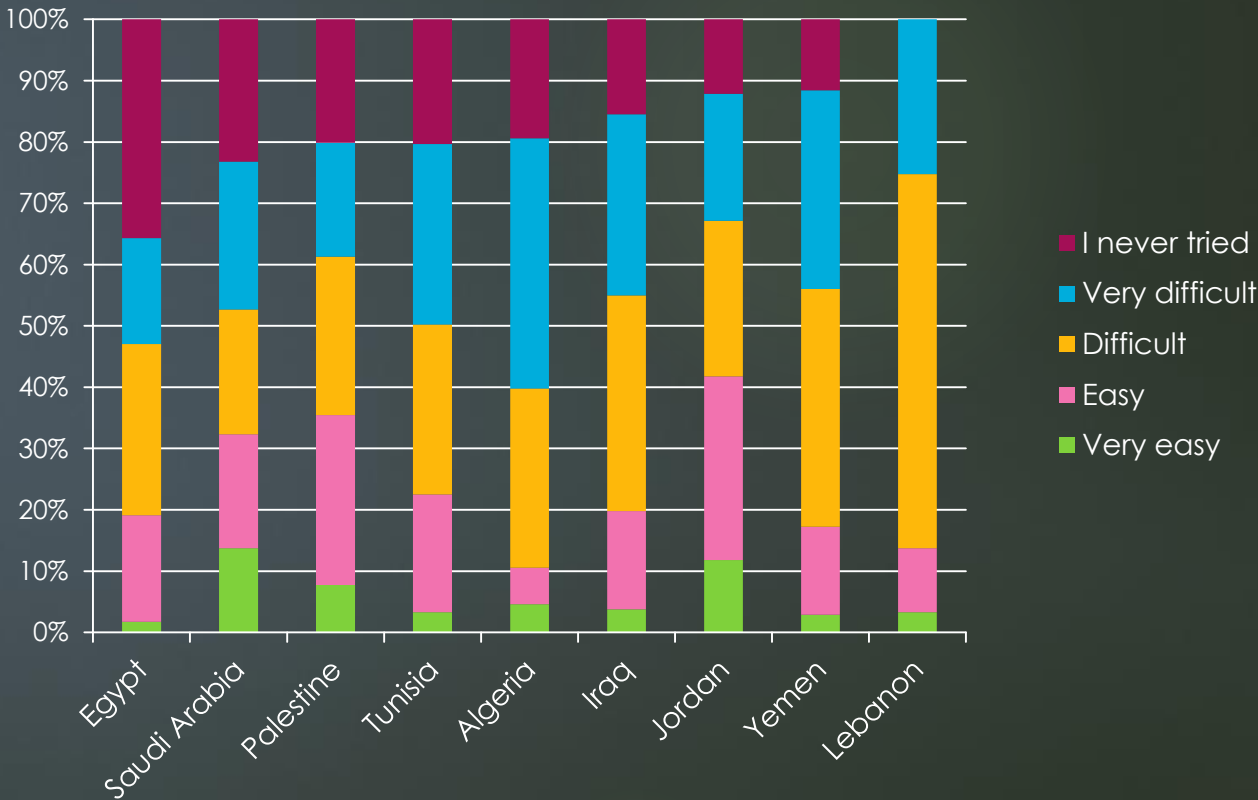
and in some cases, concerns regarding a sense of entitlement

Student Level Analyses: Students' Concern for and Parents' Attention to Education in MENA
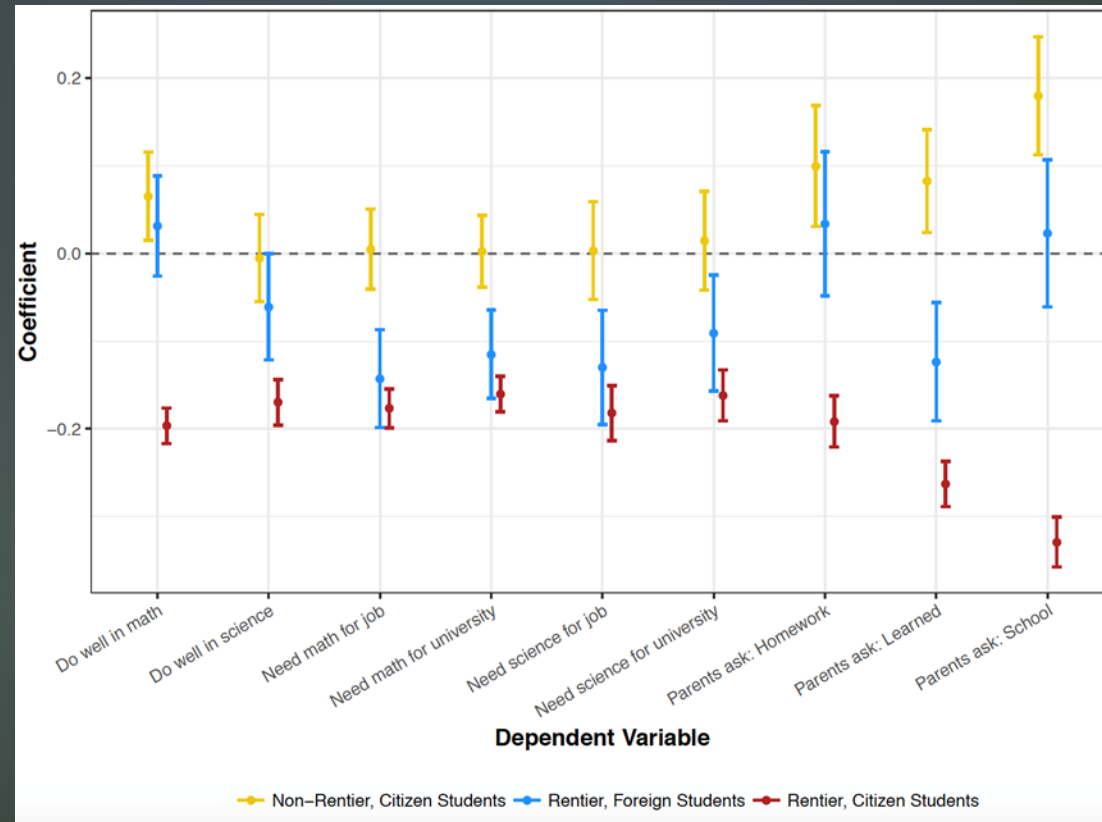
Full model: Citizen, Rentier, Gender, Age, Computer, Internet, Own Room, # Books at Home, Mother's Ed, Father's Ed; Dependent Variables: Questions from TIMSS Surveys

Increasing challenges in the Arab world

- Young men and women in the MENA region face the **highest youth unemployment levels in the world** and express **lower levels of trust** in government than their parents (OECD, 2017).

- Civil war in Syria has killed about 500,000 people, displaced half the population - one-third of them outside the country - and pushed more **than two-third of Syrians into poverty** (World Bank, 2017).

- The conflict in Yemen has touched every aspect of Yemenis' lives, limited their access to **food, water, and health care, and forced millions of children out of school**. So far, more than 15 percent of Yemenis have been displaced or have fled the country (World Bank, 2017).

- Violence in Libya has **displaced** one tenth of its 6 million people internally, and about 125,000 externally (World Bank, 2017).

Challenges for national planning and Agenda 2030

Low trust, weakened states and growing demands

▶ **Low (and declining) trust and strength of state institutions** and actors

▶ Both **state and non-state actors** and institutions influence processes and outcomes

▶ **Local-level factors** affect implementation and outcomes of reforms

▶ Governance experienced differently given **community**, and to a lesser extent, individual factors

▶ **Different stresses** across the region: conflict affected, oil-'endangered'

The Cycle of Performance*

- Citizen Engagement
- Formal and Informal Mechanisms

- Citizen Trust in the State

Engagement

Institutions

Trust

Cycle at the National, Subnational, and Community Levels
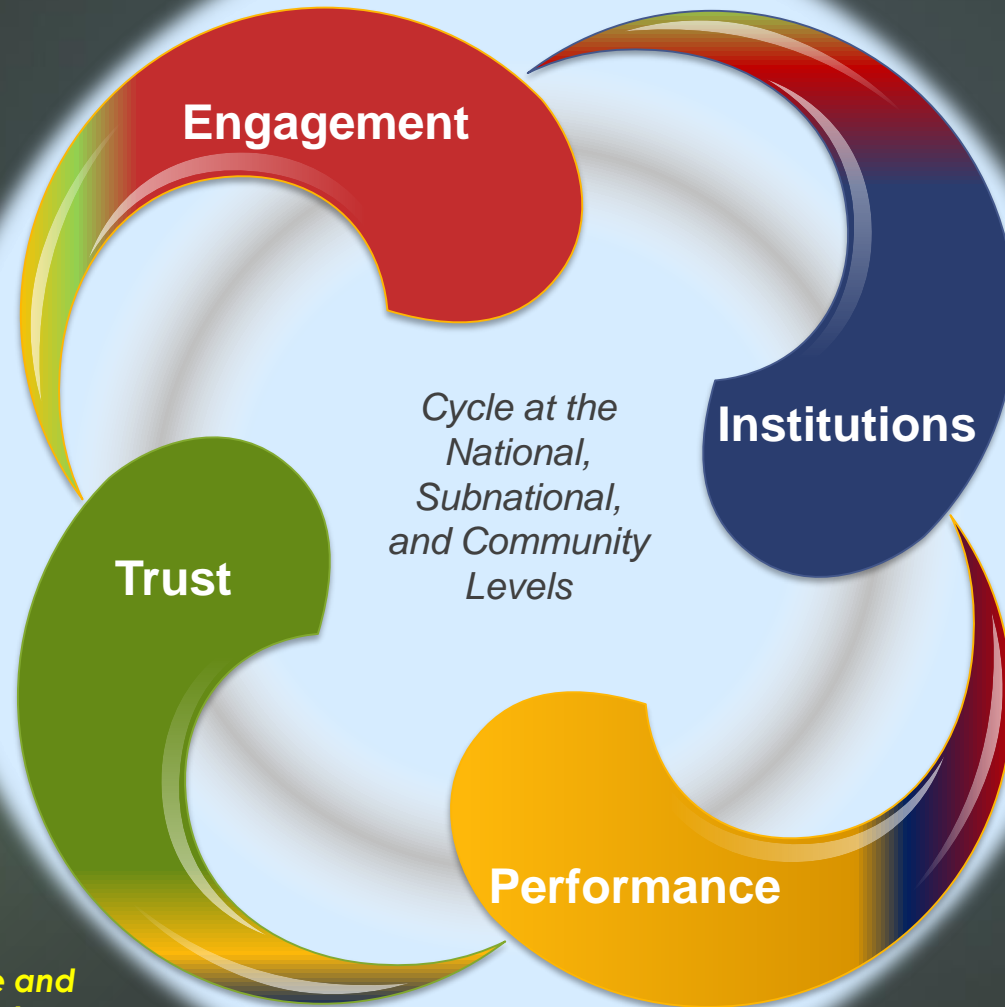
Performance

- Political, Social and Administrative Institutions
- Accountability: Formal and Informal; Internal and External
- Emphasis on Incentives

- State Performance
- Service Delivery Performance

* Brixi, Lust and Woolcock, *Trust, Voice and Incentives* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2015)

Wealth/class a key factor:
Poorer citizens are more likely to report using wasta (aktef) to receive better medical treatment (Tunisia 2015)

Figure 55: Use of wasta to get better treatment, by class.
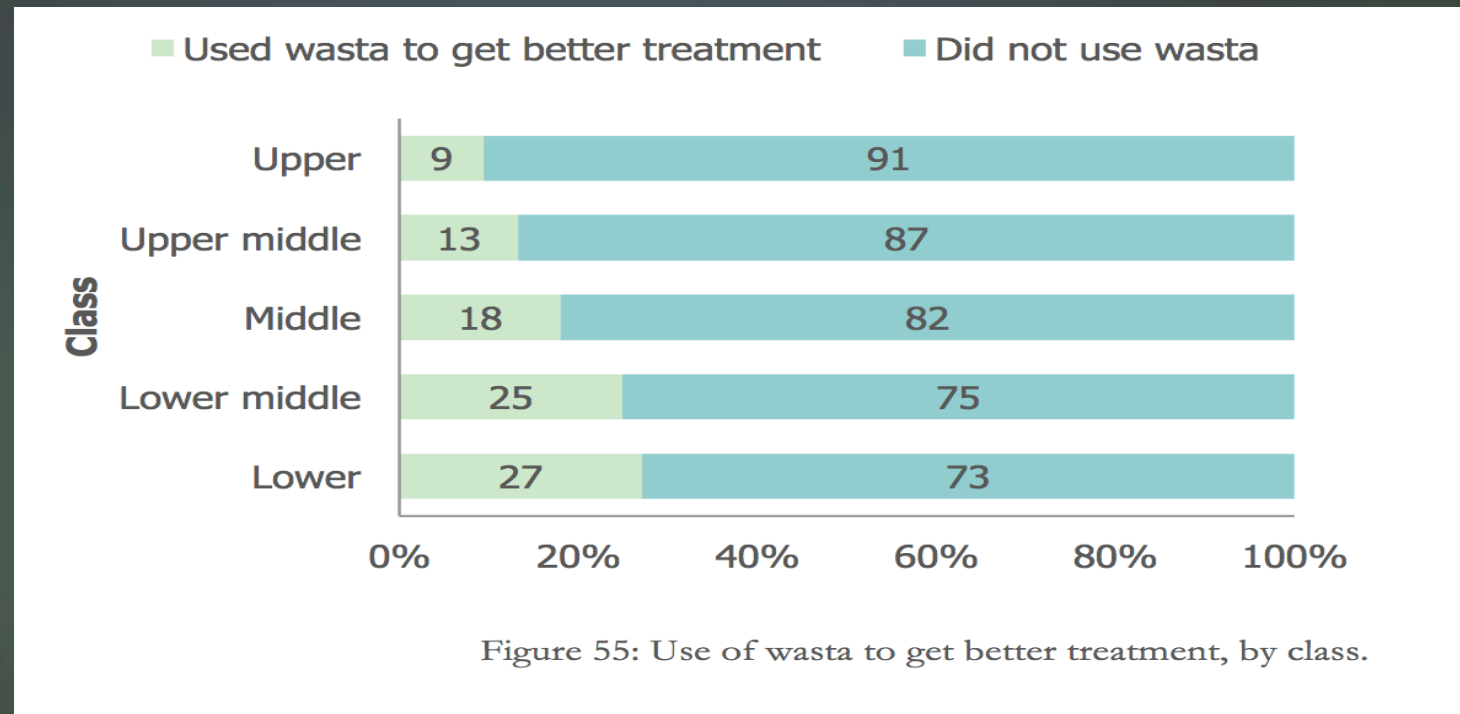
Village-level differences in how citizens seek solutions

People living in different villages have vastly different likelihoods of meeting to solve problems, even when controlling for demographics
Malawi 2016
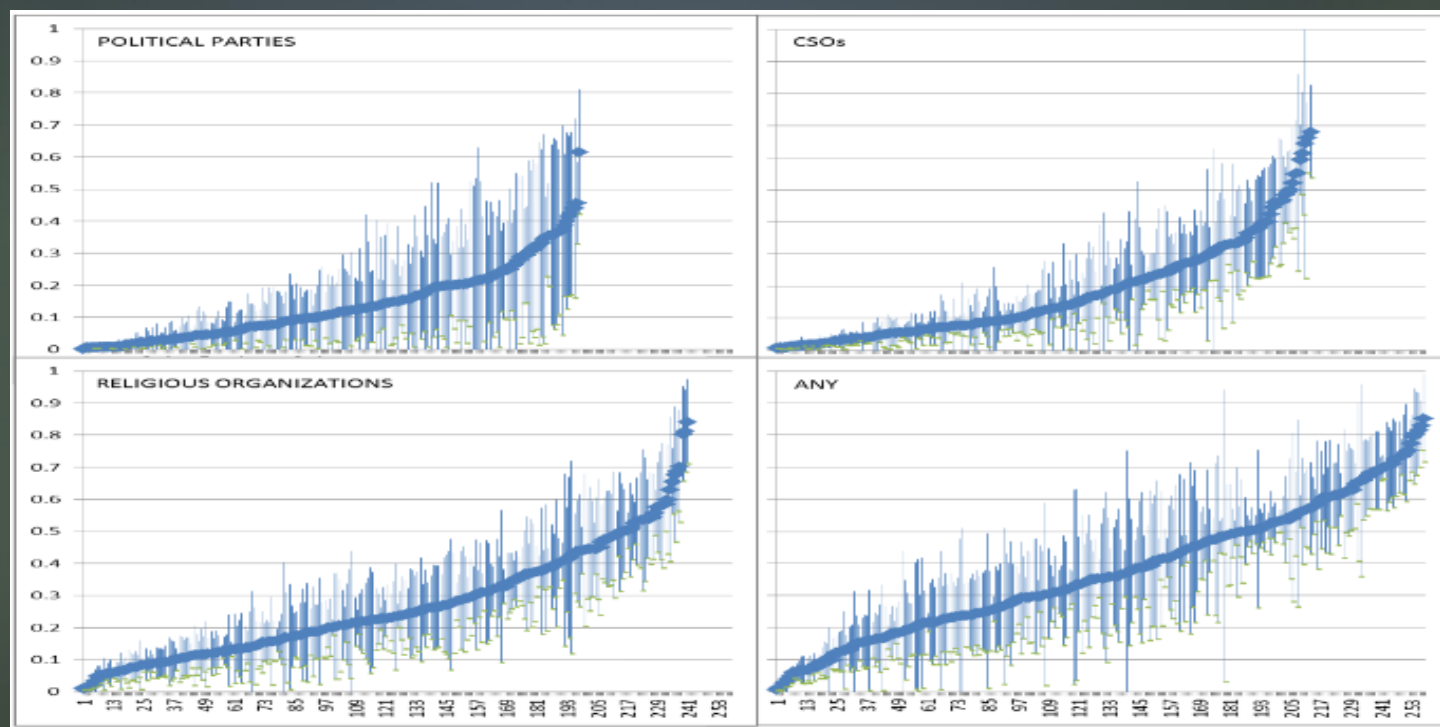
Learning from local success

طلاب يديرون شركة زراعية في «الحرم المدرسي»

الشيبانية: مستعدون لتقديم الدعم

Drivers of change: mechanisms and inspiration – discerning the difference

Management systems

- School Improvement Plan + District Development Plan (Jordan)
- Health accreditation systems (Jordan)
- Concours Qualite (Morocco)

Community Engagement

- Education Council Chief + community questionnaires (Jordan)
- Direct parental involvement in schools (Palestine)
- Collaboration with important local social institutions (Jordan)

Collaborative decision-making & transparency

- Education Council (Jordan)
- Relations and coordination with school district (Palestine)
- Coordination with provinces and regional MOH officials (Morocco)
- Local Health Committees (Jordan)

Autonomy

- School grants (Jordan)
- Freedom in organization of teachers and school environment (Palestine)
- Formalization of health management procedures (Jordan)

Common words used by citizens and providers: **trust** (between provider and citizens, and between provider and Ministry), **building partnerships, formalizing avenues for citizens to share their voice, transparency, ownership, strong leadership, internal motivation, common vision…**

Considerations moving forward

Empower communities and local leaders to find 'best fit' solutions

Reforms should aim at inspiring trust and empowering citizens, service providers, and local officials to act.

► Recognize and address bottlenecks and state weakness, and build on non-state strengths, where available.

► Develop institutions that regulate, but innovate

► Give local actors space to devise and engage in piloting possible solutions.

► Close the feedback loop, engage citizens and partners among the civil society organizations and in the private sector to strengthen policy development, needs prioritization, resource allocation and policy implementation

Gather, and *use*, local level information

► Systematically collect information on governance and services, focusing on experience

► Gather from users and non-users, on state and non-state provision and engagement

► Use for benchmarking service delivery and local governance performance, and disseminating information on performance to provide a rigorous basis for citizen, government and leader action.

Strengthen trust and efficacy

Any form of improvements observable by citizens to gain and retain trust and make the cycle of performance virtuous.

- Foster 'quick successes'

- Identify and publicize local success, use for inspiration

- Hold public awareness campaigns on citizen rights and service delivery standards, and **follow through**

- Conduct solutions-focused public meetings to address, for example, absenteeism and material shortages in service delivery and encourage innovative solutions

- Demand a response to citizen feedback

Conclusions

- Arab world faces a range of challenges: conflict-affected, oil-challenged

- Low trust and weak state institutions characterize Arab world, to varied degrees

- Planning might benefit from

  - Recognizing and building on state and non-state actors and institutions

  - Build institutions that foster and reward creative solutions

  - Gather and use local information on state and non-state governance and service provision

  - Highlight local success as inspiration, and recognize not all lessons transfer

  - Build trust, in part by emphasizing 'quick wins' along with sustained, long term institutional development

Thank You, and Our Funders