



SIGHT **for GROWTH**

a monthly series

Youth:
Our region's
change agents

September | 2025



Across the Middle East, a **youthful demographic** is **rewriting the region's social, cultural, and economic narratives.**

With nearly **60% of the population under the age of 30**, the region is witnessing a **generational shift where ambition, connectivity, and creativity converge.**

In our region we are experiencing a rapid transformation, driven by this young population **eager to embrace change and innovation.**

Their unique perspectives, challenges, and aspirations are essential for **shaping the policies and initiatives** that will **define sustainable development** in the Middle East.



The Growing Impact of Youth in the Middle East

Youth are not just the future of the Middle East — they are today's change agents. By **harnessing digital tools, cultural creativity, and entrepreneurial energy**, they are **reshaping economies, challenging norms**, and putting the region firmly on the **global innovation map**.

"Gen Z Founders Put MENA on the Global Startup Map"

"Tradition Meets TikTok: How Arab Youth Are Redefining Culture in Real Time"

"The New Face of Sports: Youth Talent Driving Global Recognition"

"Rewriting Tomorrow: How Arab Youth Are Driving Progress in Sustainability and Policy"

*Learning, Leading,
Launching: The Education
Revolution Driven by Youth"*



Let's look at how Youth are reshaping the future of our region...

Theme 1

Startups over Status Quo: Entrepreneurial Mindset & Startup Boom



Theme 2

Transforming Digital Dreams into Unicorns: Digital-First Mindset



Theme 3

Re-writing the Arab Story: Cultural Reinterpretation



Theme 4

Redefining Sports and National Pride: Sports, Fitness & Esports Revolution



Theme 5

Wellness is the New Cool: Self-care Movement



Theme 6

Powering a Sustainable Future: Green & Sustainable Living



Theme 7

Bold, Connected, and Unstoppable: Social Change & Advocacy



Theme 8

Future-Proofing for a new Economy: Education & Global Mobility



Theme 9

Lifestyle Remix: Consumer Power & Lifestyle Shifts



Theme 1

Startups over Status Quo: Entrepreneurial Mindset & Startup Boom

Young people are at the center of the digital economy —launching startups in fintech, e-commerce, health-tech, gaming, and AI-driven solutions.

A survey conducted by INJAZ Al-Arab and Wyman revealed that **84% of MENA youth aspire to launch their own ventures**, with North Africa showing the strongest inclination at 87%.



In Saudi Arabia, programs under Vision 2030 are designed to unlock youth-led innovation, supporting entrepreneurship hubs and accelerators.



In Saudi Arabia, youth-led fintechs are transforming payments while in the UAE, Gen Z founders are scaling e-commerce brands globally.



The Arab Youth Startup Marketplace (AYSM) in UAE convened 103 startups and over 145 entrepreneurs from 18 countries.

"The MENA region is a hub for youthful and positive energy... how can we harness their power, their voice, the energy of young entrepreneurs." H.E. Shamma Al Mazroui, the UAE Minister of State for Youth



Anghami (founded in Lebanon, now HQ in Abu Dhabi) — the region's first music streaming platform — was created by youth entrepreneurs to serve Arab tastes while competing with global giants.

Theme 2

Transforming Digital Dreams into Unicorns: Digital-First Mindset

Social media platforms like **TikTok**, **Instagram**, and **Snapchat** are shaping youth culture and consumption. Youth are influencers, content creators, and digital entrepreneurs, monetizing their platforms and reshaping media narratives.



According to recent studies, over 90% of Arab youth use at least one social media platform daily, and more than half consider online channels as their primary source of news, entertainment, and even education.

For us, digital isn't a tool—it's the starting point. If it doesn't live online, it doesn't really exist.

Roman Ziemian—a global entrepreneur and mentor says
"These founders use social platforms as launchpads, treat AI tools as co-founders, and often aim to build movements rather than just businesses"



Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are not just leisure spaces—they are ecosystems of influence, identity-building, and entrepreneurship.

Theme 3

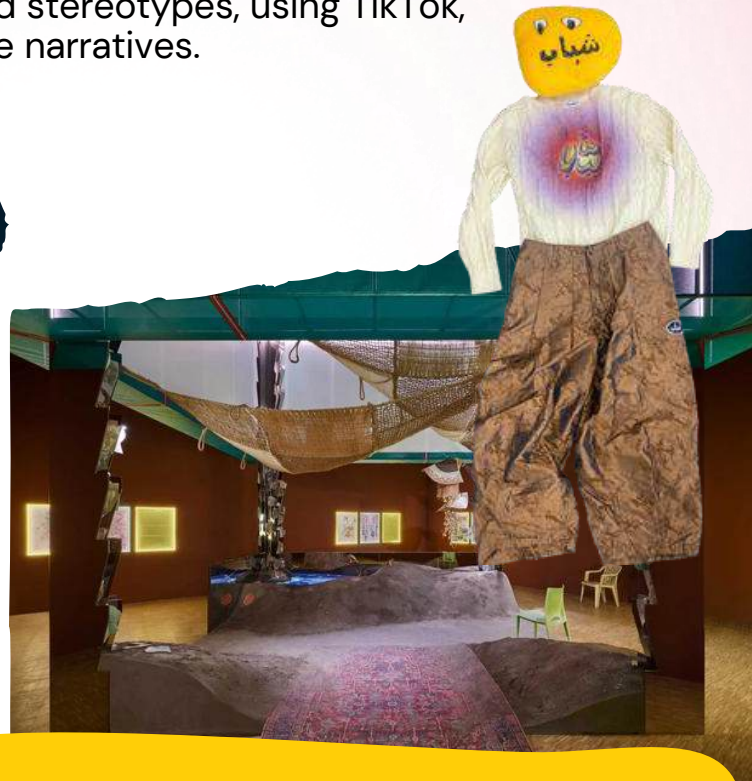
Re-writing the Arab Story: Cultural Reinterpretation that balances Heritage with Modernity

Youth are **reimagining Arab identity**, embracing global influences in fashion, music, and arts while **holding on to local traditions**.

They are pushing back against outdated stereotypes, using TikTok, YouTube, and podcasts to voice diverse narratives.



Unlike older generations, who often saw tradition and modernity in tension, today's youth embrace fusion rather than separation. Young Arabs are reclaiming heritage as a source of inspiration, not limitation.



Streetwear brands like Shabab Intl (UAE) weave Arabic calligraphy and regional identity into global street culture, while Saudi artists showcase traditional motifs at international design fairs such as the Milan Triennale.



Food entrepreneurs in cities like Dubai and Riyadh are reinventing classic Arab recipes with modern, health-conscious twists, appealing to a generation that values both authenticity and innovation.

Saudi rapper Qusai and Emirati streetwear brands like Precious Trust reflect this cultural fusion.



Theme 4

Redefining Sports and National Pride: Sports, Fitness & Esports Revolution

Arab youth are transforming both traditional and emerging arenas of physical activity into lifestyle, identity, and even career opportunities. This generation places a high value on **wellness, performance, and community**, while also driving the region's growing **esports and digital gaming economy**.

Equally, **the fitness culture boom** is visible on Instagram and TikTok, where young Arabs showcase training routines, wellness tips, and body positivity—reshaping ideals of health and lifestyle.

Esports and gaming are exploding, with Saudi Arabia positioning itself as a global hub.

Youth participation in traditional sports is also rising—particularly women entering football, basketball, and motorsports.



The Gamers8 festival in Riyadh attracts global audiences and puts youth at the forefront of digital entertainment.



Dubai hosting major esports tournaments attracting Gen Z gamers.



Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 Sports Strategy is turning the Kingdom into a global hub for football, Formula 1, and esports, while the UAE hosts global fitness challenges and marathons that attract mass youth participation.



Saudi's Savvy Games Group pledged a \$38 billion investment in gaming and esports, and companies like Tamatem Games (Jordan) are localizing content for Arab youth audiences.

Theme 5

Wellness is the New Cool: Youth leading Wellness & Self-care Movement

Arab youth are placing **well-being and balance at the center of their lifestyles**, reshaping cultural norms around health, beauty, and mental resilience. Unlike previous generations who often equated success with relentless hustle, today's young Arabs are embracing self-care as strength, not indulgence.

This shift is visible in the rise of **mindfulness practices, fitness culture, and mental health advocacy**.



Social media influencers amplify this movement by sharing mental health conversations, skincare routines, and "slow living" content that resonate widely.



From yoga and meditation classes in Dubai and Riyadh to wellness retreats in Jordan's Wadi Rum, youth are seeking ways to integrate holistic well-being into daily life.



Youth-led startups in wellness apps, boutique gyms, and healthy food delivery are booming.



The self-care economy is also booming: demand for organic skincare, healthy food startups, and boutique gyms is largely driven by Gen Z and millennial Arabs.



Campaigns like the UAE's National Program for Happiness & Wellbeing and Saudi Arabia's Quality of Life Program align with this generational push, reinforcing wellness as part of national identity.

Theme 6

Powering a Sustainable Future: Green & Sustainable Living

Arab youth are emerging as key drivers of sustainability, **using their voices, choices, and innovations to push for greener lifestyles and climate-conscious policies.** Unlike previous generations, they see sustainability not as an option but as a necessity for survival and prosperity in the region.

From climate activism to eco-entrepreneurship, young Arabs are reshaping the agenda.

They are increasingly vocal about sustainability, climate change, and eco-friendly practices.



Many are adopting green consumer habits—choosing sustainable fashion, plant-based diets, and renewable energy solutions—while others are launching startups tackling waste, water scarcity, and clean tech.



Arab Youth Hackathon (2023) – A collaboration between PepsiCo and the Arab Youth Center focused on climate solutions; finalists to be announced during COP28.



Roman Ziemian—a global entrepreneur and mentor—observes that Gen Z founders are not just profit-driven — they're purpose-fueled... Gen Z founders are turning cultural nuance, technology, and social conscience into their advantage.

Theme 7

Future-Proofing for a new Economy: Education & Global Mobility

Youth are among the most educated and globally connected generations in the region.

They are increasingly pursuing global education and international experiences to broaden their skills, networks, and career prospects. Scholarships, exchange programs, and online learning platforms are enabling them to access world-class education, while returning graduates often drive innovation and entrepreneurship in their home countries.

Youth are pivoting towards STEM, AI, digital skills, and freelancing to thrive in a post-oil economy.



There is a surge in coding bootcamps, AI research fellowships, and gig-economy jobs among MENA youth.



Theme 8

Bold, Connected, and Unstoppable: Social Change & Advocacy

Arab youth are increasingly becoming **catalysts for social change**, using digital platforms, grassroots initiatives, and civic engagement.

Young voices are driving discussions on **gender equality, sustainability, and inclusivity**. Their influence is prompting governments and businesses to rethink policy and communication strategies.



Social media campaigns, volunteer initiatives, and policy advocacy are some of the key avenues through which they drive tangible impact.



In Lebanon, youth-led campaigns have raised awareness on climate issues and pushed for sustainable urban development.



In Saudi Arabia, young activists have promoted female empowerment and access to education, influencing public discourse and policy shifts.

MENTAL

HEALTH



In Egypt, students and young professionals have championed initiatives supporting mental health awareness and community development.

Theme 9

Lifestyle Remix: Consumer Power & Lifestyle Shifts

This digital immersion is also **reshaping consumer behavior**. Young Middle Easterners prefer **mobile-first experiences**, value **personalization**, and increasingly expect **seamless digital interactions** from brands, governments, and institutions.



Youth use digital platforms to organize, raise awareness, and amplify voices around causes such as sustainability, women's empowerment, and mental health.



Their preference for e-wallets, digital banking, and contactless services is accelerating fintech adoption, while their passion for content creation has fueled the creator economy in the region.



This dual role—as both consumers and change agents—makes them one of the most powerful forces reshaping the region's future



But beyond consumption, the digital-first mindset extends to agency and activism.

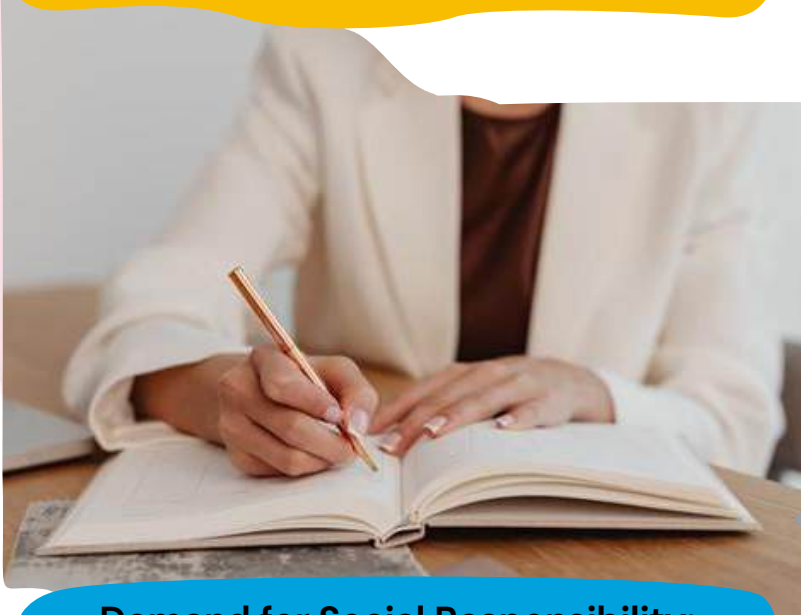
With all these mega movements in the region, what does this mean for brands?

Arab youth are increasingly vocal about their expectations from brands, emphasizing authenticity, cultural relevance, and social responsibility. They seek:



Authenticity Over Stereotypes: Young Arabs express frustration with brands that generalize or misrepresent their culture.

Desire for Co-Creation: Arab youth want to be active participants in brand narratives. They seek opportunities to design, influence, or contribute to products and campaigns.



Demand for Social Responsibility: Sustainability is no longer a trend but a requirement. Young consumers are turning sustainability from a marketing theme into a buying requirement, forcing companies to publish evidence on environmental and social impact or risk losing trust and market share.



Preference for Engaged Influencers: Arab youth show a strong preference for influencers who actively engage with them, whether through comments, live interactions, or Q&A sessions. They tend to seek influencers who reflect their values, culture, and lifestyle aspirations.

Mind-the-Gap

Here is a snapshot of the generational mindsets to help better connect with them...



GEN ALPHA (2012 onwards)

GEN Z (1997 - 2012)

GEN Y (1981 - 1996)

GEN X (1965 - 1980)

BABY BOOMERS (1946 - 1964)

Context:

Growing up with AI, VR, the metaverse, green energy revolutions, and redefined Middle Eastern identities.

Always-online world, Saudi Vision 2030, Expo 2020 Dubai, regional economic reforms, post-COVID realities.

Economic diversification, tech boom, September 11 aftermath, Arab Spring (2010s).

Rapid urbanization, oil boom wealth, Gulf War, and the early stages of globalization.

Post-colonial transitions, oil discoveries, the rise of pan-Arabism.

Shaping Impact:

Will be the most tech-integrated generation ever—AI assistants, metaverse classrooms, and global interconnectedness. Likely to redefine careers, education, and governance, demanding climate action, inclusivity, and innovation.

They will grow up in a region where women's roles, entrepreneurship, and digital-first economies are normalized.

First true digital-native generation in the Middle East—living on TikTok, gaming, and e-commerce.

Driving cultural change: music (hip-hop, rap, K-pop influence), esports, fashion, sustainability.

They are less tolerant of stereotypes, demanding authentic brand voices and new gender roles.

Gen Z in KSA & UAE is reshaping national narratives—taking roles in entertainment, sports, and global representation.

The Arab Spring was the defining youth moment of this generation—millennial voices demanded reforms, freedoms, and transparency. In the Gulf, Millennials shaped economic diversification efforts.

Rise of digital culture—blogs, early social media activism, Arab YouTube stars. Women from this generation pushed boundaries in education, workplace participation, and public visibility.

Grew up in societies that became wealthier, urbanized, and globally connected. They were the first adopters of satellite TV, Western brands, and global consumerism, creating a hybrid identity. Many entered the workforce during a time of state-driven economic growth, helping to expand industries, trade, and finance.

Many came of age during a time of nation-building—helping establish modern state institutions, infrastructure, and the region's oil-based wealth. Their youth years were marked by collective struggles (wars, identity formation, anti-colonial movements).

They laid the foundations of modern education, public service, and welfare systems.

Legacy:

The post-traditional, post-digital generation—expected to put the Middle East on par with the most innovative regions globally.

They are the “globalized youth” who are making the Middle East cool, creative, and future-facing while still respecting roots.

Introduced a culture of questioning, digital activism, and entrepreneurship.

Carried the first seeds of globalization into Arab culture while still balancing conservative values. They represent the “bridge” generation between tradition and modernity.

Political activism, nationalism, and loyalty to traditional structures. They shaped the first wave of Arab identity on the global stage.

OUR

4SiGHT Live Suite



PANEL UAE | KSA

Our pre-recruited ahead-of-the-curve panel for quick, cost-efficient research needs, offering a window into live data.



COMMUNITIES

Designed to build an agile system to conduct research while keeping the customer at the heart of the business.
Enables clients to make consumer relevant decisions by testing on the go.



CONSUMER CONNECTS

4SiGHT's solution to curate and build a customized calendar of immersive interviews for client teams to get the pulse of the consumer.

Available as ad-hoc & annual programs.

For more information, contact [**info@4sight-global.com**](mailto:info@4sight-global.com)

OUR

Research Tools

INSIGHT EXPRESS

Enables swift and efficient innovation testing, minimizing the risks linked to a comprehensive launch - allowing you explore, experiment, and fail cheap.

AASMA | CHATBOT

Facilitates interactive conversations with consumers, streamlining the process of filling consumption/usage diaries. Leading to improved efficiency and quality of data collection.

SPRINT+

Provides an innovative boost to your iterative process by making it more AGILE through co-creation workshops, giving wings to potential ideas/improvements

For more information, contact info@4sight-global.com

OUR

Calendar 2025

JANUARY

[FUTURE OF
EDUCATION](#)

FEBRUARY

[FUTURE OF
FINANCIAL
LITERACY](#)

MARCH

[PULSE OF THE
HEALTH CARE
SECTOR](#)

APRIL

[THE MAGIC OF
MUSIC, MOVIES &
MORE...
PART 1](#)

MAY

[THE MAGIC OF
MUSIC, MOVIES &
MORE...
PART 2](#)

JUNE

[THE MAGIC OF
MUSIC, MOVIES &
MORE...
PART 3](#)

JULY

[MOBILE APPS
REWRITE THE
DIGITAL PLAYBOOK](#)

AUGUST

THE RISE OF WOMEN
POWER

SEPTEMBER

YOUTH: OUR REGION' S
CHANGE AGENTS

OCTOBER

COMING SOON....

NOVEMBER**DECEMBER**

For more information, contact info@4sight-global.com