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PROMOTING YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATION IN MOROCCO

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Introduction: This Quick Note is based on the report of the same name which was prepared just prior to the Arab Spring. The study anticipates the demands for social and economic inclusion articulated by Moroccan young people, especially following February 2011. Since then, these demands have been amplified and reached a new level of urgency. This study adopts a mixed method approach combining an innovative quantitative instrument with qualitative and institutional analysis.

The goal is to provide policy makers with a nuanced analysis of barriers to employment and active civic participation encountered by young people aged 15 to 29 years so as to tailor youth interventions more effectively. It identifies a wide range of recommendations available to support youth-inclusive activities and policies, and a roadmap for integrated youth investments.

The transition to work: Youth (aged 15 to 29) make up some 30 percent of Morocco's total population and 44 percent of the working age population (aged 15 to 64), but have been largely excluded from the sustained economic growth the country has experienced in the last decade. Though the youth unemployment rate is high, averaging about 22 percent among males and 38 percent among

females², it only provides a partial picture of young people's exclusion from economic life.

- In 2009-2010, close to 90 percent of young women and about 40 percent of young men who were not in school were either unemployed or out of the labor force, suggesting that progress in educational attainment has not translated into effective transitions to the labor market.
- The bulk of unemployed youth have little or no education: almost 80 percent have less than secondary education (or no education at all); less than 5 percent have tertiary education. Yet policy interventions in Morocco have focused on tertiary graduates, while ill-serving the less educated majority.
- Gender disparities in employment are glaring in all age groups. Many young women appear reluctant or unable to work as a result of social norms and the attitudes of their families.
- Governmental programs to assist young people in job search and placement tend to have a limited impact. For example, ANAPEC³, the public intermediation agency, remains mostly unknown to young people, and only 8 percent of surveyed unemployed youth who did know of ANAPEC used its services.

This report suggests that inactive youth should be considered a key excluded group. Qualitative analysis suggests that the social cost of economic

¹ This MENA K&L Quick Note is based on the report with same title which will be available at <http://worldbank.org/mena> in early July 2012. This MENA K&L Quick Note was cleared by Franck Bousquet, Sector Manager Urban and Social Development Sector and Disaster Risk Management, Sustainable Development Department (MNSSD), Middle East and North Africa Region, The World Bank.

² Note that the unemployment rate refers to the ratio of unemployed young people and young people who are in the labor force.

³ For more see Anapec.org

exclusion is high, with young men in particular experiencing very high levels of frustration. After completing their studies with their families' support, young men are expected to become breadwinners and earn sufficient income to care for their future family and, at times, for their parents. The inability to do so engenders feelings of failure and despair. As it is socially more acceptable for women to stay at home, despite lower levels of employment, they appear more reconciled to this than are men. Nevertheless, many young women, especially tertiary graduates, demonstrated strong expectations of working.

Employment Quality: Young men and women who do have work widely report holding poor-quality jobs, often working without job security or benefits (about 88% of employed youth work without a contract, meaning that most have informal sector jobs), experiencing underemployment (especially in the informal sector, where many jobs are temporary or part-time), and poor working conditions.

Overall, youth in Morocco report being dissatisfied with their jobs and recount many problems with them—the most widely cited are the low pay, heavy workloads, long hours, and boredom.

Private versus Public sector Jobs: Approximately 50% of youth are salaried workers in private companies. The importance of the public sector as a source of jobs has declined. Only 5% of youth have public sector salaried positions. Despite the interest expressed by young survey respondents, very few are actually self-employed.

Youth feel they have little control over their economic future. Better education and skills are considered insufficient to obtain a decent job without personal or family networks and connections, whether in the public, private, or informal sector, and even just to gain an internship. This is due to limited formal job intermediation mechanisms. One in three youth desires or plans to leave Morocco because of poor future prospects.

Youth Participation in social and civic life: Moroccan youth participation in social and civic life is very low. Most of their time is spent on unstructured personal activities. The pattern of leisure activities Moroccan youth are engaged in strongly suggests the lack of more productive or

socially constructive outlets. Youth spend little time on productive civic engagements, such as volunteer work. Apart from sports, youth participation in recreational or social activities is insignificant. Indeed, few institutions offering recreational or social activities exist and many of the youth turn to the internet and social media for social interaction.

Youth are concerned about the consequences of being excluded from economic and civic life. Dropping out of formal education, unemployment, underemployment, and the lack of support structures to facilitate social participation are all factors contributing to idleness, isolation, and frustration, making youth susceptible to high-risk behaviors such as drug use and crime

Analysis of Existing Youth Programs and Services: The study reviewed a wide range of institutions and programs that offer diverse services to young people, including employment, training opportunities (for example, vocational training, skills training, personal development, basic literacy, life skills, self-employment, microfinance, and leadership), community participation, summer camps, sports, and recreational activities, which form the foundation for a comprehensive youth program in Morocco⁴.

Vocational training is in high demand, and is associated with improved employment prospects and job satisfaction. However, these programs still have limited coverage, especially among disadvantaged youth, and some common constraints:

- Many agencies provide similar services, without apparent coordination, leading to fragmented coverage, and some ambiguity and overlap in roles;
- Most programs are seriously under-resourced;
- Staffing is inadequate: there are few young training staff, and there insufficient trainers for

⁴ The analysis presented in this section was conducted under the coordination of the Ministry of Economy with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Agency for Social Assistance (Entraide Nationale), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

new skills in demand such as ICT and broader life/work skills;

- Facilities may be poor or inaccessible, and lack necessary equipment;
- Insufficient use of partnership mechanisms to assess, improve, and provide services;
- Little (or regressive) poverty focus - the largest share of youth program funding goes to Active Labor Market programs targeted at university graduates who constitute only 5 percent of unemployed youth, while the programs of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, *Entraide Nationale*, and the Ministry of Agriculture directed at disadvantaged youth face significant resource and other challenges.

Together, these constraints highlight the challenges and point to the need for a more systematic, strategic, and integrated approach to youth development. Also needed is a clearer focus on targeting the disadvantaged youth.

The study also notes that it is possible to overcome these challenges. For example, several recent stakeholder partnerships in the field of youth services (i.e. between the public sector, private sector, international development agencies, charitable organizations, NGOs) show promise in facilitating the integration of disadvantaged young people into the workplace. These offer applied vocational training linked to job placements. Although the coverage of these programs is limited, their strategies and placement rates make them models for future market labor intermediation programs. Several new opportunities for active youth participation are also emerging in the new Moroccan context, as highlighted by the youth consultations held by the Moroccan Government in May 2011 (*Assises de la Jeunesse*).

Recommendations: An integrated package of measures aimed at improving existing services and offering new ones to cover current gaps is urgently needed to address youth demands for meaningful social and economic inclusion. The report recommends focusing in particular on two key areas: (i) promoting employability with linkages to labor markets and entrepreneurship and (ii) active youth participation in the programs and designing

youth policies. These findings link closely to the government's own youth strategy, currently under preparation.

Supporting employability and entrepreneurship:

Private sector intermediation and certification could substantially improve the labor market entry of less educated and poorer youth. Partnerships with the public and/or non-governmental sector, notably through existing employability programs will be critical in this regard. This would expand the action of ANAPEC, which is the primary source of employment intermediation but which currently mostly targets youth with higher levels of education. Similarly, private skills certification and accreditation could complement the existing technical degrees offered by the *Entraide Nationale* and agricultural institutes.

Youth employment measures should focus on training as well as comprehensive programs, which combine technical training, life skills training, private sector internships and/or apprenticeships, wage subsidies (or a subsidized training period/paid internships), and accreditation. Among the most relevant international training plus programs are the "Jovenes" programs in Latin America, which have had significant positive impacts on disadvantaged youth, and the *Ecole de la Deuxième Chance (E2C)* in France and other European Union countries. The E2C focuses on providing youth with life skills, mentoring, psychosocial support, remedial education, training in information and communication technology (ICT), and apprenticeships with private firms. ICT training programs may be particularly effective in Morocco, since ICT offers opportunities for less formal learning and lowers barriers to labor market entry, including geographic boundaries, time flexibility and home-based work.

Comprehensive entrepreneurship programs that offer entrepreneurial skills training, access to capital, and mentoring from new and established entrepreneurs, are also needed. Such interventions would target secondary graduates and disadvantaged less-educated youth, which constitute the bulk of unemployed youth, complementing the existing *Moukawalati*⁵ program

⁵ For more see <http://www.moukawalati.ma/>

for tertiary graduates (who tend to show a lower propensity to self-employment).

Restructuring the Existing Youth Centers: In line with the strategic orientation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a new model for the Youth Centers (*Maisons des Jeunes*) is recommended, in which integrated services are offered under the themes of life and social skills, active youth participation, and employability skills. Investments and reforms should also focus on building partnerships and fundraising capacity, improving beneficiary targeting and outreach efforts, while introducing robust monitoring and evaluation systems. In the same manner, the *Foyers Féminins* need substantial investment and reform to meet their mandate of furthering the inclusion of young women, including better defining their target beneficiaries, rehabilitating and improving their current facilities and improving program content in coordination with other public programs and relevant NGO service providers.

With respect to targeting disadvantaged young beneficiaries, the report encourages the adoption of services and outreach tailored to specific age groups, gender considerations and/or youth categories. The second priority is to expand coverage of well-designed interventions in order to attract a much greater volume of disadvantaged youth in a cost-effective, inclusive manner. The third priority is to focus on the impact of cross-sectoral programs initiated by different ministries for the same beneficiary groups. This requires mapping existing program mandates and integrating them through a common and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system. The role of municipalities in the local coordination of youth inclusion services offered by various national entities should also be strengthened in order to facilitate synergies and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Active Youth Participation in Programs and Policies: There is a critical need to include youth in the delivery of quality services and the monitoring of local accountability in Morocco, especially in the context of greater youth engagement and voice in the public sphere. Youth service programs are a tested avenue to provide opportunities for young people to learn new skills while actively engaging in community development, for e.g. literacy tutoring, protecting the environment, small-scale

infrastructure, etc. To promote the participation of unemployed and low-income youth, participants may receive a stipend or allowance for their work.

Youth participation in the development and implementation of national youth policy should be strengthened through institutional channels. In most European countries young people and their representative bodies are recognized as stakeholders and equal partners in the implementing youth policies - a system referred to as co-management. In Morocco, similar models are being developed. For example, *Conseil Local des Jeunes*, implemented by the NGO *Forum Méditerranéen de la Jeunesse et de l'Enfance* is a four-year program promoting the participation of youth in public life in rural and urban regions of each province. Meanwhile, the *Programme Concerté Maroc*, designed to build the youth capacity in exercising their civic duties and improve public policy on youth issues, has supported the creation of youth councils in four Moroccan cities. These councils are working in concert with local, public, and civil society actors⁶. These and other initiatives are promising foundations. However, wider and coordinated efforts to build representative and elected local and national youth councils will be needed to ensure a unified national approach to constructive interaction between youth, government, and society as a whole.

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⁶ This program is implemented by the Carrefour Network and is a partner of CCFD-Terre Solidaire. See Programme Concerté Maroc at www.pcm.ma