Measurement to guide smart spending

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Public social expenditures are not optional handouts from Governments to people. They are essential investments in human capital, drivers of greater productivity and correctors of inequity. Steered by fiscal policy, choices to allocate and spend public resources have lasting impacts on the course of each country's economy and human development and the stability of its social contract. They are in line with the SDGs and the 2014 Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region, in which member States reaffirmed commitment to social justice as a core value of Arab and Islamic culture and a foundation for secure, cohesive and prosperous societies. Fiscal policy should therefore play a prominent, active role in building advanced societies and economies with universal access to resources and services and equal opportunities for all.

Towards that end, the SEM supports better-informed fiscal decisions that can both efficiently and sustainably accelerate development and make benefits equitably available. To set the stage, this chapter defines public social expenditure and its measures and presents the latest data on social expenditure in the Arab region and the world. It introduces the SEM and discusses findings based on mapping trends in public budgets in eight Arab countries with sufficient data.

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A. Measuring social expenditure in public budgets

1. What is social expenditure?

The definition of social expenditure varies across countries. One global measure captures Government budget spending on health, education and social protection. Known as HES, it is produced by the IMF,[37] covering some core elements of the SDGs but not others. The SEM is broader in scope. Aligned with the SDGs and adaptable to national specificities, it comprehensively maps all public social services and their beneficiaries.

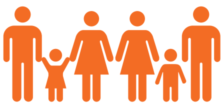
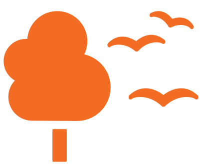
The SEM defines social expenditure as including goods and services provided to individuals, households or communities, primarily on a non-market basis but also through subsidies,[38] grants, tax relief and other transfers. It classifies on-budget social expenditure in seven dimensions (table 2).

Each dimension has a series of indicators of social policy expenditures that are essential in achieving several SDG targets. The indicators show the purpose of expenditure (or kind of social service) and the beneficiary population. Classification of current and capital expenditures by each indicator helps analyse productivity and growth in a macroeconomic context. By capturing crucial social development priorities in the Arab region, SEM indicators represent a concrete step towards aligning thinking on social policy interventions with fiscal and macroeconomic policy.[39]

Expenditure in the SEM is aligned with the IMF Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) system. Beneficiaries are classified as follows: children, young people and adults (disaggregated by sex); older persons; persons with disabilities, sickness and survivors; socially marginalized people or those at risk of social exclusion, refugees and immigrants; households benefitting from financial or in-kind support; and the community at large. The last category covers expenditures on public goods and services and investments in non-financial assets that are not exclusively for any specific population group.[40]

Table 2. SEM dimensions and indicators

1. Education	1. Early childhood education 2. Primary education 3. Secondary education 4. Post-secondary skills training 5. Tertiary education 6. Education for adults 7. Research and use of technology on advancing education 8. Administrative and institutional support
2. Health and nutrition	1. Outpatient services (including residential care) 2. Inpatient hospital services 3. Reproductive health care 4. Discrimination against women and gender-based violence[41] 5. Public health services 6. Expenditure on medicines, medical products, appliances and equipment 7. Research and use of technology related to health and nutrition 8. Administrative and institutional support

3. Housing, connectivity and community amenities 	1. Housing 2. Water supply network and reservoirs 3. Quality of water supply 4. Urban commuting 5. Rural connectivity 6. Street lighting 7. Community development 8. Research on housing and amenities 9. Administrative and institutional support
4. Labour market interventions and employment generation programmes 	1. Incentives to encourage female employment 2. Training and skills upgrading, including on technology (on the job) 3. Grants and other incentives to private enterprises/start-ups for job creation 4. Employment generation programmes 5. Research on labour market programmes and policies 6. Administrative and institutional support
5. Social protection, subsidies and support to farms 	1. Support for achieving a basic income, housing and food security 2. Unemployment benefits 3. Support to family and children, including maternity benefits 4. Subsidies to food processors 5. Subsidies to fuel (oil and gas) 6. Subsidies to electricity 7. Subsidies and other support to farms 8. Research on social protection and food security 9. Other nationally defined sets of goods and services 10. Administrative and institutional support
6. Art, culture and sports 	1. Cultural facilities and events 2. Promoting individuals and organizations in art and cultural fields 3. Sports facilities and services 4. Promoting athletes and teams 5. Research on advancing sports, culture and art 6. Administrative and institutional support
7. Environmental protection 	1. Solid waste management 2. Wastewater management and sanitation facilities 3. Incentives for renewable energy supply (hydroelectricity, solar, wind, biomass) 4. Protecting biodiversity, combating desertification, land degradation 5. Research on environmental protection 6. Administrative and institutional support

Source: ESCWA, 2019c.

2. Challenges in mapping public budgets

Producing the SEM requires identifying and mapping budget lines to social services and beneficiaries. The Arab region is widely diverse in its budget systems and reporting of Government finance statistics. Some countries follow results-based or programme-based budgets (with or without COFOG); others follow COFOG or their own classification of public expenditure. A detailed mapping encounters several issues in the identification and classification of public expenditure for social services.

First, the level of disaggregation often does not allow the clear identification of specific social services and target beneficiaries. Some countries use COFOG with data disaggregation of up to five digits, which identifies the purpose of the expenditure and helps build several indicators for the SEM. Greater disaggregation is needed for some SEM indicators, however, such as to separate expenditure on early childhood, primary and secondary education. Limited data disaggregated by sex posed a challenge for most indicators. In general, achieving the clear disaggregation of social services and their beneficiaries requires results-based or programme-based budgeting, but only a few countries practice this.

Second, the economic classification of social services is often not reported. Countries that report Government finance statistics by COFOG provide total expenditure by purpose but usually with no disaggregation by current and capital expenditure. The IMF's Government Finance Statistics Manual provides a cross-classification of economic budget classifications and COFOG. Yet, it is difficult to cross-classify available budget data without access to more detailed records.

Third, budget classifications may not be comparable over time. Government finance reporting systems may change, which requires examining and reclassifying budget lines for comparison. Insufficient coherence between programme-based and COFOG classifications is another issue in looking at expenditure data over time.

Fourth, sources of expenditure are not consolidated in the general Government budget or central Government budget. Knowing the source is important in understanding expenditures and their comparability over time. Calculating social expenditure in the general Government budget is costly and time-intensive given the current data infrastructure. General Government entities are not consolidated in Government budgets in many Arab countries.

Finally, most countries do not make a detailed budget document publicly available. Only nine of twenty-two Arab States publish budget documents with varying details of expenditures: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan, and Tunisia. Few countries have records available over time. Some have published records for only one or a couple of years.

Overcoming these challenges requires working with Government authorities, including sectoral ministries, to access detailed budget records, a critical task in preparing the SEM mapping. The process drew on a pilot exercise in Jordan and Tunisia and assessment of publicly available budget documents for six other countries. SEM analysis focuses on eight countries; broader regional assessment of public social expenditure draws on the HES.[42]

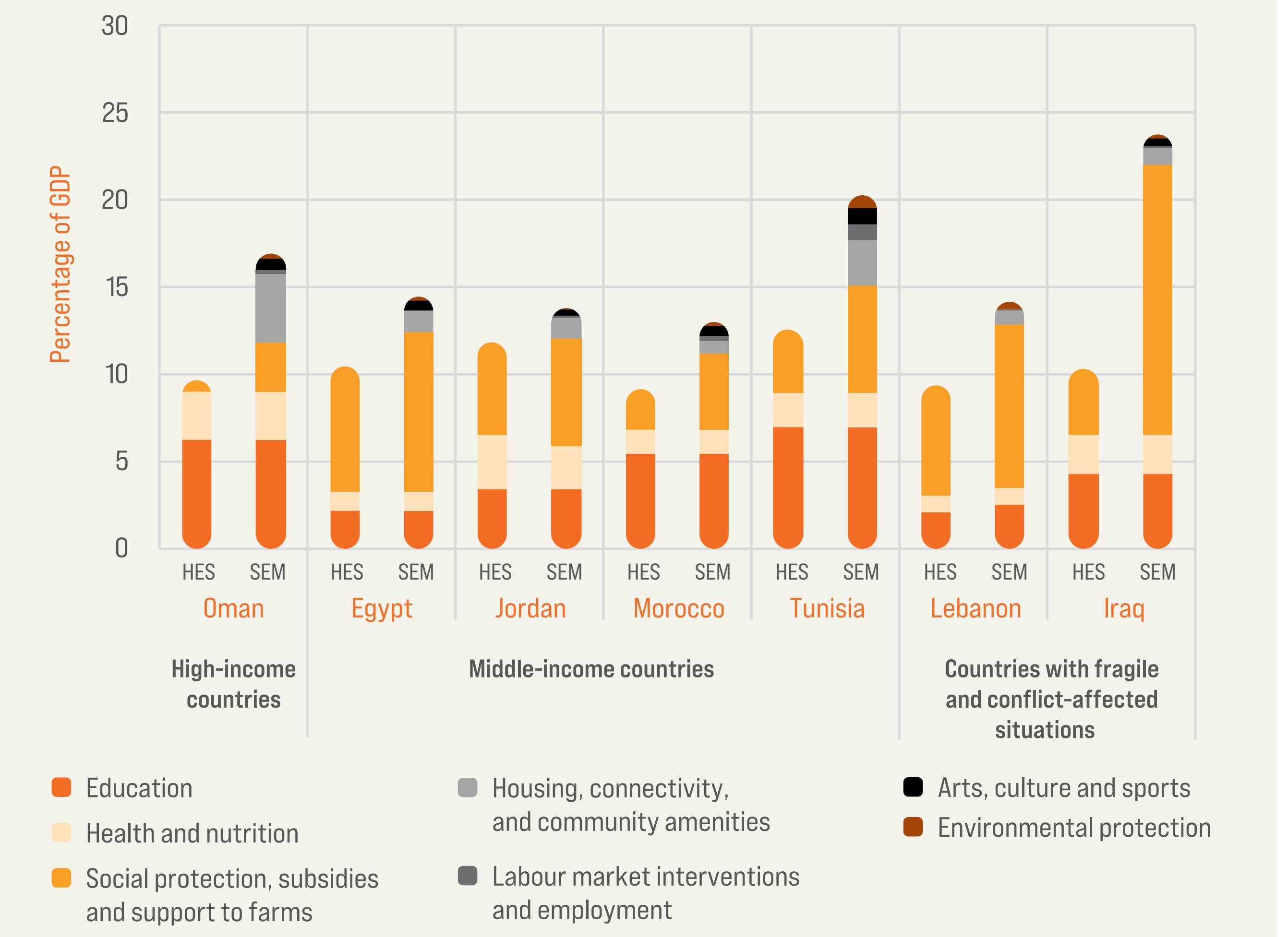
3. Adding up the numbers: comparing the SEM and other measures

A calculation of the HES and SEM based on public budget shares in 2019 found higher total expenditure, as a share of GDP, under the SEM (figure 7). The difference was highest in Iraq (13.8 per cent) followed by Tunisia (7.8 per cent) and

Oman (7.4 per cent). The difference was lowest in Jordan and Morocco. In Iraq, the large difference was mainly due to subsidies. In Tunisia, the difference comes from expenditure on support to the labour market, housing and environmental protection, categories that also explain small differences in Jordan and Morocco. The share of health and education in the SEM matches the HES, which reflects categories with large shares of social expenditure in all countries.

On health expenditure, the SEM database tracks the HES but is consistently below the general Government health expenditure data of the World Health Organization (WHO). Two reasons explain the difference, as shown in figure 8. First, WHO data are provided for the general Government, which includes both central and local governments; SEM data reflect only central Government expenditures. Second, WHO statistics include a component for consumption of fixed capital, also known as depreciation, which is not recorded in financial statistics reporting for the SEM or HES.[43] Counting depreciation is not part of Government budgets, only of national accounting systems. Health expenditure in the SEM reflects only current health expenditures from the budget, a methodological difference to consider in interpreting the results.

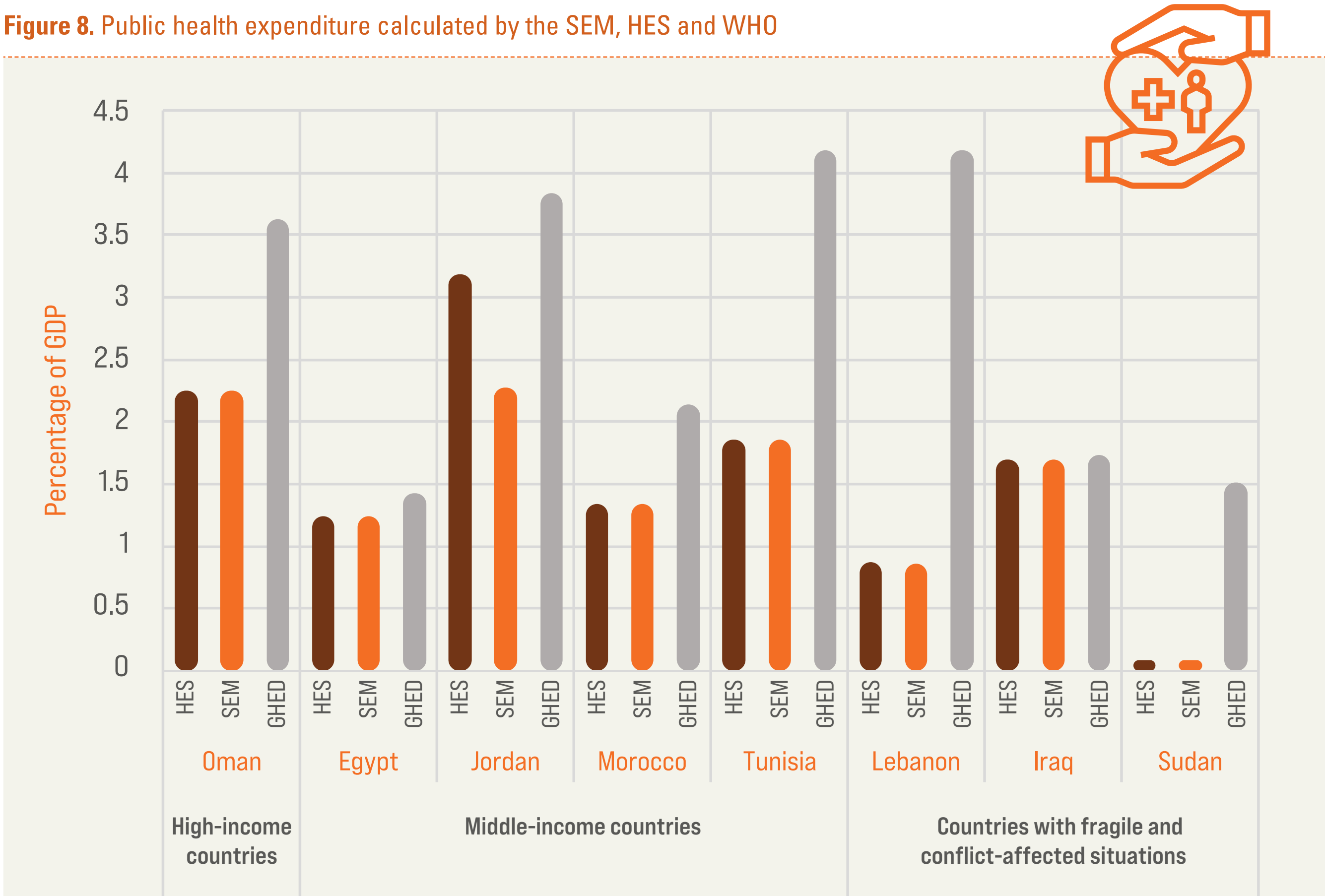
Figure 7. The SEM developed by ESCWA compared to the HES developed by IMF, 2019



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a; IMF, 2019a.

Note: In the HES, social protection does not include subsidies and support to farms. Data on SEM are from public budgets. In the case of Lebanon, subsidies to fuel and electricity are treasury advances to the electricity authority of Lebanon, which do not enter into public budgets from 2018 onwards.

Figure 8. Public health expenditure calculated by the SEM, HES and WHO



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a; IMF, 2019a; OECD, WHO and Eurostat, 2011.

Note: GHED stands for the Government Health Expenditure Database of the WHO. The SEM health expenditure for Lebanon is estimated and differs slightly from the HES calculation based on actual expenditures. Data for Iraq are from 2017 and the Sudan from 2016.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) publishes national statistics on public social protection expenditure through its World Social Protection Data Dashboard.[44] The ILO definition of social protection includes expenditure on services and transfers provided to individual persons and households and expenditure on services provided on a collective basis; it excludes expenditures on health. Data come from a variety of sources, including the ILO, the IMF, the World Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and national sources, depending on the country.

In most countries, the social protection component of the HES is lower than the ILO figures for social protection (figure 9). In some countries, such as Lebanon and Oman, the difference between the HES and ILO is small, while in others, such as Jordan and Tunisia, it exceeds 3-4 per cent of GDP. The SEM social protection component is equal to the HES, but since it adds subsidies and support to farms, it bridges the gap between the HES and

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ILO measures. The resulting SEM total for social protection, subsidies and support to farms is in line with the ILO social protection statistics in several countries.

Few countries show substantial differences between the SEM and ILO figures. For Lebanon, the ILO social protection data are sourced from the IMF, making the HES and ILO measures nearly identical. The SEM social protection component is very close to the IMF data (6.4 per cent versus 6.3 per cent, respectively), although to produce the dimension, the SEM added subsidies that cross 3 per cent of GDP in Lebanon. For Jordan, the SEM social protection component closely matches the HES figures produced by the IMF.

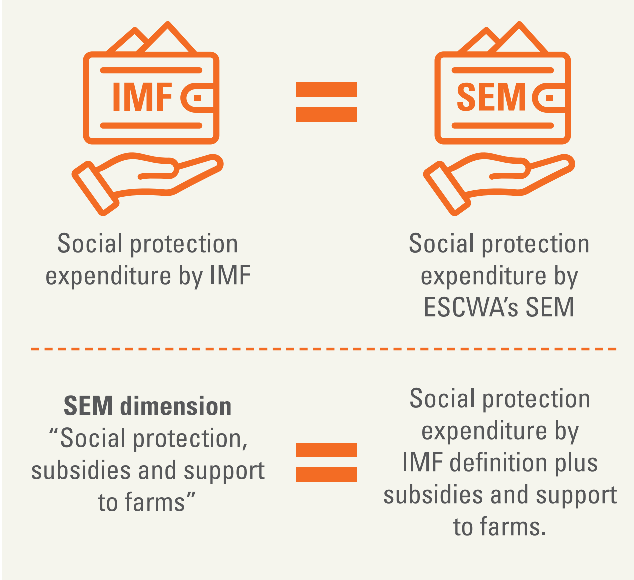
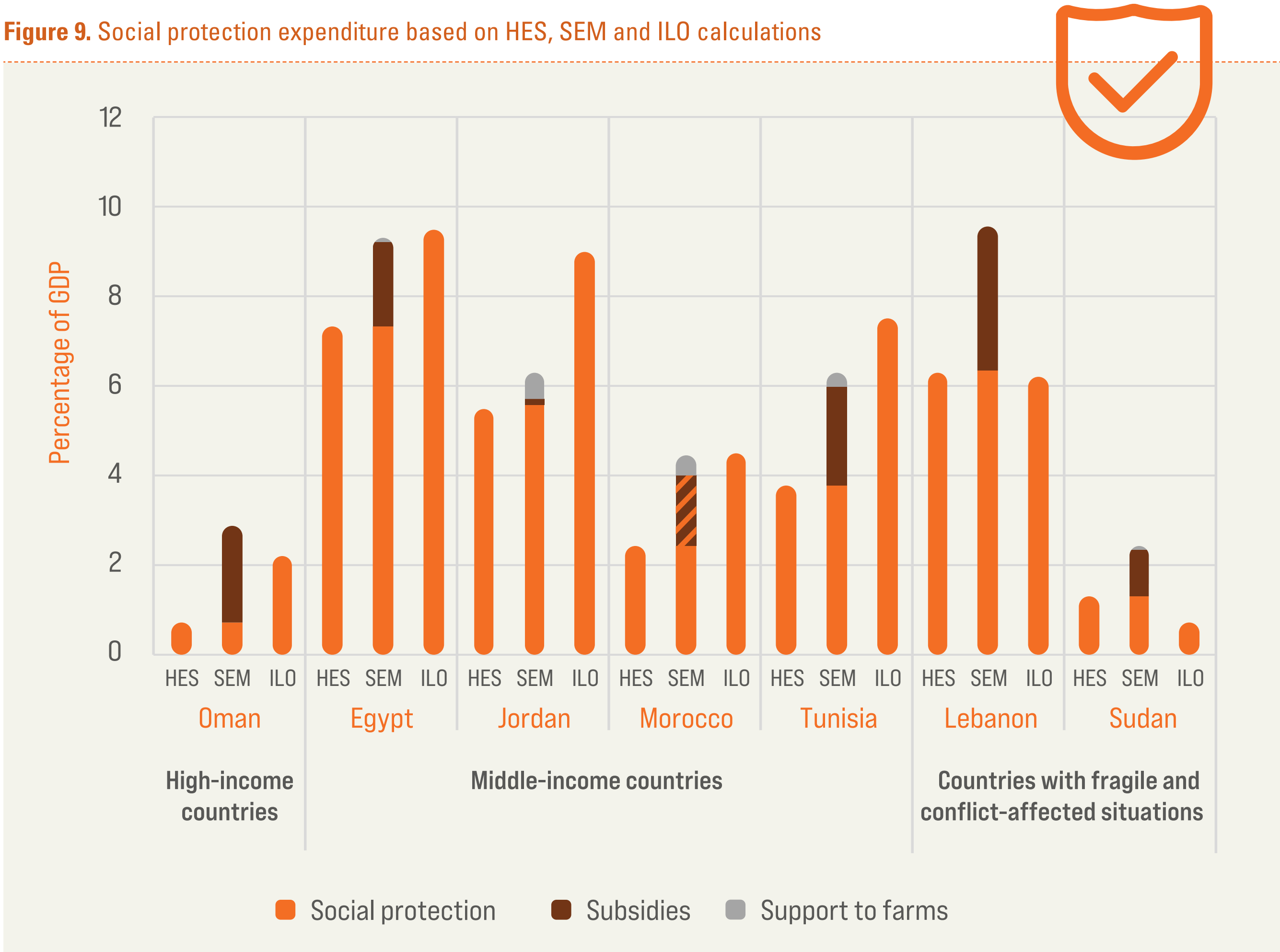


Figure 9. Social protection expenditure based on HES, SEM and ILO calculations



Source: ILO, n.d.b; IMF, 2019a; ESCWA, n.d.a.

Note: Data are from 2020 or the latest available year. Subsidies to food processors, which are considered social protection, and subsidies to fuel and energy, which are classified as subsidies, are not disaggregated in the Morocco budget data. Therefore, the orange-brown section cannot be further disaggregated.

B. How social expenditure compares in the region and with the world

Developing a regional and global comparison of social expenditures required focusing on the HES, since data on other aspects of expenditure are not available or are filtered from published Government finance reports. The HES covers 127 countries, including 14 Arab States. For analysis, countries were grouped by income and development level. High-income countries included 51 nations, of which 5 were Arab States. Middle-income countries comprised 52 countries with 4 Arab States. Of 10 least developed countries, none were in the Arab region. Fourteen countries with fragile and conflict-affected situations were included; five were Arab States.

1. The size of public budgets as a whole

From 2010 to 2019, public expenditure as a share of GDP remained almost stagnant in the Arab region at around 34.6 per cent, compared to the world average of 35.7 per cent.[45] In 2020, the world average increased to 39.5 per cent during the pandemic.[46] The Arab regional average increased to 35.9 per cent but remained lower than global average with most economies facing limited fiscal space and contraction in their incomes. The share in the region varied,[47] reaching 40.4 per cent in the high-income countries but only 30.7 per cent in the middle-income countries, 20 per cent in the least developed countries and 36.3 per cent in countries with fragile and conflict-affected situations (figure 10).

In the region's high-income countries, the expenditure-to-GDP ratio, on average, increased from 34 per cent in 2010 to 40.4 per cent in 2020, albeit with some year-to-year fluctuations. During the pandemic, most GCC countries resorted to borrowing or withdrawals from sovereign reserves to finance Government expenditures, including fiscal stimulus measures.

The expenditure-to-GDP ratio in Arab middle-income countries increased during 2010-2014, on average, which mainly resulted from higher subsidy bills associated with rising oil imports. The share then fell to 31.2 per cent in 2019, mostly due to several measures to contain fiscal deficits, including expenditure cuts and subsidy reforms. With the adverse impact of the pandemic on the economic output, the share of expenditure to GDP further declined to 30.7 per cent in 2020, while that for global peers increased from 31.1 to 33.7 per cent. Inadequate domestic revenue mobilization, external liquidity challenges and high debt-service payments impeded increased financing for essential expenditures even during the pandemic.

In the least developed countries, the percentage remained largely stable during 2010 to 2019 at around 19 per cent, while Government spending increased slightly during the pandemic to reach 20.2 per cent mainly due to some debt relief measures for these countries during the pandemic.

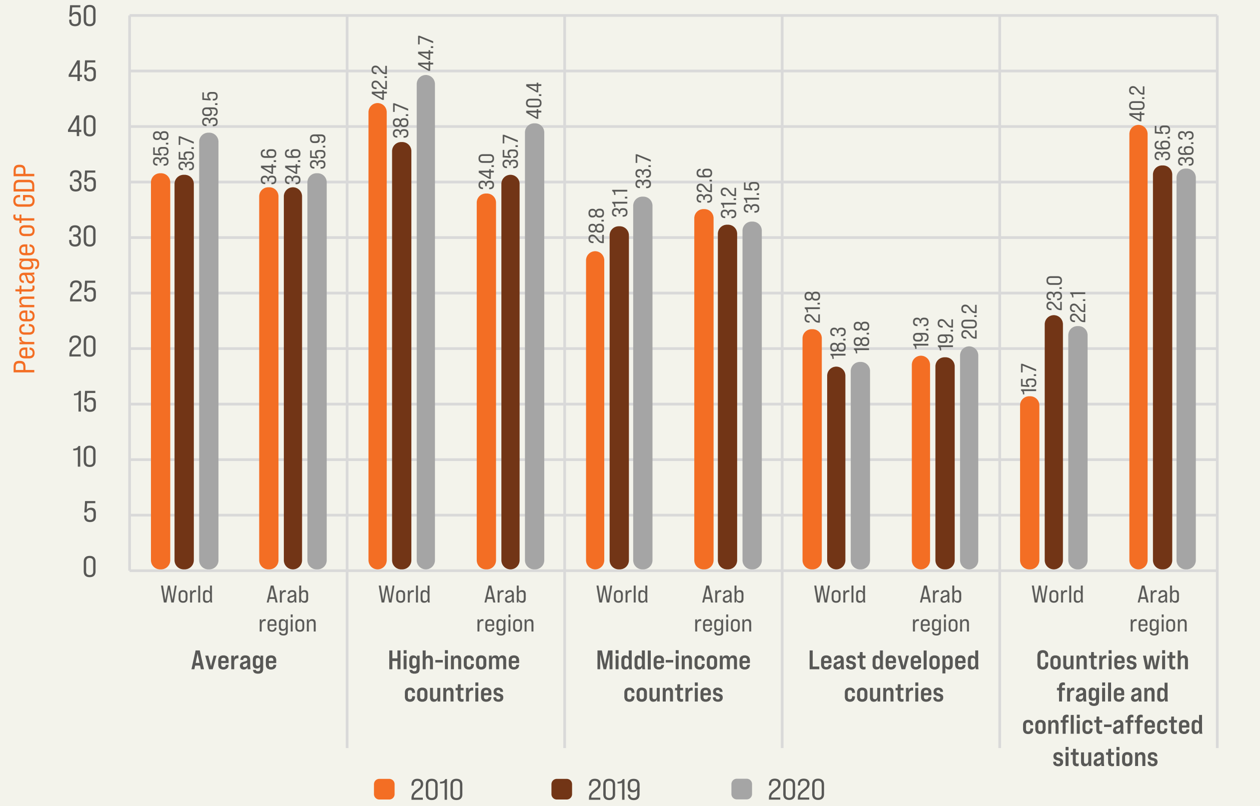
Public expenditure as a share of GDP

34.6%
Arab region

<

35.7%
World

Figure 10. The pandemic pushed up public expenditure as a share of GDP globally, but not in the Arab States



Source: Sarangi and others, 2021, based on data from IMF, 2020b.

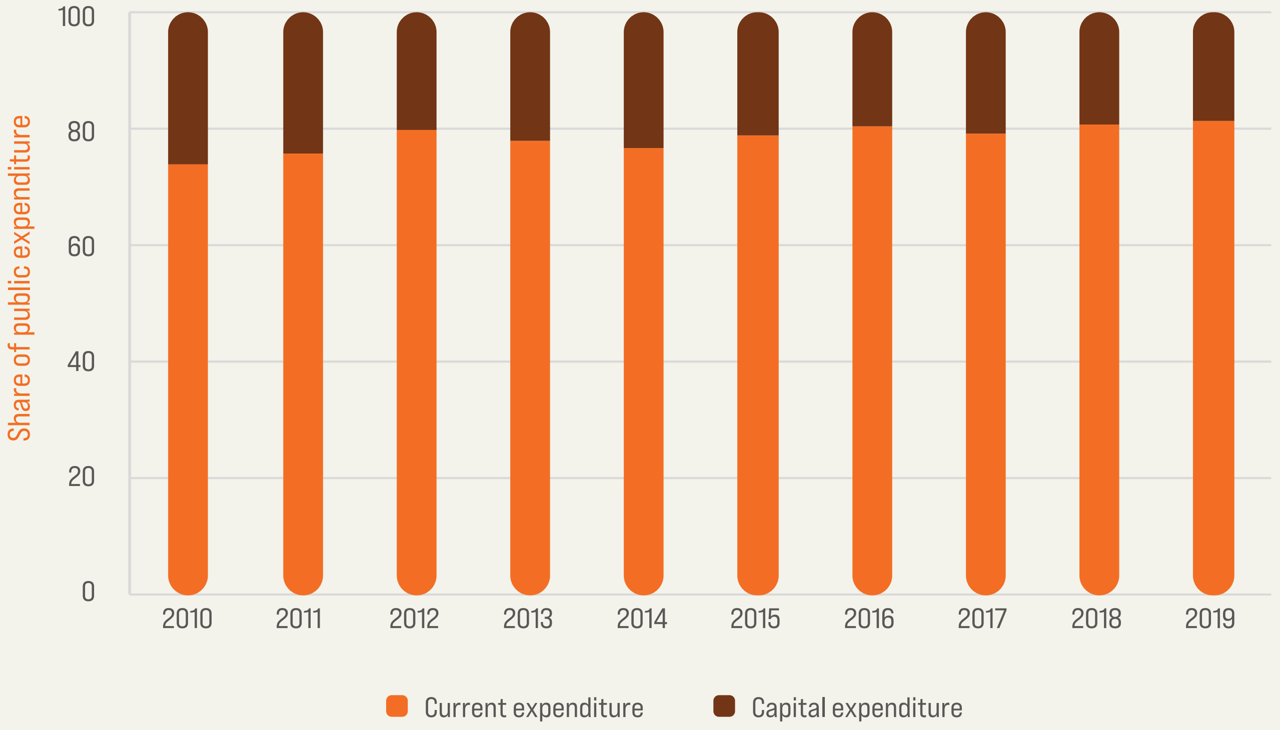
Note: Data are for 187 countries, including 58 high-income countries, 75 middle-income countries, 24 least developed countries, and 30 countries with fragile and conflict-affected situations. This includes 20 Arab countries; 6 high-income countries, 5 middle-income countries, 2 least developed countries, and 7 countries with fragile and conflict-affected situations.

A review of the breakdown of expenditures shows that the Arab region has been spending more on running costs such as salaries than on building essential infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and roads, or on investing in productive sectors that contribute to growth and human development. Most public expenditure goes to current expenditure, with a large share for employee wages and salaries and public transfers. In 2019, current expenditure constituted around 81.5 per cent of regional public expenditure, leaving just 18.5 per cent for capital expenditure (figure 11).

Around 36 per cent of public spending, on average for 12 countries in the region with available data in 2019, went to employee salaries and 14 per cent to goods and services. Social benefits, subsidies and grants constituted 17 per cent (figure 12). Interest payments accounted for almost 7 per cent and remaining current expenditures under the "other" category represent 9 per cent. Only 16 per cent of spending comprised investments in non-financial assets.

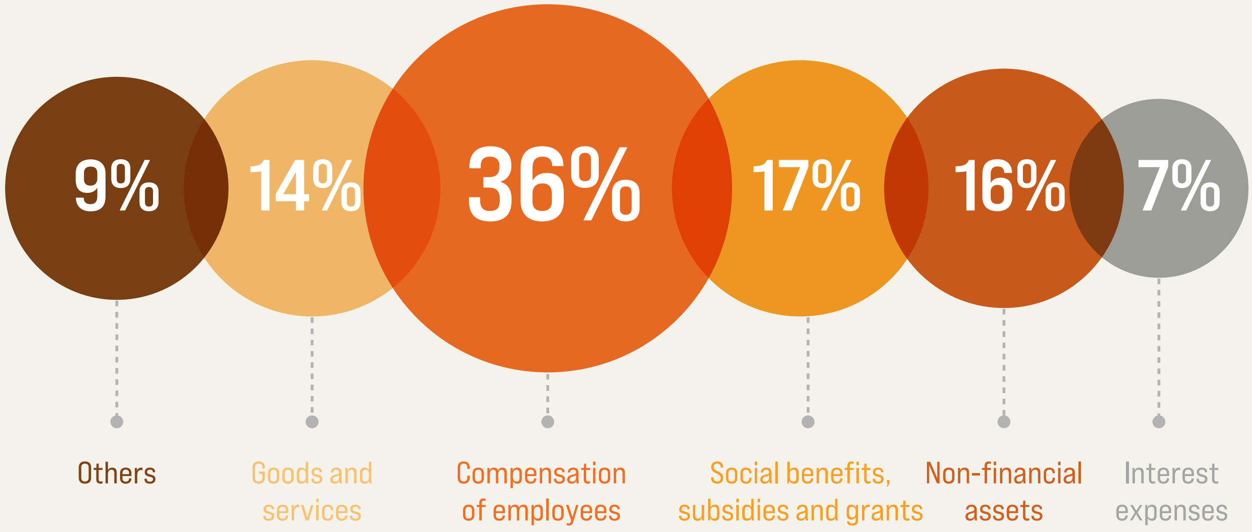
> **Most public expenditure goes to current expenditure, with a large share for employee wages and salaries and public transfers.**

Figure 11. Current expenditure dominates Arab public expenditure



Source: Budget statements from ministries of finance of respective countries; IMF, 2019a.

Figure 12. The economic composition of public expenditure in the Arab region, 2019 (Percentage)

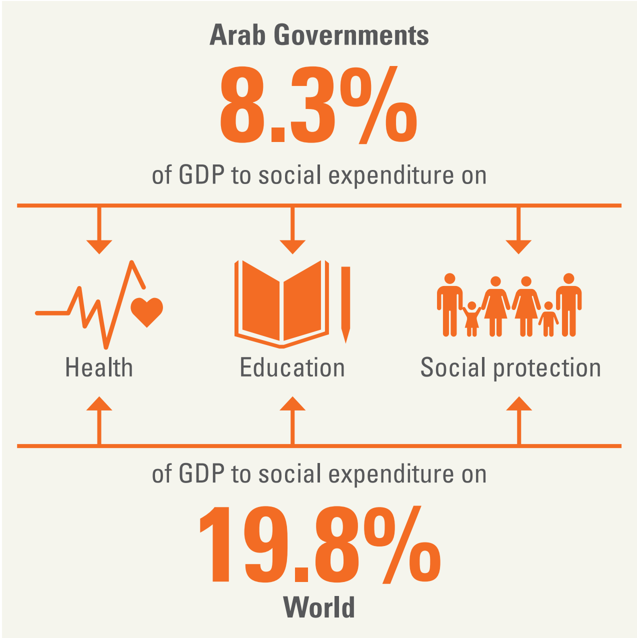


Source: Budget statements from ministries of finance of respective countries; IMF, 2019a.

2. The size of HES expenditure in public budget allocations

Based on the HES definition, on average, Arab Governments devote around 8.3 per cent of GDP to social expenditure. This compares to a world average of 19.8 per cent drawn from the latest available data in 2018. Since the regional average for total public expenditure as a share of GDP is almost on par with the global average, the difference in public social expenditures is striking (figure 13). One explanation is that many Arab countries spend disproportionately on military investments instead of social ones.[48] Disparities are evident across country groups, however. As a percentage of GDP, the average social expenditure for the high-income countries in the region (6.1 per cent) is only about a quarter of that of these country groups globally (23.8 per cent). In contrast, the average for middle-income countries in the region is slightly higher than that of middle-income countries globally.

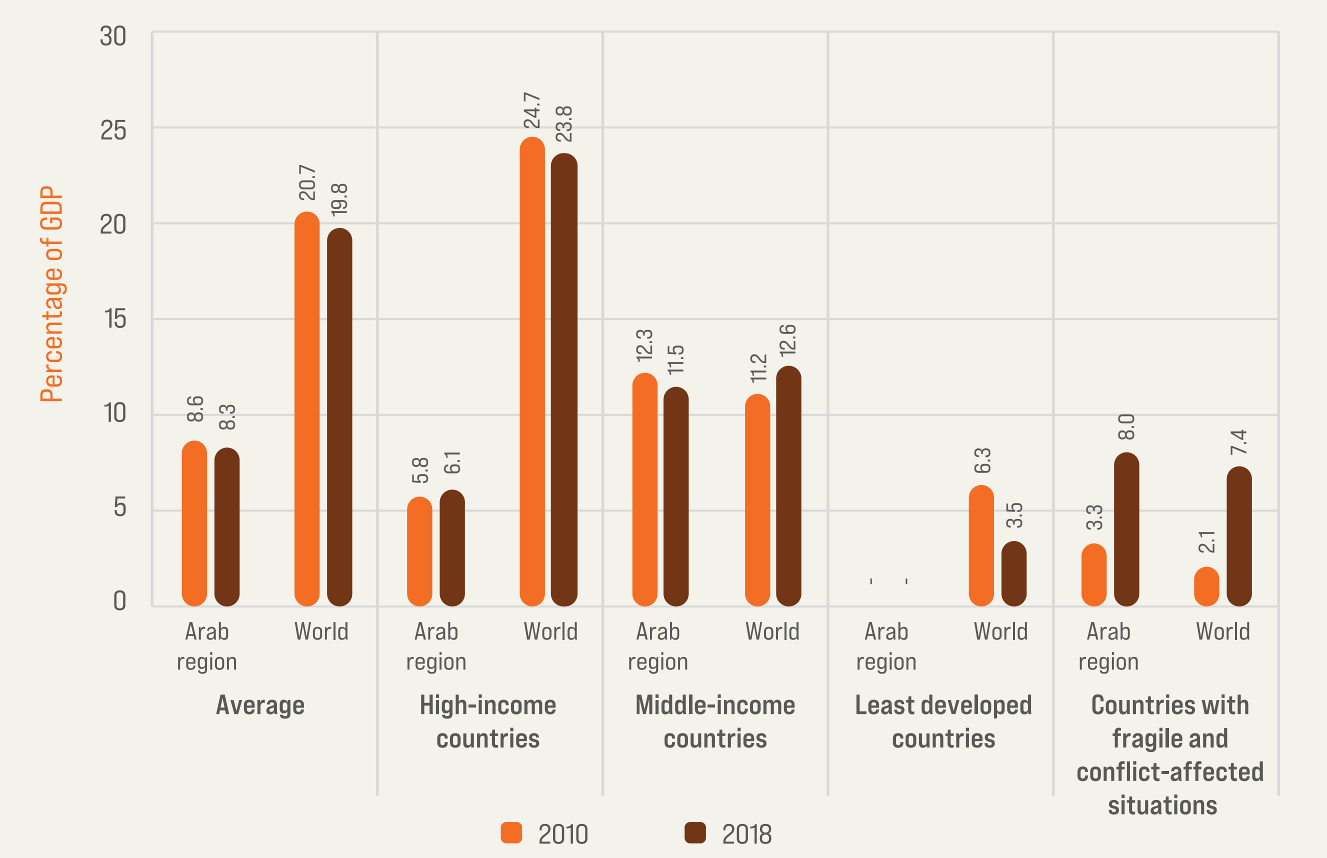
Among high-income GCC countries, some face emerging fiscal challenges to financing the SDGs. Several have undertaken major taxation reforms and turned to external borrowing, with gross public debt in the GCC countries jumping almost fivefold during the last decade, from about $117 billion in 2008 to an estimated $576 billion in 2020.[49] Bahrain, where public expenditure on HES exceeds 35 per cent of its budget, faces the challenge of financing other areas of the SDGs while managing public debt and reducing the budget deficit.[50] While 41 per cent of Kuwait's total expenditure is on HES, it has indicated that financing all of the 2030 Agenda is constrained by fiscal imbalances brought on by the pandemic and low oil prices between 2014 and 2020. Dwindling public revenue has required withdrawals from reserves and borrowing to finance public expenditures.[51] Saudi Arabia introduced fiscal reforms, including a bump in the value added tax rate from 5 to 15 per cent in 2021, and shifted social expenditure allocations to improve its fiscal balance.[52]



Among middle-income countries, liquidity shortages and debt are critical financing barriers to investing in the SDGs. Egypt, for example, has increased social expenditure on essential services in recent years. Government expenditure on health and education reached 6.1 per cent and 10.1 per cent of total government spending in 2020, respectively.[53] Further progress is hindered by limited fiscal space, however, driven by interest payments on government debt and a budget deficit. Even with recent reforms in its social protection policies, Egypt faces financial challenges that have intensified through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governments in the least developed countries and those with fragile and conflict-affected situations face the worst obstacles in financing and delivering essential social services. Conflict both shifts resources away from social expenditure and puts additional pressure on the environment for and quality of public services. Yet, the share of GDP on social expenditure in countries with fragile and conflict-affected situations in the region is higher than that of global averages for their peers. Several oil-exporting countries contribute to pushing up the average share for this group.

Figure 13. Compared to the rest of the world, the Arab region spends much less on public social expenditure as a percentage of GDP, based on the HES



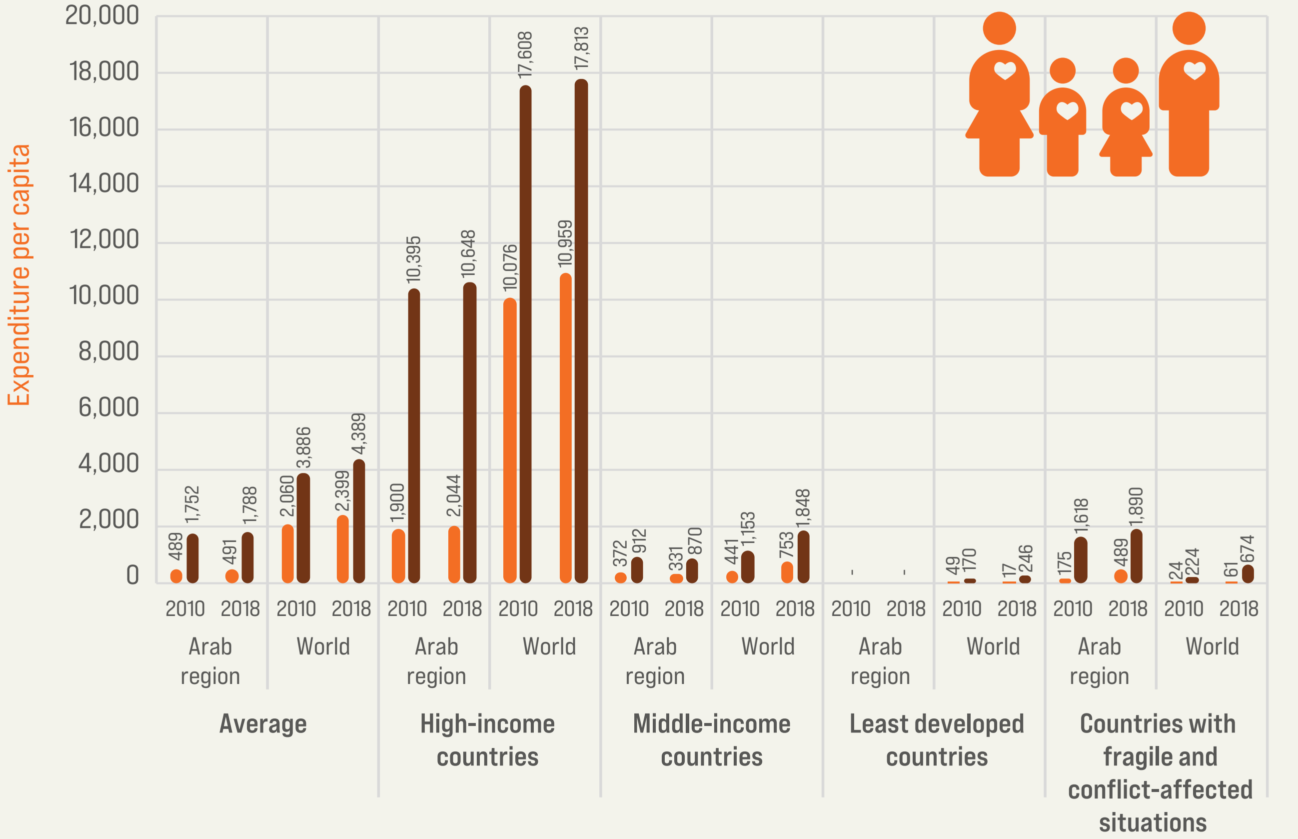
Source: Sarangi and others, 2021, based on data from IMF, 2020d.

3. HES expenditure per capita

Social expenditure per capita under the HES definition constituted nearly a quarter of public expenditure per capita in the Arab region in 2018. The regional average was $491 compared to the global average of $2,399 (figure 14). Arab high-income and middle-income countries have significantly lower public social expenditure per capita than global peers. In 2018, social expenditure per capita for high-income countries globally was roughly five times the rate for Arab high-income countries. While these countries globally devote more than half of public expenditure to social expenditure, Arab high-income countries invest only a fifth of Government expenditure in HES categories. Middle-income countries globally spent roughly twice as much per person on public expenditure and public social expenditure as their Arab counterparts in 2018. Arab least developed countries lack sufficient data for reliable comparison.

Middle-income countries globally spent roughly twice as much per person on public expenditure and public social expenditure as their Arab counterparts.

Figure 14. The Arab region, across country income groups, lags much of the world on social expenditure per capita (Dollars)



Source: Sarangi and others, 2021, based on data from IMF, 2020d.

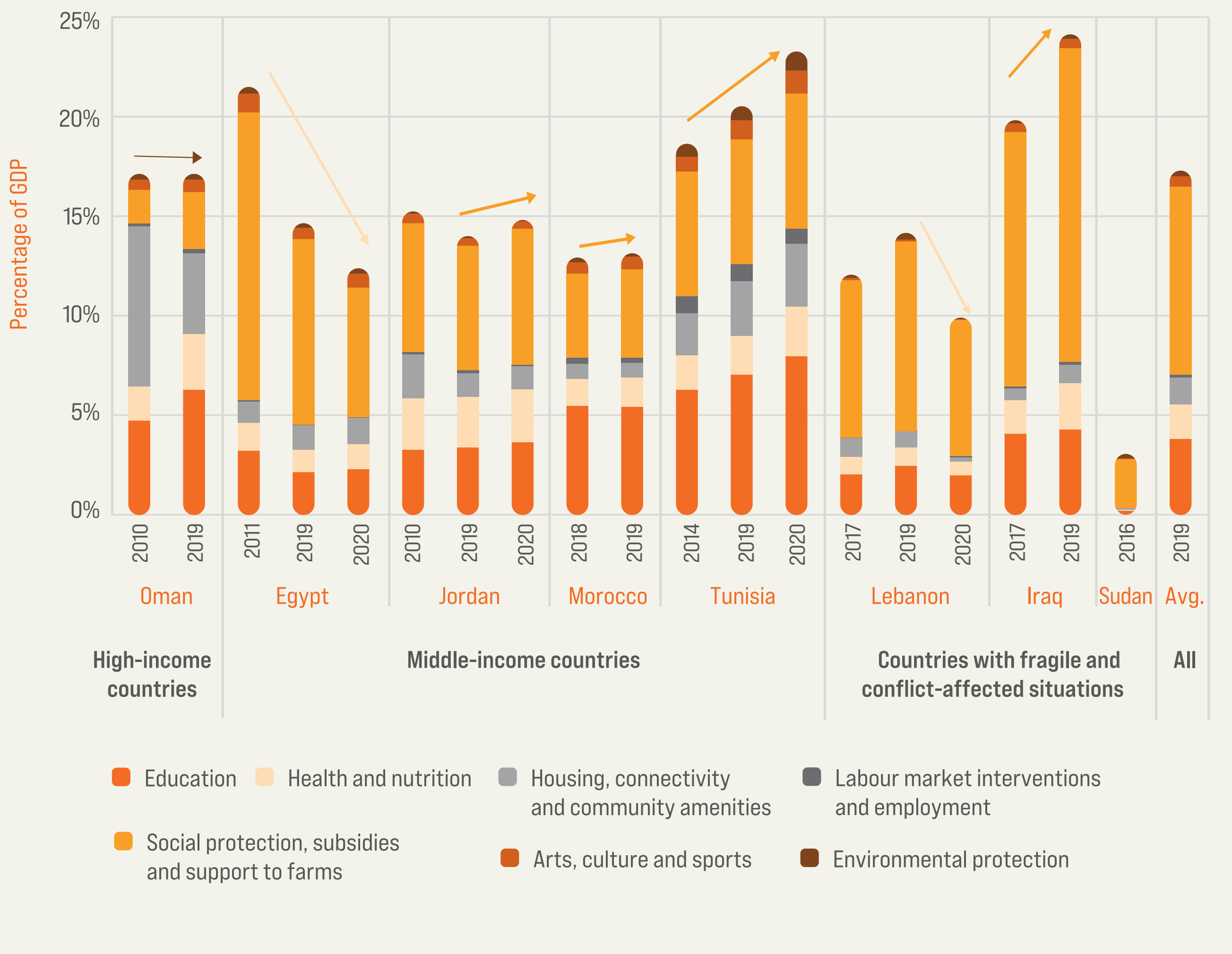
C. Calculating public social expenditure with the SEM

Calculating total public social expenditure across the seven SEM dimensions found that it accounts for between 10-20 per cent of GDP in most Arab countries.[54] In 2019, the highest-spending Governments were Iraq and Tunisia, which both dedicated more than one fifth of GDP to social expenditure. On the other end, the Sudan spent 3 per cent of GDP in 2016, primarily due to limited fiscal space. At the aggregate level, there is no clear rising or falling trend in overall social expenditure over time. During the last decade, three countries increased social expenditure, as a share of GDP, with an average rise of 3.4 per cent. Another three countries saw a decline of 3.3 per cent of GDP on average. Between 2019 and 2020, two out of four countries, per available data, increased social expenditure as a share of GDP, mainly on HES (figure 15). The increase in social expenditures during 2020 was expected since Governments implemented fiscal stimulus and social protection measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. This included expansion of social protection measures both through setting up new temporary schemes and enlarging the coverage of pre-existing ones.[55]

Among the seven SEM dimensions, the largest share, reaching 9.5 per cent of GDP in 2019, went to social protection, subsidies and support to farms, based on eight countries with available data.[56] This dimension has seen the greatest fluctuation in expenditure over time due to significant year-to-year changes in the value of subsidy programmes. Shifts in social protection spending have driven substantial changes in overall social expenditure in Egypt and Iraq. Regional spending on education was 3.9 per cent of GDP in 2019, a figure that has remained relatively stable over time. In Morocco, Oman and Tunisia, education was the largest dimension of social expenditure in 2019; in most other counties, it was the second-largest dimension.

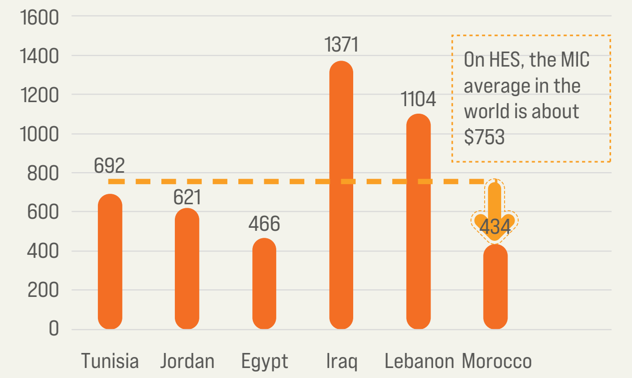
The health and nutrition dimension and housing, connectivity and community amenities dimension are comparable in expenditure, with both averaging around 2 per cent of GDP for countries with sufficient data. The remaining three dimensions receive considerably less support. Expenditure on arts, culture and sports consistently falls between 0.5 and 1 per cent of GDP, while labour market interventions and employment and environmental protection each received less than 0.25 per cent of GDP in 2019, on average.

Figure 15. Across Arab countries over time, there are no clear trends in public spending by SEM dimension (Percentage)



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Figure 16. The SEM reveals low social expenditure per capita in Arab middle-income countries in 2019 (Dollars)



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

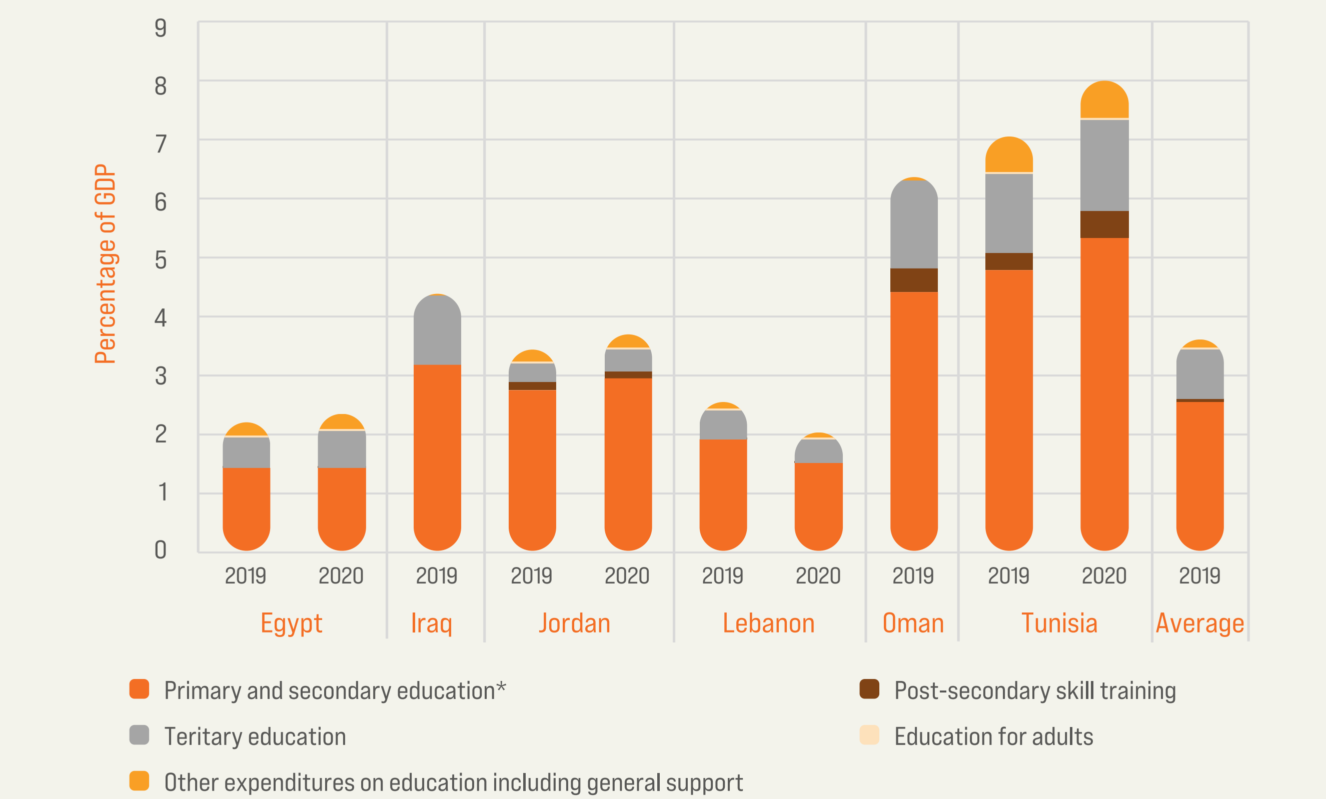
Based on SEM calculations, Arab middle-income countries have low social expenditure per capita, varying between $434 in Morocco and $692 in Tunisia. Taking only three dimensions of social expenditure, based on the latest HES data in 2019, the global average was about $753 (figure 16).

A look at social expenditure by SEM dimension

(a) Education

Education expenditure represented 11 per cent of the region's total public expenditure and 22 per cent of public social expenditure in 2019. Seventy per cent of education expenditure goes to primary and secondary education. This represents 2.5 per cent of total GDP for the countries assessed with the SEM (figure 17). Information on early childhood expenditure is available in two countries, namely Jordan and Tunisia. However, their share is too little. In 2019, it was 0.35 per cent of education expenditure in Jordan and 0.16 per cent of education expenditure in Tunisia.

Figure 17. The bulk of education spending goes to lower levels



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Note: *Includes early childhood education spending for few countries with available data; however these expenditures are minimal.

Approximately two thirds of remaining education expenditure goes to tertiary education; its share has increased steadily over the last decade. By contrast, the other education expenditures indicator, which notably includes administrative expenses, declined to 4.7 per cent of total education spending in 2019, from 8.1 per cent in 2011. Post-secondary skills training accounted for 2 per cent of education spending, although this indicator varies significantly by country. Oman and Tunisia both invest substantial amounts in skills training while Egypt's expenditure is negligible.

Jordan has a low illiteracy rate of 6.4 per cent overall, or 3.4 per cent among men and 9.5 per cent among women. This explains very little spending on education for adults, less than 2 million Jordanian dinars or 0.04 per cent of total public social expenditure, although under the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2020, the Ministry of Education operates different programmes for adults and children who have dropped out of school, including an adult literacy programme. In Oman, even though the literacy rate for people aged 15-44 reached 95.7 per cent in 2011[57] and there is no explicit budget allocation on education for adults, the National Strategy for Education targets a goal of 100 per cent literacy by making adult education integral to the education system.

In Egypt, the SDS-Egypt Vision 2030 calls for developing a high-quality education and training system with efficient, sustainable and flexible institutions. While spending on post-secondary skills training tends to be negligible, the plan gives particular significance to technical and vocational training. In 2018, spending on post-secondary skills training increased to 0.55 per cent of total spending on education, up from 0.21 per cent in 2011.

Mid-term interventions in Iraq's Vision 2030 focus on early childhood, primary and higher education. As well, it aims at enhancing skills, technical and vocational education, including teacher training, and rehabilitation and training programmes to empower the poor as productive citizens.

With the aim of reducing illiteracy among people aged 10-59 from 18 per cent to 16 per cent in 2020, Tunisia's Development Plan 2016-2020 activated the National Literacy and Adults Education Strategy. It has developed legislative and regulatory provisions to review educational programmes and cover regions with gender gaps in literacy rates.

(b) Health and nutrition

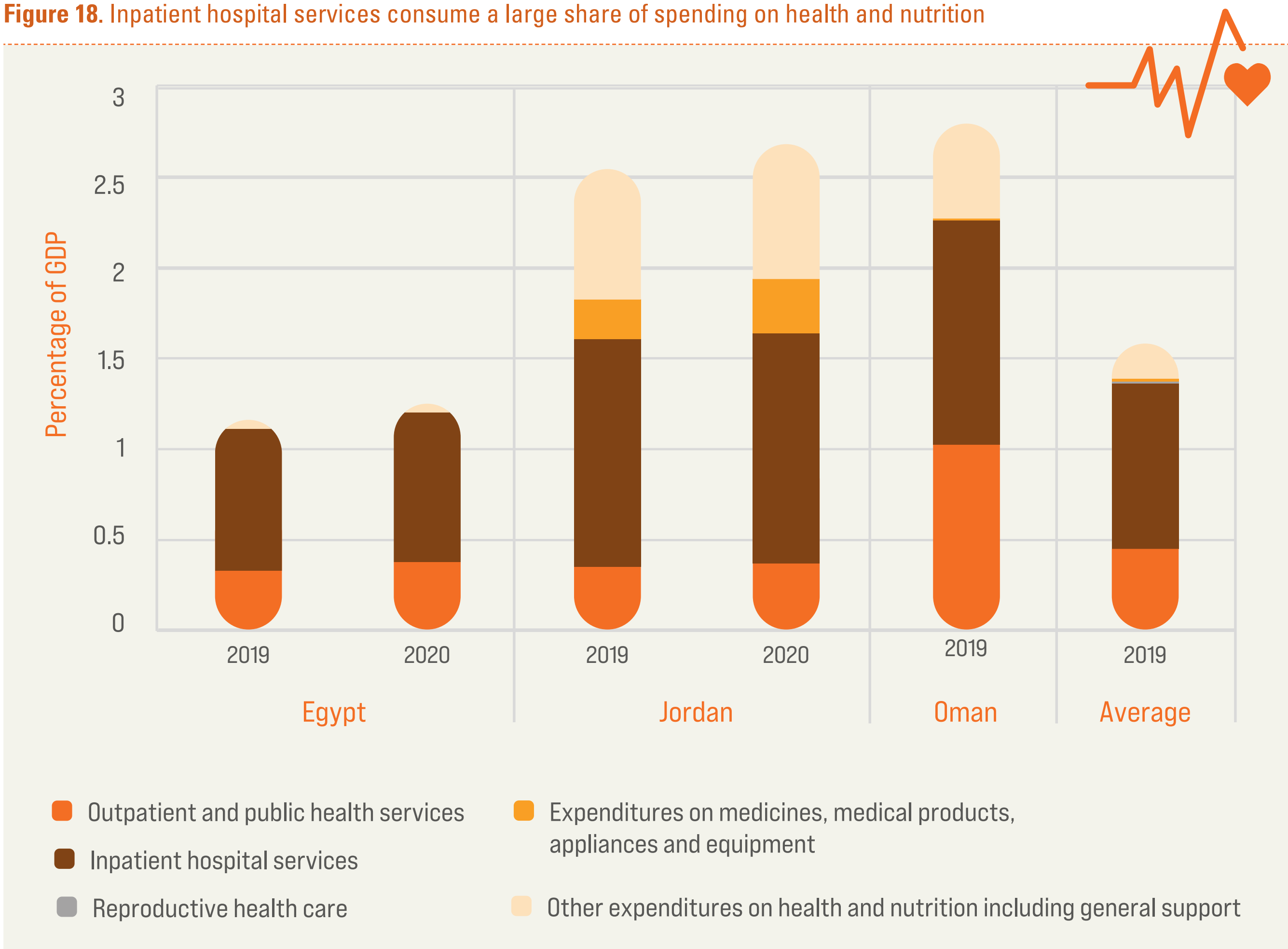
Social expenditure on health and nutrition ranged from 1.2 per cent of GDP in Egypt to 2.8 per cent in Oman, making it one of the larger SEM dimensions. In all countries with sufficiently detailed data, inpatient services comprise the largest component of this expenditure (figure 18). Outpatient and inpatient services combined absorbed 86 per cent of total spending on health and nutrition in 2019, which represented roughly one and a half percentage points of GDP. This distribution has been fairly consistent over the last decade. Most remaining spending falls in the other expenditure category, which includes administrative expenses. Expenditures on medicine, medical products, appliances, and equipment as well as reproductive health care were very limited, comprising 1.3 per cent and 0.03 per cent of total health and nutrition spending, respectively.

Social expenditure on health and nutrition ranged from

1.2% → **2.8%**

of GDP in Egypt — of GDP in Oman

Figure 18. Inpatient hospital services consume a large share of spending on health and nutrition



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Note: Tunisia's expenditures on outpatient and inpatient hospital services are combined due to data limitations, as shown in a different colour pattern than the rest. SEM includes data on Lebanon, Tunisia, and Iraq, but expenditures on inpatient and outpatient services cannot be disaggregated.

Expenditure on reproductive health, a key public service to enhance gender equality, is negligible in most Arab countries. Tunisia, for instance, devotes only 0.19 per cent of total spending on health and nutrition to reproductive health care, even as the National Development Plan 2016-2020 intensified efforts to provide single mothers with training and awareness on reproductive health. Despite the diversification of expenditure on health and nutrition in Jordan, and reproductive health being key to the national population strategy, the country has spent little on the latter in the past decade. The Ministry of Health is currently implementing a national health communications strategy that includes reproductive health and family planning, and health care for women and children.

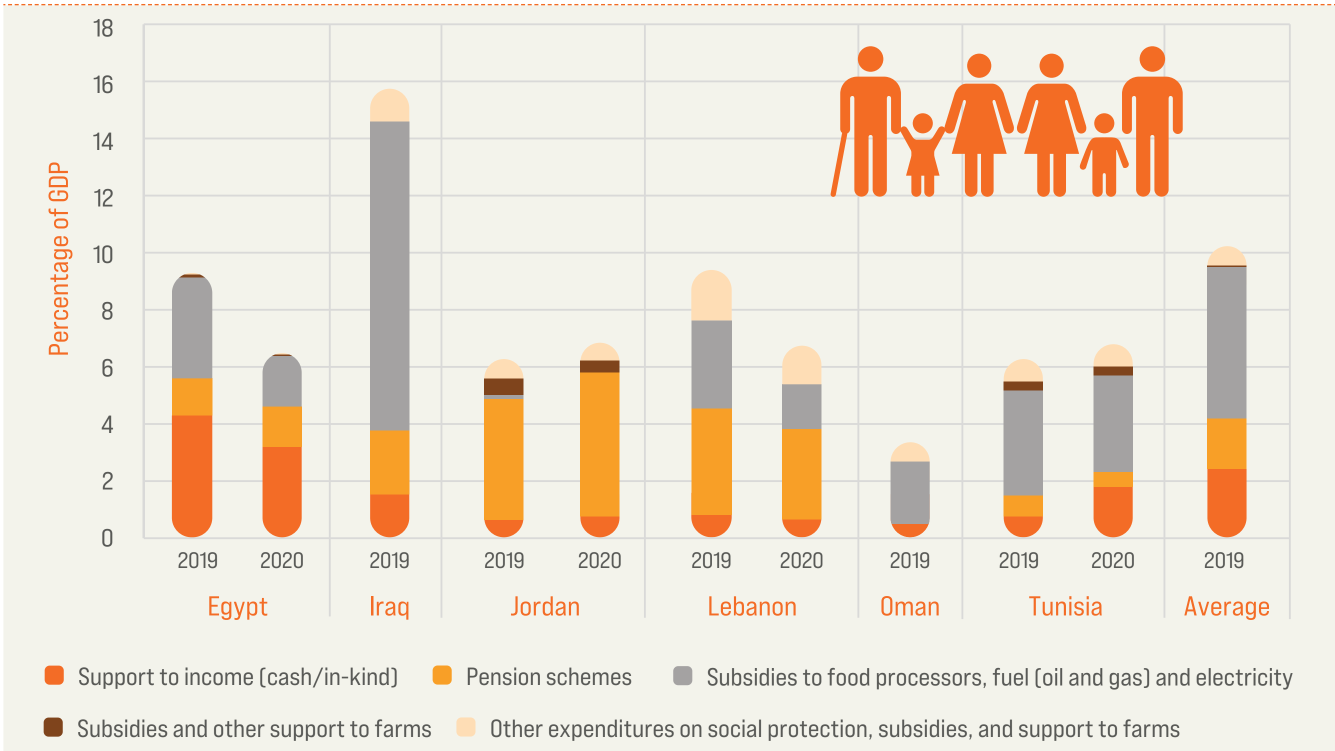
Expenditures on reproductive health and medicines, medical products, appliances, and equipment are negligible in Egypt, although the SDS–Egypt Vision 2030 gives high priority to enhancing the quality of health care and promoting reproductive health and proper nutrition. Oman emphasizes providing comprehensive care to mothers and children to promote health and reduce morbidity and mortality. But while the Ministry of Health provides maternal morbidity indicators as part of showing efforts to realize high-quality health services, data on health and nutrition expenditures are not well disaggregated.

(c) Social protection, subsidies and support to farms

Food and energy subsidies and cash and in-kind benefits are responsible for most spending on social protection, subsidies and support to farms in selected countries. As this is the largest of the seven SEM dimensions, subsidies and cash and in-kind benefits represent a significant share of overall public social expenditure. Spending on energy and food-processing subsidies amounted to 5.4 per cent of GDP in 2019, on average, as an aggregate for selected Arab States (figure 19). Several countries, especially middle-income nations, have adopted fuel and energy subsidy reforms during the last decade towards improving the efficiency of public expenditure. Rationalizing food, water and energy subsidies, however, remains a challenge.

While the overall value of subsidies, as a share of GDP, does not show a uniform trend between 2011 and 2019, fluctuations in exchange rates, market prices and subsidy programmes have caused spending on subsidies to fluctuate between 3 and 7 per cent of GDP since 2011. In 2019, spending was at 5.4 per cent of GDP. By 2022, the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on food and energy prices had increased subsidy bills in import-dependent countries trying to maintain subsidy schemes. Support for income, families and children comprised 2.4 per cent of GDP in 2019, although Egypt has an outsize influence on this calculation due to its large population and related revenue and expenditure levels. Pension schemes, mainly social insurance expenditures for formal sector employees, accounted for 1.8 per cent of GDP across the selected countries but over 4 per cent in Jordan, where they are the largest component of social protection spending. Other categories such as support for housing, subsidies to farms and the other expenditures indicator receive relatively little support.

Figure 19. Food and energy subsidies are prominent in spending on social protection, subsidies and support to farms



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Note: In the case of Lebanon, subsidies to fuel and electricity are treasury advances to the electricity authority of Lebanon, which do not enter into public budgets from 2018 onwards.

For certain countries, budget documents allow further disaggregation of subsidies between those to food processors and those to fuel and electricity. This shows that a vast majority of subsidies is for fuel and electricity. In 2019, roughly 85 per cent of subsidies went to energy while the other 15 per cent went to food processors.

There are significant differences across countries, as Iraq and Oman reported no subsidies to food processors. In Egypt, nearly half of total subsidies were for food in 2020, explained by declining energy subsidies coupled with constant subsidies to food processors. Food processing subsidies in Lebanon fell by 80 per cent from 2010 to 2019, starting from an already marginal share of 2.5 per cent. Given the regressive nature of energy subsidies, it is concerning that they occupy a large share of total subsidies and, therefore, public social expenditure in many Arab countries.

(d) Housing, connectivity and community amenities

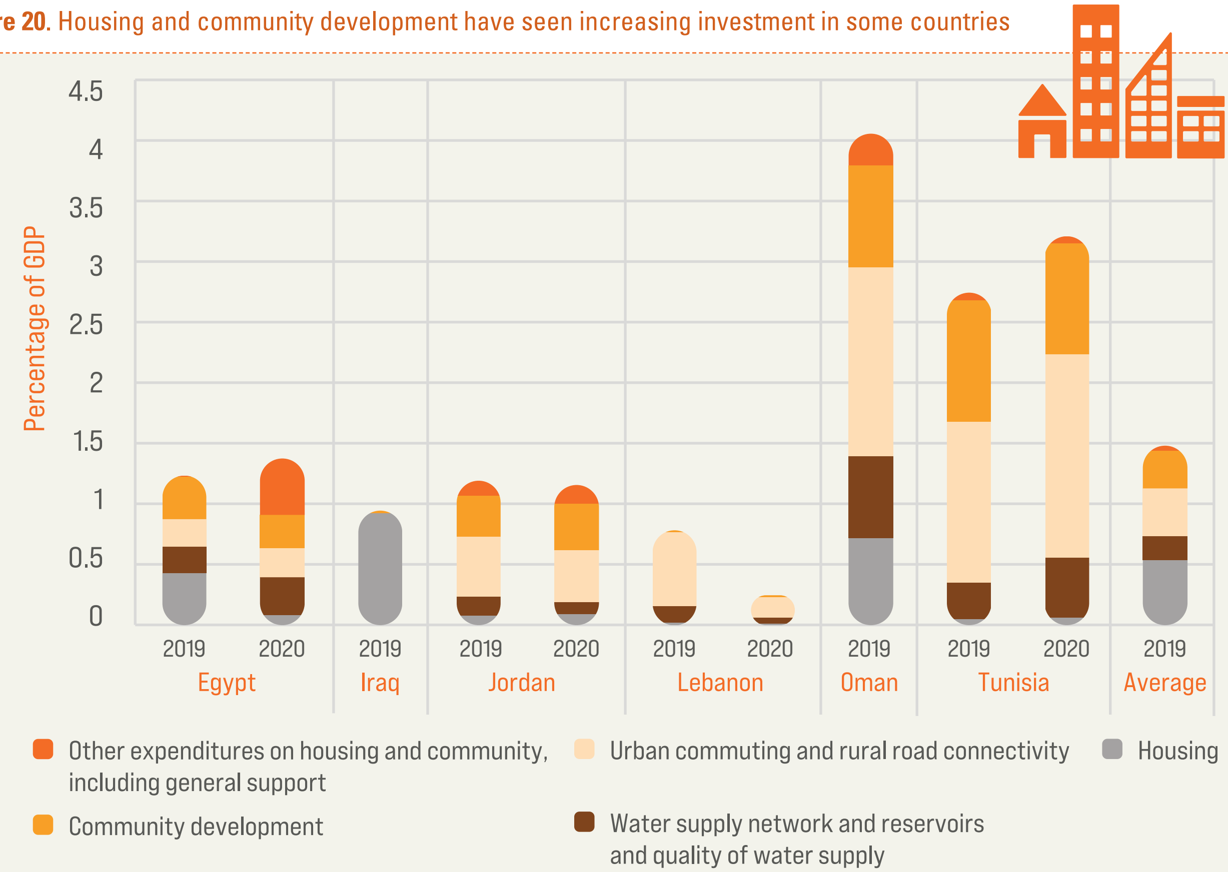
Housing is fundamental to education, employment and health in addition to its significant role in citizen identity and social belonging. Social housing policies include all Government policies to increase access to adequate housing, control rents and facilitate access to finance. The SEM shows that spending on housing, connectivity and community amenities is well distributed across various components but their composition has been changing.[58] Notably, housing and community development saw increasing support over the last decade. In 2012, the first year with representative data, housing and community development together comprised 37 per cent of social expenditure on this dimension. By 2019, the proportion was 60 per cent or about 1.5 per cent of GDP on average (figure 20).

Jordan's national development plan, Jordan 2025, highlights how many households struggle to find adequate housing, given a surplus of high-end housing and a lack of affordable housing for low- and middle-income families.[59] Programmes to provide social housing for low-income households include the Social Development and Combating Poverty scheme, where the main activity is constructing and maintaining housing for poor families. In 2016, Jordan established collective houses for persons with disabilities based on more inclusive social housing policies.

To provide a decent life for every citizen, Oman has created various social housing programmes, such as to build housing complexes for low-income people. A housing loan programme grants loans without interest to low-income people.[60] Libya, Morocco and Tunisia have all implemented Government-built social housing. Morocco and Tunisia have favoured an increased role for the private sector and have the region's most successful models of mixed Government and private sector projects where incentives and an environment for private developers exist to build housing that is means-tested for low-income households.[61]

Based on the SEM, expenditure on water supply networks, urban commuting and rural road connectivity has decreased. Spending on these issues was 1.15 per cent of GDP in 2012 but only 0.6 per cent more recently. With infrastructure for urban commuting and rural road connectivity a key enabler of development, some countries have bucked this trend, however. Egypt significantly increased spending on roads in 2017-2019. It then jumped 90 places on the international competitiveness classification of road quality, from 118th in 2014 to 28th in 2019. Tunisia's National Development Plan 2016-2020 emphasized infrastructure development and cost reduction through developing a road network to rural locations with ports and coastal areas, and the development and maintenance of the road and lane network.

Figure 20. Housing and community development have seen increasing investment in some countries



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

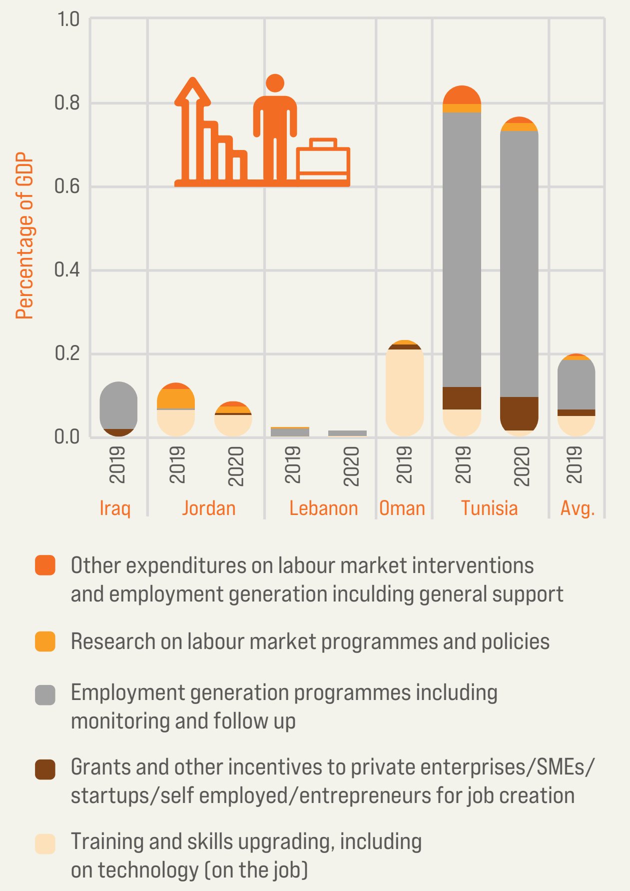
(e) Labour market interventions and employment generation

Iraq, Jordan, Oman, and Tunisia all designate social expenditure for labour market interventions and employment generation but through different strategies.[62] Tunisia is the most committed to supporting labour markets; historically, the Government has spent close to a full percentage point of GDP on employment-related issues. In 2019 and 2020, Tunisia increased expenditure on employment generation through public sector employment creation programmes and grants and incentives to promote private enterprises. Training and skills upgrading is a primary focus in both Jordan and Oman. Investment in research on labour market programmes and policies is a substantial area of support in Jordan and, to a lesser extent, Tunisia (figure 21).

Although Arab Governments have recognized the importance of private sector-led growth and taken various measures to foster private activity, efforts to boost small and medium enterprises have been fragmented. In 2019, 41 per cent of Arab countries had laws related to such firms (on insolvency, bankruptcy, and others) but only 18 per cent had regulatory impact analysis, including Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.[63]

Several legislative and programmatic reforms have been designed to support small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurs and start-ups. In 2018, Tunisia passed Law Number 20 to provide a clear definition for small and medium enterprises and start-ups; the Ministry of Industry and Small and Medium Enterprises has continuously supported firms through a dedicated platform for finance.[64] These efforts are captured in the SEM under grants and other incentives.

Figure 21. Public budgets to support labour markets are marginal in most countries



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Oman's Five-Year Plan 2016 describes boosting the employment rate for citizens as the most pressing priority. Launched in 2018, Oman's National Youth Programme for Skills Development is a step towards realizing ambitions for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The programme is captured under training and skills upgrading, which constituted the largest share of expenditure on the labour market and employment dimension.

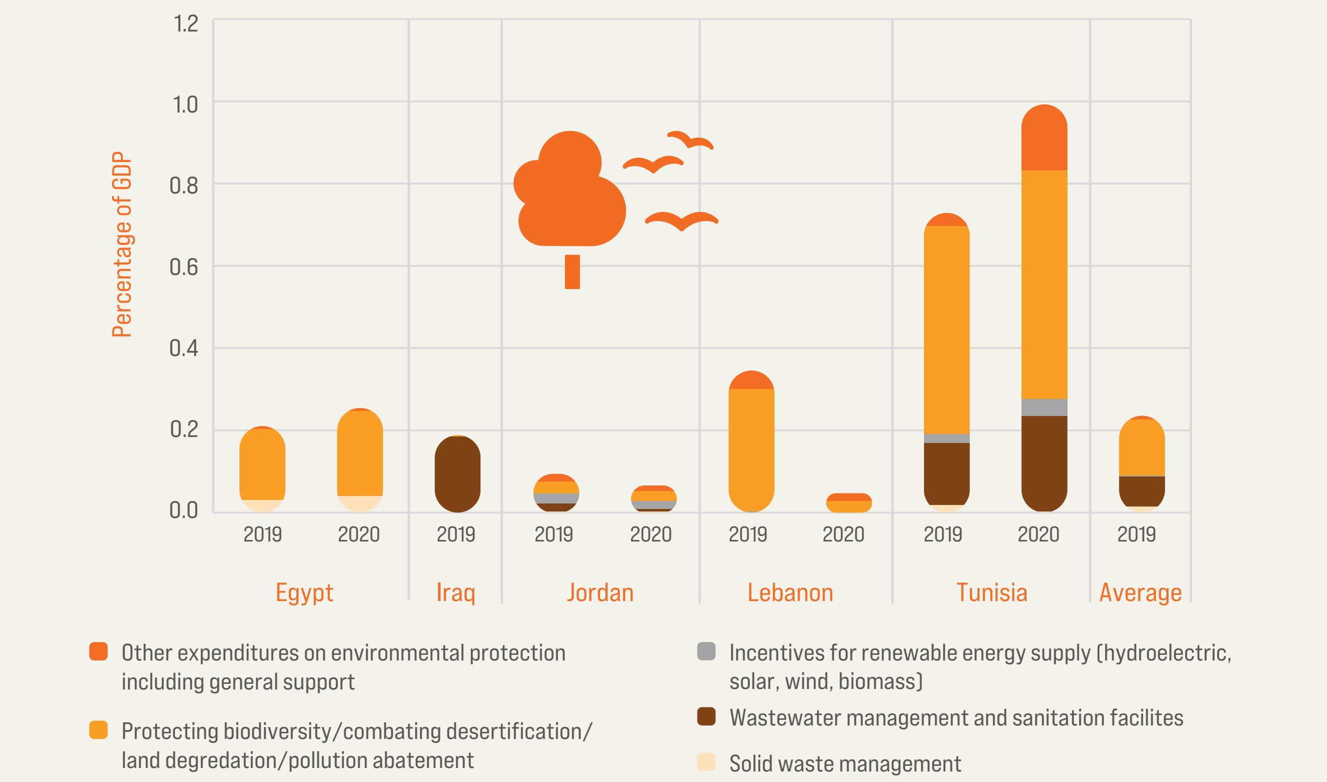
(f) Environmental protection

Expenditure on environmental protection has not meaningfully increased despite the growing urgency of investment in climate action, biodiversity protection, waste management, and renewable energy.[65] Spending as a share of GDP is low and remained constrained during the last decade, ranging between 0.32 per cent in 2011 and 0.24 per cent in 2019. Few countries increased allocations in 2020 (figure 22). Roughly half of environmental protection support is for protecting biodiversity, combating desertification and land degradation, and/or abating pollution. Wastewater management is the next largest expenditure, due largely to Iraq, which put $420 million towards this in 2019. Solid waste management accounts for 7 per cent of environmental protection expenditure based on the most recent data, though the share has declined over time. In general, spending on environmental protection depends upon a country's exposure and vulnerability to climate change. The Arab region is highly vulnerable to climate change; projections indicate that the average increase in temperature in large parts of the region will be above the world average.[66] In this context, low spending on improved resilience and environmental protection is a concern.

Several Arab States have set ambitious targets for developing renewable energy, although related incentives represented just 1.3 per cent of spending on environmental protection in 2019. Historically, Jordan has been the only country allocating significant sums for renewable energy, peaking at a quarter percentage point of GDP in 2017. Jordan has made a substantial leap in developing wind and solar photovoltaic projects since 2014, part of continuous efforts to implement the National Energy Strategy 2015-2025. It seeks to diversify and develop domestic energy sources and promote energy conservation.

Between 2010 and 2017, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates all made considerable progress in installing wind and solar power generation facilities. The Sudan leads the region with renewables making up 51 per cent of its energy, mainly from its large hydro facilities.[67] These are largely funded with non-budgetary finance.

Figure 22. Overall environmental protection spending is very low and constrained



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

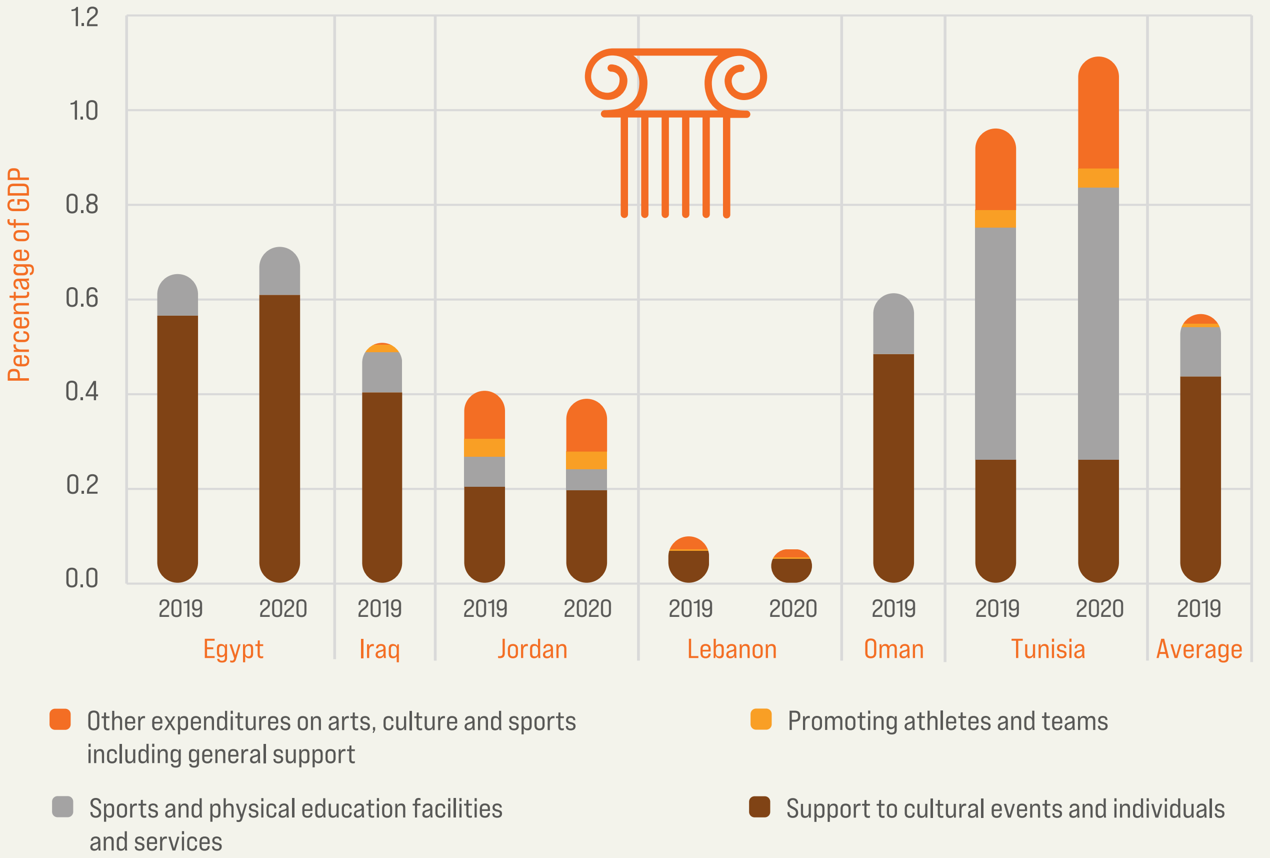
Many countries in the region are also pursuing efforts to preserve biodiversity. As such, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia have recently updated their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. They have taken a broad range of actions to reduce biodiversity losses, ensure that biological resources and ecosystems are sustainably used, prepare for climate change, and combat desertification. These include for example the expansion of protected areas, monitoring activities and the establishment of biodiversity databases, capacity-building and education as well as institutional and legal reforms.

(g) Art, culture and sports

Expenditure on arts, culture and sports has decreased modestly in recent years, from 0.80 per cent of GDP in 2011 to 0.64 per cent in 2019, based on countries with available data in both periods. More than three quarters of this spending goes to supporting cultural events and individuals. The remaining expenditure is primarily dedicated to sports and physical education facilities and services. Promotion of athletes and teams and the other expenditure category combined make up only 4 per cent of overall arts, culture and sports expenditure, although spending on both has increased steadily over time (figure 23).

Expenditure on arts, culture and sports has decreased modestly in recent years, from 0.80 per cent of GDP in 2011 to 0.64 per cent in 2019.

Figure 23. Arts, culture and sports spending has contracted slightly in several countries



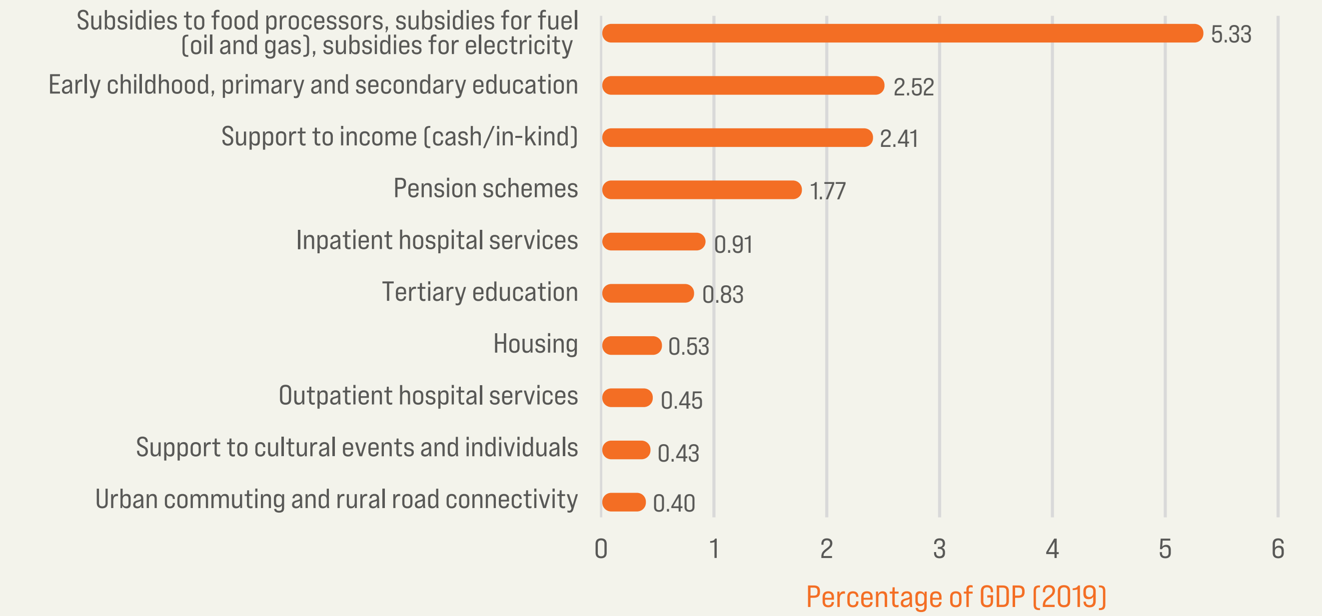
Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Tunisia leads in spending on arts, culture and sports as a share of GDP, especially in support to sports and physical education, which aligns with strategic priorities to encourage young people to develop as productive citizens. Arts and culture featured prominently in the 2016-2020 National Development Plan, which stressed cultural innovation, among other issues. Jordan's National Vision 2025 also emphasizes promoting cultural development and cultural industries, especially among youth. Programmes include maintaining archaeological sites and museums and spreading the use of the Arabic language.

D. Subsidies top social policy expenditure, innovation and investment lag

The Arab region's often short-term perspective on public social expenditure has undercut investment in human capital and economic transitions. This is evident from a look at the top 10 expenditure categories across the SEM dimensions. A considerable sum goes towards subsidies for energy and food, more than the next two largest spending categories combined. No element of environmental protection or labour market and employment spending makes the top-10 list (figure 24).

Figure 24. The top 10 social expenditures in the Arab region reveal a short-term perspective, 2019



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Note: For inpatient and outpatient services, averages omit Lebanon, Tunisia, and Iraq as the budgets do not allow for disaggregation between such expenditures.

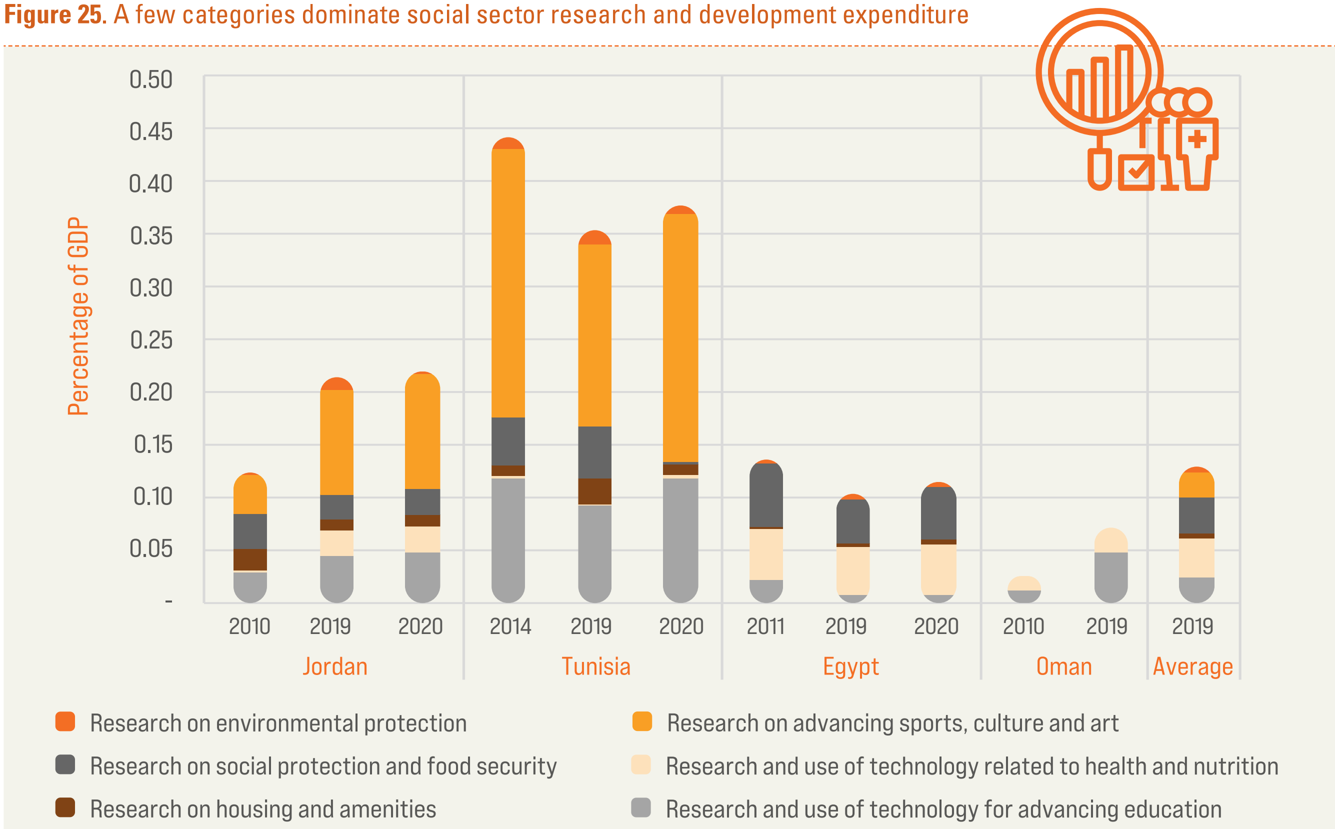
1. Few funds go to research and development

One indicator of a lack of a long-term investment vision is the marginal amount spent on research and development on social issues, which is classified under other expenditures for each relevant dimension. This limits prospects for developing new and lasting solutions to development challenges in the region. Arab countries in general are behind their peers in research and development and innovation. On average, high-income Arab economies spend only 0.5 per cent of GDP on research and development while the average is 2 per cent for advanced economies.[68]

Social-related expenditure on research and development has increased as a share of GDP in Jordan and Oman but decreased in Egypt and Tunisia. Of countries with available data, Tunisia invests most heavily in research and development, despite a decline in expenditure in the last five years. The two largest dimensions for research and development are health and nutrition, which accounted for 27 per cent and 25 per cent of total spending on research and development, respectively. These areas covered issues such as disease and drug control and social protection research on vulnerable populations. Egypt focuses on these dimensions and weighs heavily on aggregate calculations due to its large size and population. In percentage terms, Oman has seen the greatest increase in expenditure on research and development but remains behind its peers (figure 25).

The past five years have witnessed significant expansion in higher education, but despite generous public funding for universities, the share for research and development remains low. Consequently, innovative technologies have not developed. Even the region's most prosperous economies largely rely on purchasing technology from abroad. This suggests a need to prioritize developing endogenous research communities where output is determined by societal demand.[69]

Figure 25. A few categories dominate social sector research and development expenditure



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Research and development spending on environmental protection and housing is minimal. Of the four countries with data, Tunisia spends the highest share of GDP on each of these dimensions. Research and development related to employment and the labour market was not included due to comparability issues across countries.

2. Current expenditure takes a dominant share in social expenditures

Another indicator of a limited perspective on the longer-term investment role of social spending is the heavy concentration of current expenditure, which is a structural challenge of the region. On average, capital expenditure made up only around one fifth of social expenditure in 2019 in countries with SEM data. In 2019, Iraq invested the highest share in capital expenditure at 8.5 per cent of GDP and 35 per cent of total social expenditure. Conversely, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon saw the highest concentrations of current expenditures, at around 90 per cent of social expenditure. Based on the timeframe for available data, five countries increased capital social expenditure and two had a decline (figure 26).

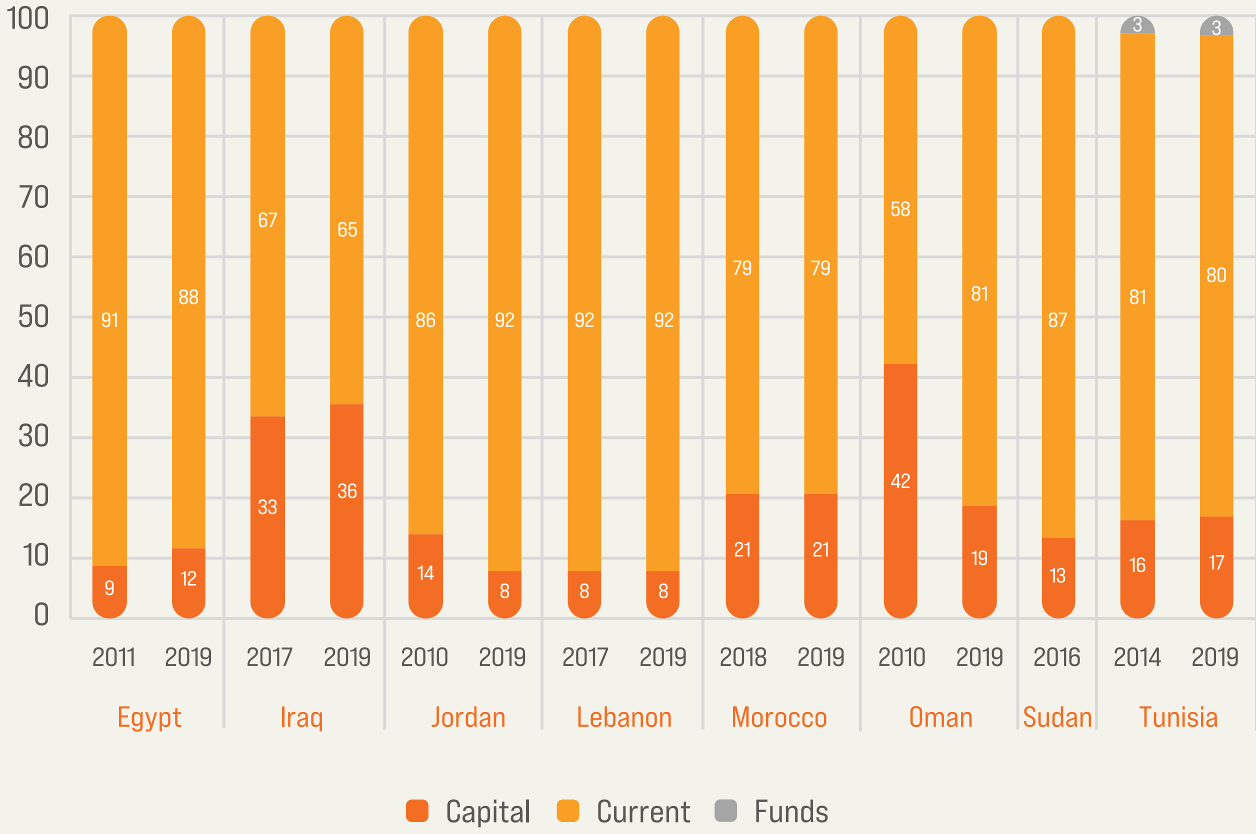
Capital expenditure made up only around

1/5 of social expenditure in 2019 in countries with SEM data

Current expenditure takes a dominant share

80% in social expenditures

Figure 26. Current expenditure dominates social expenditure



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

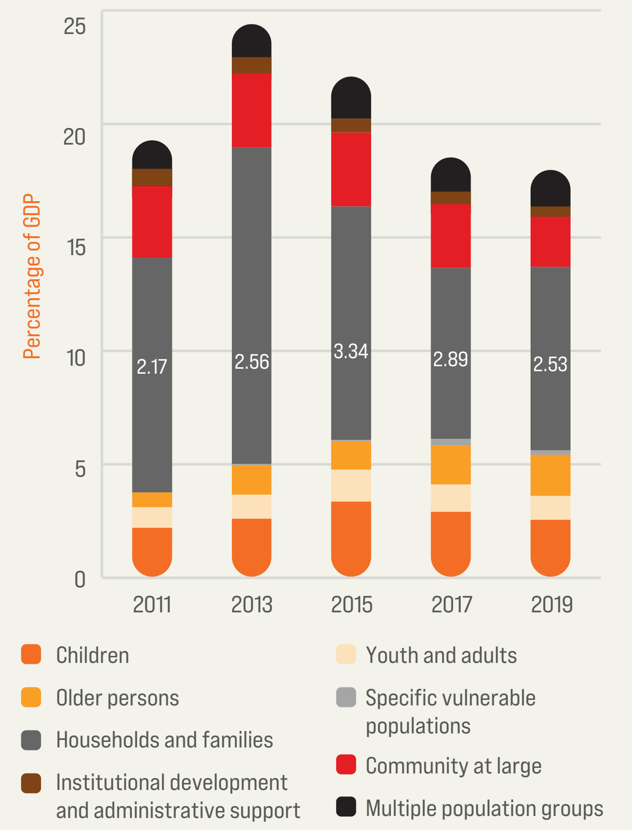
E. Who benefits and how much from social expenditure?

To better understand the distribution of social expenditure, the SEM offers an innovation by classifying expenditures across broad categories of beneficiaries,[70] namely, children, young people and adults disaggregated by sex; older persons; persons with disabilities, sickness and survivors; socially marginalized people or those at risk of social exclusion, refugees and immigrants; households benefitting from financial or in-kind support; and the community at large. Examining spending by beneficiary showcases considerable differences across Arab countries. There are dramatic variations in the distribution of beneficiaries, most notably for households and families, older persons and the community at large. These variations reflect not only the relative size and the features of national social policies and programmes, but also other contextual factors, in particular the demographic structures.

1. Support to households and families dominates but is trending down

Households and families benefit from various social policy spending such as social assistance; subsidies for food, fuel and electricity; and other support to farms. A large share of social expenditure is classified as targeted at households and families;[71] on average, 16 per cent of GDP and 42 per cent of total social expenditure in 2019. Support to households and families increased from 2011 to 2013, reaching a peak of 14 per cent of GDP, but has since generally trended downwards as the value of subsidy expenditures has declined (figure 27). In terms of the distribution of social expenditure, the share accruing to households and families has declined from a peak of 57 per cent in 2013 to 42 per cent in 2019.[72] A lack of clear targeting mechanisms and reporting is a barrier to identifying types of households or actual beneficiaries within households.

Figure 27. On average, a large share of social expenditure is targeted at households and families, although with a downward trend

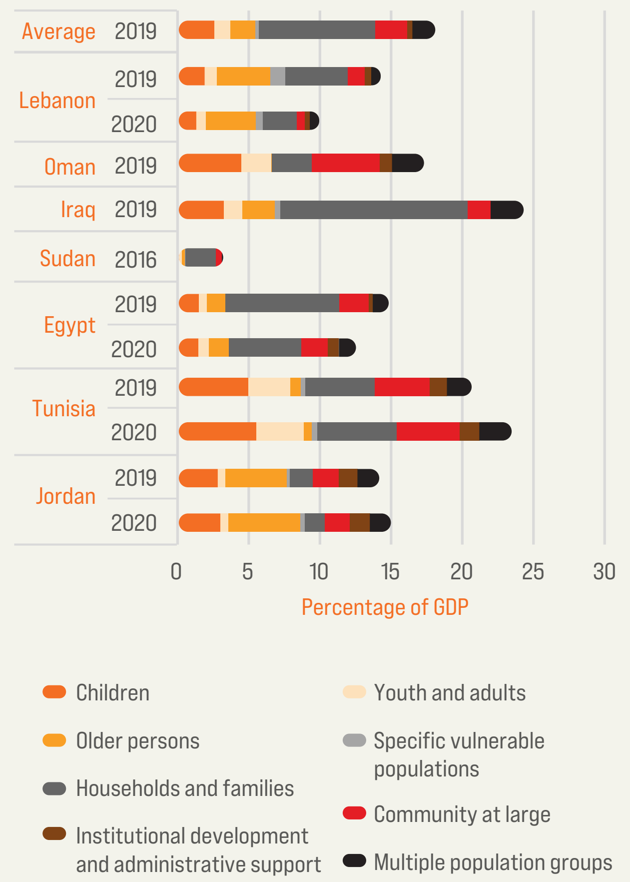


Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Note: Weighted average of eight countries, as per data available for the SEM. Multiple population groups are a category where social programmes benefit more than one population category and data are not disaggregated.

In countries with extensive subsidy systems, such as Egypt, Iraq and the Sudan, support to households and families constitutes a majority of social expenditure. More than two thirds of the social expenditure of the Sudan, or about 2 per cent of GDP, goes to households and families while the share is 54 per cent or 8 per cent and 13 per cent of GDP respectively in Egypt and Iraq (figure 28). No other country devoted more than one quarter of social expenditure to households and families (figure 28). The overall pattern suggests that subsidies are a substantive aspect of spending on households and families, while much needed support, such as social assistance, is significantly lower.

Figure 28. Households and families benefit particularly in countries with extensive subsidies



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

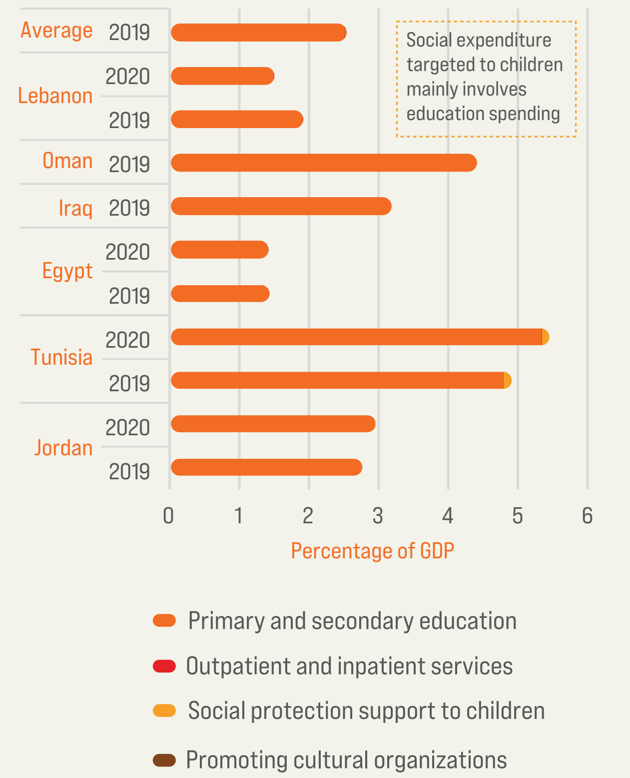
Note: Multiple population groups are a category where social programmes benefit more than one population category and data are not disaggregated.

2. Varying shares to children, youth and the elderly

Children represent the main beneficiary of education expenditures, particularly from public education systems. They also benefit from certain social protection spending targeted at them.[73] Public social expenditure specifically supporting children, on average, accounted for 2.5 per cent of GDP and 14 per cent of total social expenditure in 2019 (figure 29). The bulk of social spending targeted at children is represented by public expenditure on primary and secondary education. However, these remain below the international benchmarks. Across the region, social assistance expenditure targeted at children is low. For instance, the proportion of children or mothers with newborns covered by social assistance programmes is among the lowest in the world.[74]

Figure 29. Breakdown of public social expenditure on children

Social expenditure targeted to children mainly involves education spending



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

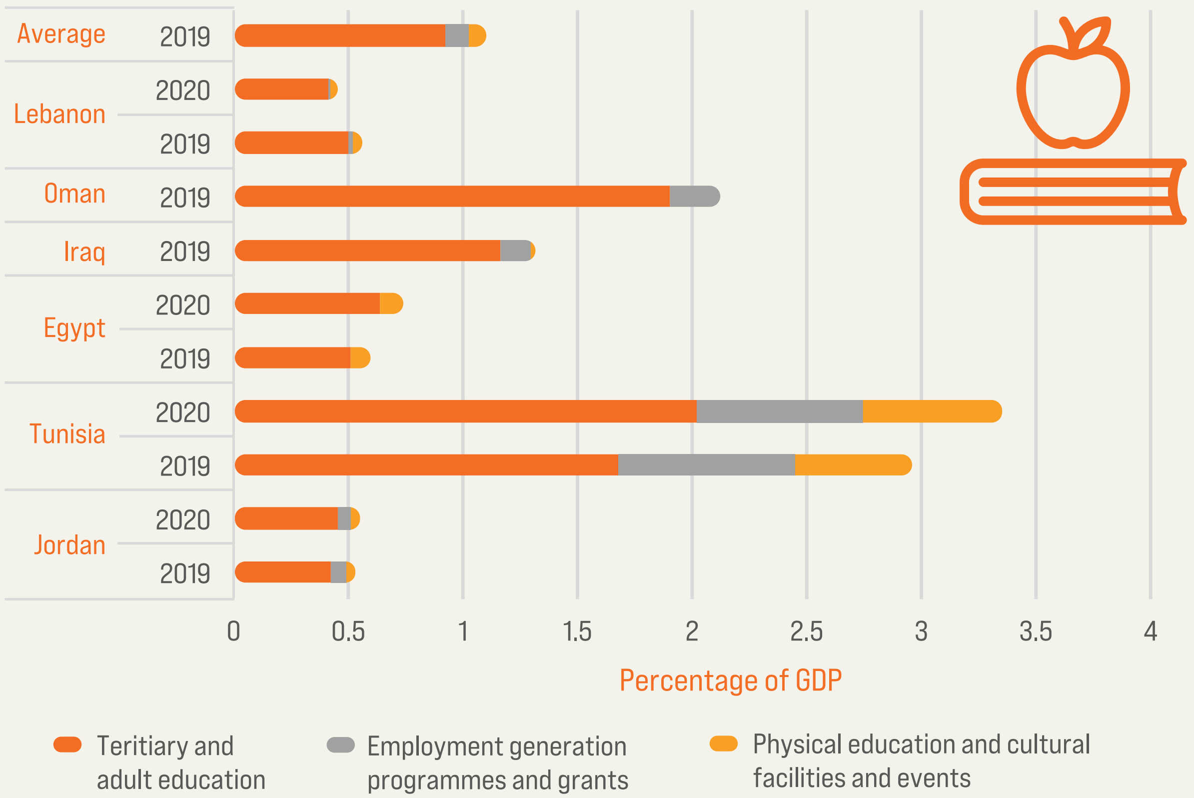
Based on the most recent data, education expenditure on youth and adults made up 1 per cent of GDP and 5.5 per cent of social expenditure; a majority of spending went to tertiary education (figure 30). The second-largest expenditure targeting youth and adults is employment generation programmes and grants, which saw $1.1 billion in support in aggregate for the countries, approximately $800 million of which came from Tunisia.

Older persons benefit primarily from spending on social protection as they represent the main beneficiaries of Government pension schemes. In total, social spending on older persons amounted to 1.6 per cent of GDP in 2019. Lebanon and Jordan, which have large Government-funded pension schemes, allocate 35 per cent and 34 per cent of social expenditure, respectively, to older persons. All other countries spend less than 10 per cent on older persons. Oman does not have any social support specifically for older persons under the SEM classification. As the region's demographics evolve and populations include greater shares of older persons, a crucial challenge becomes how to support ageing populations without compromising contributions to other groups.

> **The bulk of social spending targeted at children is represented by public expenditure on primary and secondary education. However, these remain below the international benchmarks.**

Figure 30. Breakdown of social expenditure on youth and adults

Social expenditures targeted to youth and adults are mainly through tertiary education services



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

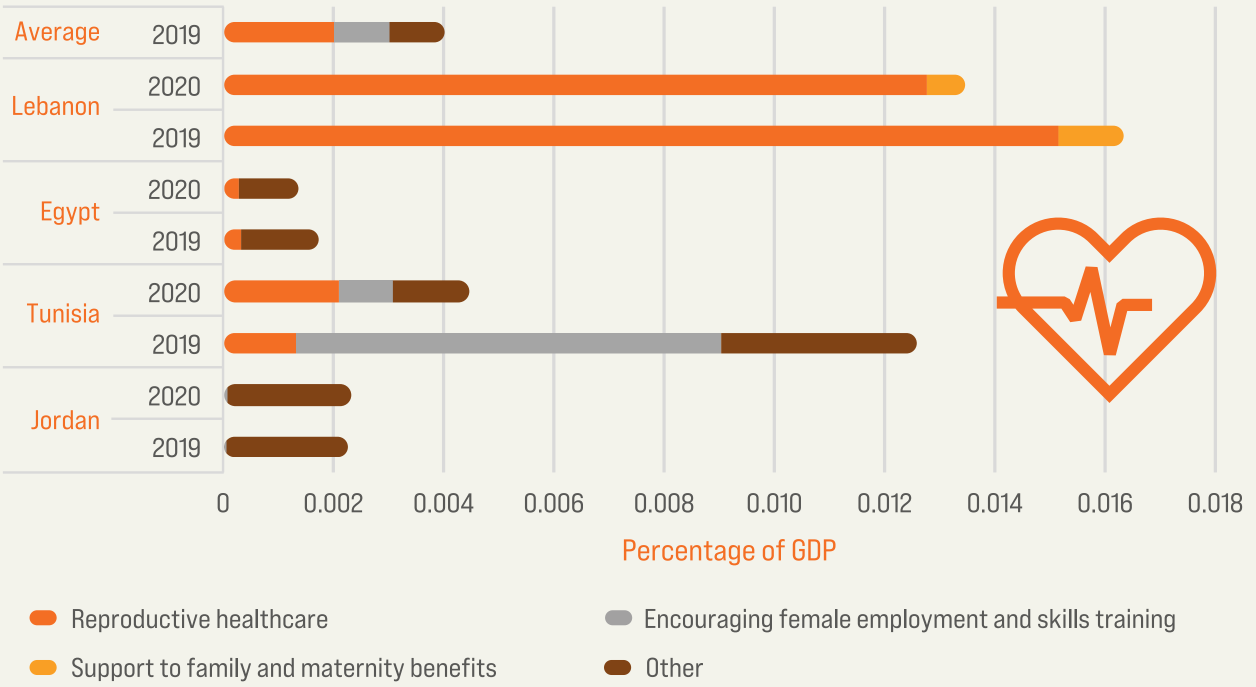
3. Spending targeted to women is shockingly low

Expenditures on programmes and services targeted to women are almost non-existent, accounting for only $10 million in 2019, less than 0.01 per cent of total social expenditure.[75] Only four of the eight countries had disaggregated data to show expenditure targeted specifically towards supporting women. In each of the last two years, roughly 70 per cent of spending on women has been related to health and nutrition, comprising expenditures on reproductive health care, and other health-related programmes including combating discrimination against women and gender-based violence, which inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys. Spending on social protection programmes and labour market programmes targeting women is relatively low.

In Lebanon, which has a relatively higher share of expenditures targeted to women than other countries in the sample, the spending is mainly through reproductive health care and support through family and maternity benefits (figure 31). Recently, Tunisia began investing in labour market programmes for women. Prior to 2017, this dimension represented less than 3 per cent of total support to women but in the last two years, the proportion has approached 30 per cent. Labour market support to women mainly covers spending on programmes encouraging female employment and promoting equal opportunities for women in higher positions through developing national plans for economic and social empowerment of women, specifically those in rural areas. In 2020, expenditure on labour market programmes fell in Tunisia primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 31. Breakdown of social expenditure on women

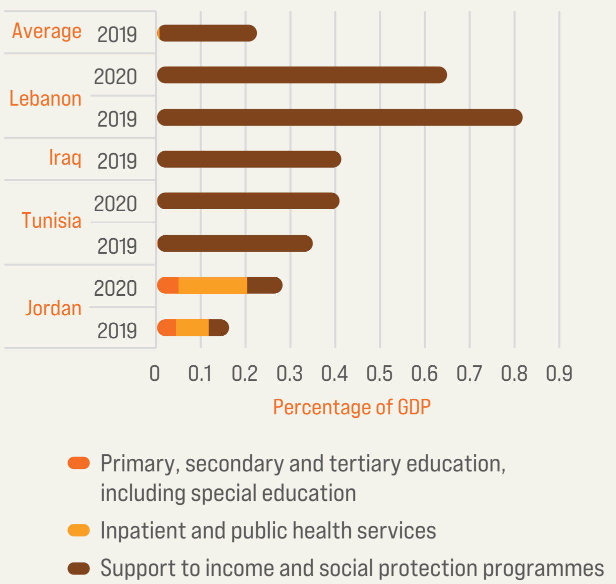
Social expenditure targeted to women is dominated by health care



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

Figure 32. Breakdown of social expenditure on specific vulnerable populations

Social expenditure on specific vulnerable populations mostly misses the goal of meeting multiple needs



Source: ESCWA, n.d.a.

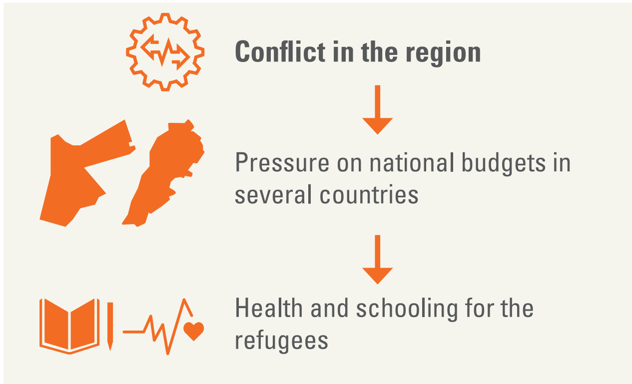
4. Vulnerable populations remain on the fiscal margins

Vulnerable populations include persons with disabilities, sickness and survivors, as well as socially marginalized persons or those at risk of social exclusion, refugees and immigrants. Expenditure on these groups generally constitutes less than half a percentage point of GDP and entails education, health and social protection spending. For several countries, well-disaggregated expenditure data are not available under the SEM classification to assess expenditure benefitting socially marginalized persons.

In Jordan, expenditure on vulnerable populations is roughly equal across health and nutrition, social protection and education. In all other countries, support occurs only through social protection. During the pandemic, several countries extended support through increased social protection, such as Iraq and Jordan. The latter also expanded public health services. It is important to increase expenditure on vulnerable populations. Equally critical is providing a comprehensive and well-organized array of programmes for education, social protection and health that uphold their rights and meet their needs (figure 32). Conflict in the region has also created an additional unexpected pressure on national budgets in several countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon, to provide health and schooling for the refugees.

5. A wide range for the community at large

The community at large benefits from spending that is not exclusive to a particular population group. It generally includes investments in non-financial assets and public goods and services and constitutes spending on housing and community amenities as well as environmental protection. Expenditures for the community at large range from 10.5 per cent of social expenditure (1.2 per cent of GDP) in Lebanon to 27 per cent of social expenditure (4.8 per cent of GDP) in Oman. Lebanon's low spending is in part due to the structure of its health-care system, which depends heavily on private health providers. The figures might be changing quickly, given the economic hardship situation that the people are facing in Lebanon.



F. Spending choices fall short

Achieving the SDGs and productive, just societies and economies depends on public social expenditure. Sufficient investment protects the poorest and most vulnerable, builds human capital and infrastructure to drive growth, and corrects imbalances in society. The effectiveness of social expenditure, however, depends on informed public expenditure choices grounded in comprehensive monitoring and analysis. The SEM presents a holistic assessment of public social expenditure that goes beyond the traditional emphasis on health, education and social protection to encompass the array of social services necessary to realize the SDGs.

The Arab region is lagging on public social expenditure compared to other parts of the world. While data limitations meant that the SEM could only examine eight countries, this still revealed several striking patterns. Social protection, subsidies and support to farms is the largest dimension of social expenditure, followed at a distance by education. Very little spending goes to labour market support; the arts, culture and sports; or environmental protection. Employment generation programmes, incentives for business start-ups, social insurance, early childhood development, and social-related research and development get short shrift in budgets.

These findings are concerning, because the level and the right mix of social expenditures determine human capital as well as links, such as between education and productive sectors of the economy, that determine economic dynamism and inclusion. Further, with 80 per cent of social expenditure in the region going to current expenditures on wages and salaries, and only 20 per cent on capital expenditures, prospects to dramatically enhance productivity are limited. The region already struggles with stagnant economic and social structures and will continue to do so unless it invests in a course correction.

Endnotes

37 IMF, 2019a.
38 Irrespective of poor targeting of general subsidies, these are from public budgets for a social purpose. Rationalizing subsidies and targeting them to people in greatest need is key to social expenditure reform but not a sufficient reason to discount subsidies as social expenditures. See ESCWA, 2017a.
39 ESCWA, 2019c.
40 Sarangi and others, 2021.
41 Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys (UNHCR).
42 At the time of the report's preparation, data on Kuwait was not available.
43 OECD, World Health Organization (WHO) and Eurostat, 2011.
44 International Labour Organization (ILO), n.d.b.
45 Historical trends since 1990s suggest a decline in public expenditure as a share of GDP, part of increasing privatization and liberalization. The quality of public institutions has also declined, with particularly striking impacts on public services for the poor. See Diwan and Akin, 2015.
46 The increase in the ratio of expenditure to GDP is influenced partly by the fiscal stimulus extended by countries to support their people and economies, and partly by GDP losses, as discussed in chapter 5.
47 High-income countries in this analysis included Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Middle-income countries included Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the State of Palestine, and Tunisia. Least developed countries included the Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, the Sudan, and Yemen.
48 ESCWA, 2014b; UNDP, 2016.
49 ESCWA, 2021a.
50 Bahrain, 2018.
51 Kuwait, Supreme Council for Planning and Development, 2019.
52 Saudi Arabia, 2018.
53 Egypt, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2021.
54 All SEM data are from public budgets and refer to the fiscal years of respective countries. Most countries use the calendar year as the fiscal year. Egypt's fiscal year is July-June; 2019 refers to the 2018-2019 fiscal year.
55 United Nations, 2021a.
56 Analysis of the social protection, subsidies and support to farms dimension is restricted to the following countries with available, sufficiently disaggregated and internationally consistent data: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan and Tunisia.
57 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2011.
58 Analysis for the housing, connectivity and community amenities dimension is restricted to the following countries with available, sufficiently detailed and internationally consistent data: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, and Tunisia.
59 ESCWA, 2017b.
60 The official portal for e-government services in Oman is available at https://omanportal.gov.om/#p15.
61 ESCWA, 2017c.
62 Analysis for the labour market intervention and employment generation dimension is restricted to the following countries with available, sufficiently detailed and internationally comparable data: Iraq, Jordan, Oman, and Tunisia.
63 IMF, 2019a.
64 ESCWA, n.d.b.
65 Analysis for the environmental protection dimension is restricted to the following countries with available, sufficiently detailed and internationally consistent data: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia.
66 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2022.
67 International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), 2016.
68 IMF, 2019d.
69 Lemarchand, 2021.
70 The classification of expenditure by beneficiary population is based on tagging the budget line to the main beneficiary that benefits directly from the expenditure policy. Certain expenditures may indirectly benefit different population age groups within and across households or within and across communities but such disaggregated data are unavailable to undertake equity analysis.
71 In the context of public social expenditures, households and families are used interchangeably due to lack of adequate distinction in policy targets.
72 Sarangi and others, 2021.
73 Children may profit from benefits to households and families but intrahousehold distribution of benefits is not available, which makes it difficult to disaggregate certain benefits to children exclusively.
74 ILO, 2021.
75 Expenditure refers to programmes targeted to women only. Women may also benefit from expenditure on programmes related to youth and the elderly, and on households and families.