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– 2 YEARS ON: WHERE ARE THEY NOW AND WHAT HAS CHANGED?



THE ARAB YOUTH CLIMATE MOVEMENT – 2 YEARS ON: WHERE ARE THEY NOW AND WHAT HAS CHANGED?

The seeds of the Arab Youth Climate Movement (AYCM) were planted in Cairo in the lead up to the UNFCCC COP18 Doha in 2012. Since then a total of 16 AYCM national chapters have been established, including Syria, Sudan, Mauritania, Libya, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. We caught up with some of the AYCM team to find out what they've been up to, what's changed, and what's next in the region.

The Middle East and North Africa region is vulnerable to climate change. The region's geological and ecological particularity puts it at a high risk of water scarcity, food insecurity, drought, heat waves and many other significant impacts that are already being witnessed. However, there is a huge lack of awareness about this issue and a lack of youth who are informed and able to add their voices to the international negotiations.

The seeds of the Arab Youth Climate Movement (AYCM) were planted in Cairo in the lead up to the UNFCCC COP18 Doha in 2012, in a workshop organized by the youth-based Arab NGO IndyACT and other NGOs in Egypt. A group of 20 Arab youth climate leaders were selected from more than five hundred applicants to start the first regional Middle East and North African (MENA) movement, who's aim was to combat climate change locally, regionally and internationally.

Since then a total of 16 AYCM national chapters have been established, including Syria, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, Libya, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Oman.

In the lead-up to the Conference of Parties (COP18) in Doha in 2012, the AYCM mobilized more than 150 youth in the space of 10 weeks making its presence felt at the talks. This marked the first presence of Arab youth at the negotiations and was the starting point in terms of interacting with the Arab League. The AYCM underwent a lot of knowledge transfer between and amongst its members in Doha along with gaining new lessons brought forward from fellow international youth climate movements from past experiences, which were very valuable.

Following COP18, the AYCM has continued to develop, both regionally and nationally. On a regional level, the team has had a regional conference, which was hosted by IndyAct in Beirut, Lebanon in October 2013. During the regional meeting, the team discussed its strategy for COP19 along with addressing some of the challenges they have faced in the previous months following COP18 and its internal affairs. AYCM was also present at COP19, which was hosted in Poland last November, where team continued engaging with the Arab League, followed the negotiations, and participated in the fasting campaign.

(https://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/aycm_group_photo_cropped.jpg) On national levels, the AYCM chapters have blossomed beautifully with many reaching large numbers of youth and organizations across countries. Summarizing work done in 16 countries is almost impossible in a short article however, as an overview, countries can be placed in sub-regions namely: the Gulf, the Levant and North Africa. In the Gulf, Bahrain has chosen to work within the fields of agriculture, health and world heritage sites. Its biggest achievement last year was to be able to include climate change and its impacts for adaptation purposes within

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