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Development Cooperation in Muslim Countries

The Experience of German Technical Cooperation

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Contents

Youth in the Arab World

by *Ines Braune*

General introduction

In the Arab world young people play an important role not least as a result of their great number. Although the Arab countries differ widely in many aspects, the one feature they have in common is that they have a very young population. About 70 % are under thirty and 38 % under fifteen years of age. The *Arab Human Development Report 2002* accentuates the fact that Arab societies are considerably younger on average than the global average. It is stressed that the young generation holds the creative and innovative potential of the future, although in fact this does not always come to fruition due to serious deficits in development.

›Youth‹ is not merely a statistical term defined by age limits, but rather a social category characterised by a quite specific constellation of issues. In the following paper the aim is to illustrate the important aspects and interdependencies of this set of problems and to give a short description of the issues involved.

One of the most important factors, and with the farthest-reaching consequences is the lack of access to the labour market. This is despite the fact that most Arab countries invested heavily in education after they became independent under the motto ›education creates wealth‹, and there is, indeed, today a stratum of well-educated, mainly urban young people. These young people, though, are precisely the ones most severely affected by unemployment, the rate being especially high among young academics, in Egypt, for example. To this can be added the fact that young people who have been trained in financially rewarding professions move abroad where they are welcomed as highly skilled employees, leaving the Arab countries to face the consequences of this brain drain.

One effect is that low incomes prevent people from entering into marriage, because they are unable to pay for the weddings. However, as marriage is the only legitimate institution enabling men and women to live together and as it is also virtually the only route into adult life that society accepts, this ›youth phase‹ becomes more and more prolonged. Alternative forms of access to adulthood, such as the first job, receiving the right to vote, or moving out of the parental home, are of no significance because these possibilities do not exist or are not seen as relevant when compared with marriage. Many young

people still live at home with their parents and have neither the physical nor the mental space to realise their plans and fulfil their potential. The Moroccan author, Mounia Benanni-Chraïbi, describes this as a symbolic rejection of young people by their societies, whose ›old‹ elites grant them no space to take on any responsibility.[89]

Responsibility and hierarchies are tied to advancement in age, which often makes communication more difficult both within society and within the family. The relationship young people have with their parents and, in particular, their fathers as the head of the family is one ruled by respect, which often expresses itself as a feeling of distance and fear. As a result there is often little of any exchange or discussion of problems and differing opinions.

The typical image of phase of youth is one of a period of life containing a wide range of ages which, as a result of the prolonged youth phase encompasses unmarried people from the age of twelve up to their early thirties. In Morocco, for example, the average age at marriage in urban regions is twenty-nine. Social and economic exclusion above all affects people from their early twenties up to the age of thirty who have completed education at school or university.

The situation of young people in rural regions differs fundamentally from that of those living in towns and cities. In rural areas young people are more tightly integrated into the traditional rhythm of life, one feature being that in these areas girls, in particular, are very young when they marry. Young people in rural regions are often not able to read or write, do not have any access to leisure opportunities and also have poorer access to new information and communication technologies. Young women are particularly seriously affected by this situation.

In Arab countries young people themselves experience their situation as one of great uncertainty. Education and access to new information and communication technologies, but also direct contact with tourists, friends and relatives who live abroad have contributed to the broadening of the horizons of young people beyond the boundaries of their own district, their town or their country. Events, images and ideas from around the world become the frame of reference for the way young people experience everyday life, which clashes with the predominant explanatory models at home. On the one hand, the ›West‹ provides a mirror which reflects their own position, while on the other it provides physical and psychological escape from a situation considered to be without prospects. Finding solace in Islam in its varying interpretations also offers opportunities for solutions for the individual but can contain great potential for conflict as well.

Against the background of the array of problems described above, the chal-

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89   Mounia Benanni-Chraïbi, *Soumis et rebelles. Les jeunes au Maroc* (Paris: CNRS, 1994).

lenges for development co-operation lie in opening up perspectives and enabling young people to trust in their role of being the shapers of the future. Education and the labour market development are policy areas especially relevant to young people. In the education sector the objectives are on the one hand improving wide-scale basic education in the battle against illiteracy and on the other hand improving the quality of higher education to reflect the needs of the labour market. Integration into the labour market is crucial for the economic security of young people and their families but also for the stimulation of economic processes through innovative contributions from young people. Other areas of activity for development co-operation (DC) include reproductive health, in particular sex education and protection against (transmissible) diseases, and education in democratic values and participation.

As there are so many young people they are an important factor in maintaining the political stability and legitimacy of the state. Against the background of increasing radicalisation by Islamist groups, the attitude of young people towards democratic values will be a crucial determinant in shaping the future of the Arab countries. For this reason, another important activity area for development co-operation (DC) is strengthening the participation of young people in decision-making processes and raising awareness of the concerns of young people among decision-makers and political leaders. When working with the young people themselves the objective is to bolster individual talents and contribute to the capacity-building of youth organisations.

Youth and Islam

The Qur'ān does not explicitly mention the subject of youth, which is explained by the fact that the period of life called ›youth‹ is a social phenomenon that has been keenly identified in modern times. One of the first studies to explore the situation of young people in rural regions of Morocco (1969), for example, did not include girls as they the researcher considered that they do not experience a ›youth‹ phase; they are in many cases married off before they reach puberty, thus moving directly from being children to being wives and mothers.

All in all, young people are particularly affected by the contradictions between Islamic-patriarchal traditions and the reality of life. Considerable tension is created by the expectations of the gender roles on which the social order in predominantly Muslim societies is based and which are rooted deeply within not only the religious but also the social consciousness. Consequently, any changes concerning gender relations are a highly sensitive matter. This affects both the allocation of roles within marriage– and accordingly the different way men and women present themselves in public – and also the issue of sexual relations outside marriage.

As the whole issue of the relationships between youths and young women is subject to strong taboos and there is a lack of terminology to deal with the matter, it is difficult to address processes of social change in public. Because it is thought that it is impossible for something to happen if it is not permitted to happen according to religious preconceptions, not only are the right words not available but there is also a lack of public space to discuss and negotiate processes of change.

PADRESS– Support for decentralisation of the health service in the field of reproductive health, Morocco

The objective of this GTZ project is to contribute to the improvement of reproductive health in the particularly disadvantaged northern regions of Taza, Al-Hoceima and Taounate while taking account of the national AIDS control programme. The work is directed towards producing an appropriate supply of information and enabling young, unmarried people, in particular, to access relevant services. Initial exploration of the issues mentioned above met with rejection by the Ministry of Health both at the national and the regional level: by definition, premarital sexual relationships, especially any involving young females, could not possibly be a problem within the Islamic context. In private conversation, however, concerns were raised about rising rates of sexually transmitted diseases, illegal, risk-laden abortions and about the obvious change in the way male and female young people interact. GTZ signalled its willingness to offer support in this field, but this was initially rejected for fear of possible conflicts with largely conservative forces within society. However, the offer of support was left on the table and coincided with the urgent recommendation of the national AIDS control programme to recognise young people as a risk group.

Over a number of months of cautious discussions, the institutional partners acknowledged the importance of the issues and the opportunity to use the support of the GTZ to open up this field, one which was new to Morocco. It was decided to conduct a survey in the project region to find out what young people knew and how they behaved with respect to sexual and reproductive health. Intensive talks took place with participants on a national and regional level to fine-tune the instruments and the study protocol, with responsibility being borne jointly by GTZ and the Moroccan authorities. The survey conducted by the project in 2003 in Taza provided important source data.

A qualitative study carried out in parallel gave young people the opportunity to ask frank questions anonymously on the issues of puberty: boys and girls, sexuality, marriage, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. The young people took up this opportunity to an extent which had not been envisaged, thus offering proof of their enormous thirst for and frightening lack of knowledge.

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90 Christa Masonis, Summary Report: Egyptian Child Rights Coalition – Summer Youth Camp, GTZ project ›Strengthening Women's Rights‹ (1999).

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The next step consisted of using the study results and the questions asked by the young people as the basis for elaborating target-group-specific, culturally compatible and, in this case, religiously compatible, information and education materials with the involvement of young people. Taking as an example a participatory process that had been tested in a GTZ project in Tanzania, short, precise, relevant answers were formulated in response to the most common questions on the issues mentioned above. These questions and answers are to be published as a series of brochures jointly designed with young people to appeal to the target group. It proved to be important to design the provision of information and services for young people on the basis of scientific data collected within the specific context of Morocco.

Initially the results were discussed only in the immediate surrounding, that is, in a protected environment. There was a possibility that ›going public‹ would have had counterproductive consequences. After careful deliberations, neither Muslim dignitaries nor religious institutions have so far been involved, as there were overwhelming concerns that this would jeopardise the work on these sensitive and important issues during the early phase. Throughout the entire process, however, the actors involved, including the young representatives of non-governmental organisations, ensured that religious and cultural values and norms were taken into consideration.

A youth conference suggested by the GTZ-backed project and held in cooperation with other sectors contributed to advancing the issues surrounding youth sexuality in specialist circles and to casting aside their taboo status. It is planned to adapt the topic to make it a suitable one to be discussed in schools in the region, for parents and for other social groups, and to explore possibilities for dialogue with the parent generation, that is, to provide ›dialogue between the generations‹. Other types of target-group-specific and popular education measures were also supported and discussed, such as the creation of a theatre play about HIV/AIDS. In order to enable young people to commit themselves actively to matters affecting their health, the project also plans to introduce self-administrated health clubs in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

Siegrid Tautz and Ulrich Knobloch

Gender-sensitive Adolescent Development: case study in Egypt
An initial step towards a change in gender relations is for young people to be able to critically analyse traditions and norms and to ask pertinent questions about them. One such opportunity is provided by summer camps which bring together Muslim and Christian boys and girls between thirteen and nineteen years old. These camps provide an environment for the adolescents to discuss topics which are normally subject to social taboos, supported by lectures, films and role-play. Such topics include, for example, violence against women, female genital mutilation and participation in politics. The girls and boys are able to choose the topics freely depending on their interests.

The first such summer camp was held in 1998 by the NGO Jesuits and Brothers Community Development Association, which has been involved in youth work in Egypt for thirty-four years. The camp was mainly attended by young people from rural regions. In 1999 and 2000 the NGO umbrella organisation, the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (CRC) organised summer camps with support from the GTZ project ›Strengthening Women's Rights‹.[90] The circle of participants was widened to ensure that young people from different sections of the population and from both urban and rural regions came together in the camps. At the same time young people who had already attended a previous CRC camp were included in the planning and implementation of the latest camps.

Two important results emerged from the discussions in the preparatory group: first, the young people pin-pointed the problem of how to deal with the new knowledge acquired during the summer camp, because they often felt that they were unable to put their knowledge to use in everyday life. How were they to behave when the neighbour's daughter is due to be circumcised or a female friend is married off at sixteen, for example? As a result, at the second camp, the main focus was on how to deal with the traditions and customs of society, how to say ›no‹ to traditional social norms, and violence against women in general when necessary. The young people also actively took part in discussions about the shape the event should take, and unequivocally came out against lectures and in favour of active group work.

The seven-day summer camp highlighted important issues. First, it promoted young people's awareness of democracy as a result of them participating in the planning and organising of the programme.

One of the comments repeated again and again by youth during the evaluation was that the camp provided them the unique opportunity of feeling respected by adults, that they had gained practical experience in issues of their rights and responsibilities, and had increased their self-confidence in the process.

Secondly, the camps provided the adolescents with an opportunity to question not only concepts about traditional roles but also prejudices against ideas held by other faiths, and to work out both differences and common ground and, by doing so, to cross traditional boundaries.

For efforts directed at working on controversial issues, such as gender relations and women's rights, to be effective a long-term strategy is required which ensures the continuation of short-term measures. The main question with which young people were confronted was how to be able to use the acquired knowledge in everyday life outside the protected environment provided by a summer camp. It became clear that there is a lack of points of contact or partners to provide long-term support for youth programmes.

Further reading

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Links

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http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/priorities/euromed_en.html.

Jordanian Youth in Action: A Handbook of Participation.
http://www.iri.org/pdfs/YouthBookletPBYRC.pdf.

Men and reproductive health. Implementation Guide.
http://www.jhuccp.org/igwg/guide/index.html.

Transitions to Adulthood. Egypt: Findings from a National Adolescent Survey.
http://www.popcouncil.org/ta/adolescenceEgypt.html.

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEDS	Basic Education Development Strategy
BEFARe	Basic Education for Afghan Refugees (GTZ)
CGAP	Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
CLIS	Council of Leading Islamic Scholars
CMW	Community Mobilizing Worker
CNLPE	Comité National de Lutte Contre la Pratique de l'Excision (Burkina Faso)
DC	Development Cooperation
DOI	German Institute for Middle East Studies (Hamburg)
EFA	Education for All
EFA-FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative
EMRO	Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO)
EU	European Union
FC	Financial Cooperation
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GGFPP	Gambian German Family Planning Project
GNP	Gross National Product
GPC	General People's Congress (Yemen)
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSBC	Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation
IC	Information Center
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDG	Millenium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFI	Microfinance-Institution
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governamental Organisation
NWFP	North West Frontier Province (Pakistan)
NWRA	National Water Resources Authority
PAIC	Public Awareness and Information Campaign
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RWP	Reclaimed Water Project
SRH	Sexual and Reproduktive Health
TC	Technical Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
YSP	Yemeni Socialist Party

Glossary

(A) = Arabic, (I) = Indonesian, (Af) = used in Afghanistan,
(Y) = Yemeni Arabic

ᶜāda, pl., ᶜādāt	(A): tradition, custom
ahkām	(A): judgements on the basis of the prescription of Islamic law
aksakal	(Af): traditional council or court in Kyrgyzstan
ᶜālim, pl., ᶜulamā'	(A): lit., educated man; religious scholar; scholar of religion or law, trained in one of the traditional religious universities
ᶜaqil	(A): lit., knowledgeable; head of a tribal branch in Yemen
āya, pl., āyāt	(A): verse in the Qur'ān; statements
al-Azhar	The most important religious university in Cairo
ᶜazl	(A): *coitus interruptus*
daᶜīf	(A): weak
dār	(A): house, tribal territory
dār al-islām	(A): area dominated by Islam or the lands administered by Muslim governments
dayah	(I): Muslim scholar and head of a religious boarding school in Aceh, cf. *pesantren* in Indonesia.
fasād	(A): harm caused by mankind; corruption
fatwā	(A): judgement; scholarly opinion, ruling or opinion; non-binding legal opinion issued in response to a legal problem; formal legal opinion or ruling delivered by a mufti; religious-legal conviction or counsel from an accredited scholar.
fiqh	(A): lit., knowledge; Muslim judiciary; the process of jurisprudence by which the rules of Islamic law are derived; science of religious law. The word is also used to refer generally to law; Islamic legal system
fitna	(A): social chaos, moral challenges, seduction, ›strife‹ (because of misleading ideas which lead to social disorder and fights)
fitra	(A): nature, creation
fqīh, faqīh, pl., fuqahā'	(A): jurist; one learned in the science of *fiqh*; a person with a good grasp of the intricacies of Islamic law; teacher of religious affairs; Qur'ānic teacher
futūh, pl., futūhāt	(A): wars of conquest of the first caliphs seen as ›good‹ wars
hadd	(A): legal punishment (Islamic law)
hadīth, pl., ahādīth	(A): lit., report, account or statement; reports of the words and doings of the Prophet which were written down in the first centuries after Muhammad's death and which can be traced back through chains of transmission (*isnād*) to the Prophet and his Companions; tradition reports.

halāl	(A): lit., permissible by religion, lawful; one of the five categories of the *sharīʿa*, meaning that which is permitted or allowed. Most Islamic schools of law hold that everything is permitted unless there is evidence declaring it to be prohibited.
haqq al-shifa	(A): right to satisfy thirst.
haqq	(A): obligation; share or right; truth
harām	(A): lit., forbidden by religion; one of the five categories of *sharʿa* connoting that which is sacred or forbidden; religious sanctuary
hasan	(A): beautiful, fair; a man's name.
hisba	(A): legal person who watches the adherence to the allowed and forbidden and submits evidence of forbidden action of another person to court, even if it refers to the private sphere
hudna	(A): temporary ceasefires; armistice agreement
ʿidwān	(A): wars of aggression
ijmāʿ	(A): consensus (of legal scholars); legal scholars
imām	(A): prayer leader; spiritual leader in the religious sense (and sometimes in the political sense, for example, in Iran and Oman).
imāma	(A): leadership. This ranges from the occasional leadership of common prayers to the position of religious leadership of a whole community, see also *imām*
inshā'allāh	(A): God willing
al-ʿishā'	(A): early evening prayers
al-islām al-siyāsy	(A): political Islam
isnād	(A): chain of transmission of a report or tradition traced back to the Prophet Muhammad; chain of proof of the *ahādīth*
Jaha	(I): elders; delegation of elders
jamāʿat al-Islamiyya	(A): Islamic group or council
jihād	(A): lit., exertion, striving; to strive, to fight or battle with all means, including military ones. used for the defence of Islam The small *jihād* is a ›legitimate war‹ for the oppression of revolts and for defence (armed hostilities, small *jihād* or *qitāl* (fighting)), in contrast to a big *jihād* which describes the endeavour to lead a life according to Islam. In the militant sense *jihād* refers to readiness to combat in case of an aggression against Islam
Jirga	(Af): council assembly, cf. (A): *majlis*
Kawama	(A): see *qawama*
khalīfa, pl., khulafā'	(A): successor, representative; ›successor‹ of the Prophet Muhammad; caliph
khalīfat rasūl Allāh	(A): lit., the successor of God's legate; the caliphate is a Muslim form of governance which combines secular and religious leadership in the person of the caliph
khalq	(A): creation
khulʿ	(A): divorce, also *mukhālaʿa*

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kuttāb, pl., katātib	(A): Religious primary schools from the time of the Umayyads (AD 661–750); Quranic schools
kyai	(I): Muslim scholars and leaders
la ilāha illā-llāh	(A): There is no other god than God
madhhab, pl., madhāhib	(A) Legal school of thought; accepted doctrine that was canonised between the mid-8th and the mid-10th century AD
madrasa, pl., madāris	(A): lit., place of instruction; religious or secular school or college
al-maghrib	(A): sunset; name of Muslim prayers at sunset; the West; various states in North Africa including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya
mahr	(A): marriage endowment
majlis	(A): lit., council, assembly, meeting; tribal assembly which makes consensual decisions; a tribal board for solutions of conflicts; applies as much to a village assembly as much as a state council.
majlis al-shūrā	(A): consultative council; permanent advisory body
majlis hay'at kibār al-ᶜulamā'	(A): highest council of legal scholars, for example in Saudi Arabia.
maragha	(Y): highest authority on tribal judgements in Yemen
maᶜrifa	(A): secular knowledge
mashwara	(A): consultation
maslaha	(A): common welfare, preservation of the public interest
mīzān	(A): moderation, balance
mudāraba	(A): discretionary financing; limited or silent partnership
mufakat	(I/A): consensus of all parties involved in a conflict; consensus on the social level
muftī	(A): lit., decision-maker; Sunnite law scholar who delivers an expert opinion (*fatwa*) on how a matter in the Islamic legal process has been decided according to the *sharīᶜa*. *Fatwas* issued by a mufti on matters concerning marriage, divorce or inheritance are binding
muhtasib	(A): chairman of the *hisba*
mullāh	(P): village preacher; Shiᶜi scholar who is an expert in religious affairs
murābaha	(A): resale with specification of gain; no resale with an advance
musālaha	(A): reconciliation, cf. *maslaha*
mushāraka	(A): (financing through) partnership
mushāwara	(I): consultation, cf. (A): *mashwara*
nikah	(A): marriage contract
pela gandong	(I): Alliances between Muslim and Christian villages in the Molaccas, cf. *sayam*
pesantren	(I): Muslim scholar and head of a religious boarding school in Indonesia

qawama	(A): supremacy, superiority, provision; ›the responsibility of men for their families derived from the income they spend and the endowments bestowed on some of them, It is often misinterpreted by the lay public as implying a superiority of men over women despite the existence of more rational interpretations by religious leaders‹.[132]
qitāl	(A): hostilities, fighting
qānūn	(A): law
qādī, pl., qudā'	(A): religious judge
Ramadān	(A): Muslim lunar month of fasting
ribā'	(A): bank interest, usury, rent
sahīh	(A): lit., authentic, valid, true, correct; justly assured; report or tradition considered validly traced back to the Prophet
al-salaf al-sālih	(A): pious predecessors; the time of the righteous caliphs
al-salaf	(A): ancestors
salafiya	(A): Islamic reform movement
salm	(A): peace
sayam	(I): alliances between Muslim and Christian villages in the Molaccas, cf. *pela gandong*
sharīᶜa	(A): lit., path, road; the revealed, or canonical law of Islam
shaykh	(A): representative of a tribe
shaytān	(A): devil
Shīᶜa	(A): lit., *Shīᶜat ᶜAlī*: Ali's Party; sect, major subdivision of the Muslim community which regards only the male descendants of the Prophet's son-in-law, Caliph ᶜAlī Ibn Abi Tālib, who was married to the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, as the legitimate successors of the Prophet, especially the descendants of their son Husayn Ibn ᶜAlī, who was killed in AD 680 near Karbala
Shūrā	(A): consultation, consultative body, council and advice. The Qur'ān commands that the affairs of the community are run by *shūrā*; non-binding consultation which is sought by a ruler from a college or a council
Sūfi	(A): Sufi; Muslim mystic; Muslims who seek higher degrees of spiritual excellence; Muslims who belong to a mystical order
sūfiyya	(A): mysticism
sulh	(A): reconciliation, peace, peace-making
sunna, pl., sunan	(A): lit., the way, the course, the conduct of life; the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad as written down in *ahadīth*; the example of the Prophet, embodied in his statements, actions and those matters that he silently approved of as reported in *hadīth* literature. *Sunna* refers to the sum of the sayings and doings (*hadīth*) of the Prophet which are seen as a primary source of Islamic law
Sunnī	(A): major subdivision of the Muslim community. About 90 % of the world's Muslims are Sunni

sūra	(A): chapter in the Qur'ān
tafsīr	(A): exegesis or commentary, particularly as it relates to the Qur'ān; science of interpreting the Qur'ān
tahāra	(A): purity, state of ritual purity
tahkīm	(A): arbitration
tawhīd	(A): uniqueness of God
ᶜulamā', see sing., ᶜālim	(A): religious scholars
Umayyad	(A): dynasty of caliphs that ruled from Damascus between AD 661 and 750
umma	(A): Muslim community; community
ᶜurf	(A): applied common law, local custom; law derived from the common and approved mores of the people, e.g. in Yemen and Bedouin tribes
walāya	(A): guardianship; ›rights of men to make financial decisions‹[133]
walhān	(A): greedy
waqf, pl., awqāf	(A): pious endowment; religious foundations whose proceeds are used for religious or charitable causes. The administration of these foundations often belongs in modern times to the relevant Ministry of Religious Foundations and Religious Affairs
wasta	(A): mediation, influence
wudū'	(A): ablutions before Muslim prayers
zakāt	(A): Muslim obligation to give alms. One of the five ritual duties of the Muslims (the other four are confession of the faith (*shahāda*), prayer, abstinence and pilgrimage)
zinā'	(A): fornication, intercourse outside of marriage

132 UNIFEM (Egypt), *Progress of Arab Women* (Cairo: UNIFEM, 2004), p. 16, footnote 4. online at http://www.al-bab.com/arab/women.htm
133 Ibid., p. 16, footnote 3.