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SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH

Strengths of Social Media :

- Keeping connections.
 - Fulfilling human instinctual need for communication and sociality.
 - Finding new ways of self-expression.
 - Developping social and creative skills.
 - Trespassing social, cultural and psychological constraints/inhibitions.
- The taxonomy « social media » was first used by Tim O'Reilly in 2005.
- It also refers to 'Web 2.0'
- « Collective Intelligence »

Social media is defined as « users' generated content ».

Youth can create their own contents through social media applications : Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Twitter...

On social media platforms youth have the ability to practice journalism (citizen journalism), political activism as an alternative to their offline depoliticization (the Arab Spring is a pertinent evidence of the role social media, especially Facebook, plays in youth's political awareness and activism).

Social media is ' a community of connected users' and 'collected intelligence.'

Youth share information, knowledge, points of view, values, pictures, videos, memes, play video games, chat, engage in texting, do research, collect data, provide comments and feedbacks.

On social media platforms youth can speak their cultures, show resistance to mainstream conservative culture or status quo.

Social media is also a niche for youth's 'cultural identities' (online identity).

Social media is a space of youth's self-representation, an arena where traditional power dynamics are changing, where marginalised groups can vociferously represent their cultural identities through online interactions.

Through cyberspace youth have created a « full-scale sub-culture ».

However, cyberspace could generate anomalous or deviant activities such as hacking, blackmailing, bullying which have already been established as youth digital practices, an

aspect of youth sub-culture. This negative issue of cyberspace will be detailed and discussed in a separate document.

The following quotes provide further information about youth and social media :

« Cyber-culture points out the life in cyberspace and goes beyond national cultures. It is particularly attractive for the young people who use Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) to express their attitudes, values, beliefs and thinking. Those do not need to be necessarily in accordance with the standards of an individual society. »

« Research ...found that the Internet has a pivotal role in the lives of' youth'. It has been found that 87% of the youth of today go online Text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms, and personal Web sites increase the speed of multiple, simultaneous interaction. The advances in technology that provide opportunities for youth to reach out to new sources of knowledge and cultural experiences... »

« The human being is often considered as a 'social being.'Therefore, it is no surprise that the Internet is continuously transformed from a simple tool for publishing information to a means of social interaction and participation. Social networks ... are characterized as online services that allow individuals to create a public profile within an entrenched net system. Additionally, the users publish a list of other users with whom share a connection and view and interchange their own lists of connections and those who are created by others in the system. Social networks are a set of interactions and relationships. The term is also used today to describe websites that allow interface between users sharing reviews, photos and other information. The most famous of these websites are Facebook, Twitter, My Space, LinkedIn, Tumblr, YouTube.... These websites are virtual communities where people can communicate and develop contacts through them. »

« In a wide sense, youth cultures refer to the way in which young people's social experiences are expressed collectively through the construction of differentiating lifestyles, mainly in their 'social networks' In a more restricted sense, the term defines the emergence of 'youth micro-societies', with significant degrees of independence from the 'adult institutions', that provide specific spaces and time for young people... »

