

The Competitiveness Repository Morocco — Education For Employment

Competitiveness is widely accepted as the key driver for sustaining prosperity and raising the well-being of the citizens of a country. Enhancing competitiveness is a long-term process that requires improvements across many areas and long-lasting commitments from relevant stakeholders to mobilize resources, time and effort. Accordingly, to make the right decisions, these stakeholders need information and data.

For more than 30 years, the World Economic Forum has studied and benchmarked competitiveness. From the outset, our goal has been to provide insight and stimulate discussion among all stakeholders on the best strategies, policies and activities to overcome the obstacles to improved competitiveness.

Against this backdrop, the Forum is taking the next step to inform the discussion on competitiveness practices among stakeholders by embarking on a project to build a **Competitiveness Repository** that compiles relevant information about practices that have aimed or are intended to build competitiveness. It will be complemented by a series of private events that provide a safe space for countries to better understand approaches that have worked elsewhere.

The platform will be built around a collection of practices collected through the completion of the template below. With this exercise, we seek to identify practices that:

- Had or are expected to have **system-wide impact**
- Are **scalable and potentially replicable** in other countries
- Have a **strong multistakeholder** component (they should rely on public-private collaboration and could include, for example, programmes and activities led or facilitated by government, but implemented or funded completely or partially by the private sector or civil society such as foundations, trust funds, etc.)

The practices collected will ideally follow the 12-pillar structure of the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) Framework (www.weforum.org/gcr). They will include a variety of factors critical for competitiveness and offer a comprehensive tool to inform stakeholders about the different approaches for enhancing competitiveness in specific areas, as well as the key barriers to their implementation and factors that enabled change.

As well as reflecting the 12-pillar GCI structure, each of the practices will be structured along the following dimensions:

- A) **Background information about the practice**
- B) **Context and need for action**
- C) **Actions/activities adopted**
- D) **Role of the different stakeholders**
- E) **Results, lessons learned and additional information**

A) Background information about the practice

Title of the practice: Education For Employment (EFE)

Country of practice: The EFE Network is comprised of locally-run affiliates in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen, and organizations in Spain, the United States and the United Arab Emirates that support the MENA region affiliates. To illustrate this competitiveness practice, EFE's activities in Morocco (through the locally-registered and run affiliate EFE-Maroc) will be described in further detail.

Region: EFE-Maroc first launched programming in Casablanca, Morocco, and expanded to other areas and cities including Grand Casablanca, Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer, Doukala-Abda and Tanger-Tetouan. EFE-Maroc anticipates expanding to Sous-Massa-Dra and possibly to Marrakech-Tansfit and Fes-Boulemaneover the course of the next two years.

Status: Ongoing

Public-private collaboration is/was key for success? Yes

A systematic evaluation¹ was undertaken: Yes

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Related area of competitiveness: Higher education and training

B) Context and need for action

What was the situation/challenge that resulted in a need for this competitiveness practice?

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) suffer from the highest youth unemployment in the world, at 27.2% in the Middle East and more than 29% in North Africa (e.g. 19% in Morocco, 22% in Algeria and Lebanon, and 25% in Egypt in 2014).² In addition, underemployment remains a chronic issue. In many countries in the region, both non-educated youth and youth with university degrees are often relegated to short-term employment that lacks the benefits and protections that meet the International Labour Organization's standards of fair and decent work. Such positions rarely lead to long-term, stable employment opportunities.

Counterintuitively, the youth unemployment crisis exists alongside a demand for skilled labour that is presently unmet. This phenomenon points to a pervasive skills mismatch in the region. Even educated youth face difficulties finding a decent job. In some cases, the unemployment rate for those with tertiary degrees is higher than for those without such degrees, as too often their skills set does not match the needs of employers in their region. For instance, the unemployment rate for Moroccan youth with university degrees is five times higher than unemployment for those with only a primary level of education¹.

In "It's All About the Jobs" published in the *MIT Innovations Journal*,² EFE President and Chief Executive Officer Jamie McAuliffe et al discuss the skills gap and highlight a report from Al Maktoum Foundation and PricewaterhouseCoopers³ that points to the widespread belief among the region's employers that young graduates are not equipped with "softs skills" that are needed in the workplace such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking and leadership.

Social and gender divides intensify the skills gap and labour mismatch. Private-sector employers are often reluctant to hire youth from marginalized socio-economic backgrounds, and youth in turn do not trust that the system will give them a fair chance. Young women, despite attaining higher levels of education, are especially vulnerable to elevated rates of unemployment. In some MENA countries, the unemployment rate among university-educated women is three to eight times that of university-educated men.

This situation, coupled with corruption and a desire for political and economic reforms, has produced significant frustration among young people in the Arab world and is a main driver of political and social unrest, including the Arab Spring. Without any changes, the risk of social turmoil is real.

C) Actions/activities adopted

What were/are the main activities/actions of the competitiveness practice?

Education For Employment (EFE) is a network of NGOs that creates economic opportunity for unemployed youth in MENA by providing world-class professional and technical training that leads directly to jobs and entrepreneurship support.

To tackle the skills gap challenge, support youth in overcoming social and gender bias, reduce youth unemployment and provide companies with skilled employees to fuel business growth, EFE has specialized in three core training areas: job placement training; employability and job search training; and entrepreneurship training (see Figure 1, below).

The EFE Network is comprised of locally-run affiliates in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen, and organizations in the United Arab Emirates, Spain and the United States that support the regional affiliates. To illustrate this practice, EFE's activities in Morocco (through the locally registered and run affiliate EFE-Maroc) will be described in further detail. EFE-Maroc first launched trainings in 2011 and has since developed four key programmes in the country:

Workplace Success Program – EFE's flagship Workplace Success Program teaches young Moroccans crucial private-sector professional skills. Initially developed with McGraw Hill to respond to the specific Moroccan context and needs of the country's labour market a team of Moroccan consultants customized the Workplace Success Program curriculum. Materials were translated into French and adjusted to feature examples and case studies from Moroccan business leaders.

Since its inception in 2007, the Workplace Success Program has propelled young Moroccan trainees into their first jobs and brighter futures in the banking, retail, manufacturing and ICT sectors. In keeping with EFE's mission to encourage educational reform in the region, EFE-Maroc is also working closely with public education institutions such as Hassan II University of Casablanca to integrate Workplace Success into the University's broader course offerings and make it available to more of its 27,000 students.

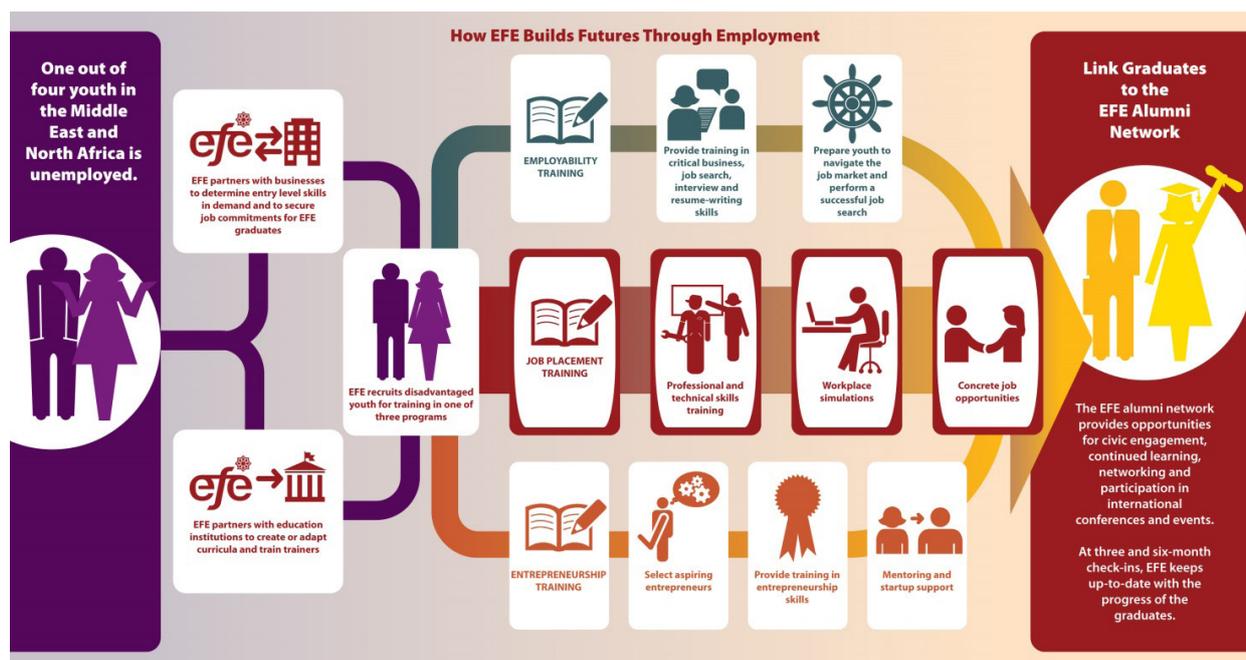
Force de Vente, Sales Training Program – In February 2009, EFE-Maroc launched the Sales Training Program, which provides unemployed university graduates with training in cutting-edge business-to-consumer sales techniques and other highly marketable skills. This programme responds to the growing need for qualified salespeople in Morocco as increased trade with Europe forces local companies to elevate their standards to meet global competition.

ICT Training Programs – Using Microsoft's Digital Literacy Curriculum, EFE-Maroc provides ICT skills training to Moroccan youth who participate in its Workplace Success or Sales Training programmes. Digital Literacy training teaches and assesses basic computer concepts and skills, enabling individuals to use computer technology in everyday life. These skills enable EFE-Maroc's graduates to work in ICT companies and call centres or, when requested by the employers, to improve their ICT skills for specific job positions.

In partnership with Accenture as part of the Programming for the Future initiative, EFE-Maroc is training youth for jobs in the IT and BPO (business process outsourcing) sectors, as it is estimated that, in Morocco, the two sectors will produce a demand for 59,000 workers by 2020.

Technology training in programmes such as Microsoft.Net, PHP, Java, Cobol, Abap and c# is paired with soft skills training to help youth develop in-demand technical skills and the professional skills needed to navigate the workplace. After training, youth are placed in internships and then into jobs with Accenture. Follow-up support, such as mentoring by Accenture employees and alumni activities, keeps youth learning and engaged.

Figure 1: What We Do (www.efe.org)



To create additional pathways to digital jobs, as part of its Digital Jobs Africa strategy, the Rockefeller Foundation is funding EFE to undertake a scaling study and market analysis of the BPO sector in Morocco, and to train 700 underserved youth for job placement in the sector.

Finding a Job Is a Job (FJIJ) Program – In 2011, EFE began delivering short-term work-readiness training programmes for youth at public universities and youth centres throughout Morocco. EFE partner ManpowerGroup has provided EFE with access to its Finding a Job Is a Job curriculum, a core work-readiness course that focuses on the skills and discipline needed to conduct an effective job search. The programme consists of direct training classes supplemented by take-home and independent exercises and activities over a period of 3-5 days, as well as ongoing and individualized counselling for candidates.

To date, EFE-Maroc partners with multiple youth centres in Grand Casablanca as well as with Hassan II University to offer its FJIJ training programme to youth. EFE-Maroc also expanded its geographic reach to the Doukkala-Abda region by cementing a partnership with Chouaib Doukkali University in El Jadida in 2011.

D) Role of the different stakeholders

Which stakeholders have been involved (public sector, private sector, civil society, etc.) in the competitiveness practice?

Multistakeholder partnerships are at the core of the EFE model. EFE-Maroc has collaborated with nearly 250 partners in the public, private and civil society sectors, including 200 businesses that hire programme graduates and 25 education institutions that support programme delivery and create opportunities for systemic change. Through its membership in the EFE Network, EFE-Maroc indirectly leverages the expertise and capacity resources generated by the EFE Network's 1,530+ partnerships across MENA. Stakeholders in the private sector are engaged from the first step of the job-placement training component of EFE-Maroc's operations. Working directly with companies looking to hire entry-level personnel, EFE assesses the skills in demand by hiring managers and secures job commitments for future programme graduates. EFE then tailors training programmes to meet company hiring needs and invites companies to become involved in the selection of programme participants.

Employer partners represent a range of industries, and in Morocco include companies such as Accenture, Lydec and BMCI, as well as small and medium-sized businesses.

EFE-Maroc also engages public education institutions to train academic staff in teaching job-search skills, enhance the job-search skills of current students and support institutions in incorporating employability into their curriculum. Partners include youth centres, public schools of tourism and universities. For example, two undergraduate programmes and one graduate programme in economics at Hassan II University in Casablanca and Mohammedia have integrated EFE-Maroc's Finding a Job Is a Job course in their curricula.

Finding a Job Is a Job is a required course for each of these two programmes, and marks obtained in the end-of-training evaluation count towards the degree. In addition, through its partnerships with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and several Maisons des Jeunes (youth centres), EFE-Maroc contributed to shaping the new strategy developed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports to revamp the use of the Maisons des Jeunes.

E) Results, lessons learned and additional information

Implementation date of the competitiveness practice: EFE-Maroc launched its first training in 2006 and the practice is ongoing. Beginning in 2011, EFE-Maroc was the first affiliate in the EFE Network to undertake a national expansion.

What are the resource requirements (human and financial resources) of the activity?

Funding for EFE's work comes from a variety of sources, including foundation, government, "corporate foundation" and private donor support. Increasingly, employer partners are asked to contribute a portion of the costs of the training for the youth.

A small contribution from the students is requested to strengthen their commitment to the programme. Given the disadvantaged backgrounds of the target population, the student fees cover a very small portion of the training.

EFE-Maroc has a full-time staff of 12 individuals. As an affiliate in the EFE Network, EFE-Maroc accesses expertise in grants and financial management, strategy, communications, curriculum development and partnership outreach through EFE-Global support offices in Europe, the United States and the United Arab Emirates.

Each affiliate in the EFE Network has at least one full-time corporate outreach staff member who specializes in building relationships with the private sector, understanding local market needs and securing job placements for EFE graduates.

What were the outcomes/results (expected or achieved) of the competitiveness practice in terms of quantitative (metrics) and qualitative results?

By the close of 2013, 6,600 youth – 53% of them young women – had graduated from EFE-Maroc’s job placement or Finding a Job Is a Job trainings. Nearly 5,000 university students have been trained in job search skills, and over 860 youth have been trained in job skills and placed into jobs.

The impact of job placement and job-search training extends beyond economics and creates community change. Many youth beneficiaries of the programme enrolled in EFE-Maroc’s alumni network, which helps youth to enhance their leadership skills and provides an impetus to become engaged in addressing local issues through community events and campaigns such as beach clean-ups and visits to children’s hospitals.

EFE-Maroc formed partnerships with 200 businesses, providing them with the skilled entry-level employees to grow their operations. Nearly 25 education institutions such as universities and youth centres partnered with EFE-Maroc to enhance the employability of their graduates, integrate job search skills into the classroom and begin to build a corps of university professionals qualified to provide career-focused training.

What were the main barriers/challenges to implementing the practice and their effect on implementation? How were these barriers overcome?

At times, gaining the trust and confidence of employer can prove challenging, as employers in the region tend to prefer overqualified candidates with more work experience, even for entry-level positions. EFE has found that engaging in “employer education” is critical to raise the level of trust in the ability of young workers to perform well from the first day on the job, provided that they have the appropriate training.

EFE works towards changing mindsets, so that those in charge of corporate hiring begin to view youth from marginalized backgrounds as viable candidates and valuable potential employees. As organizations like EFE produce trainees who – although they are first-time job seekers from marginalized backgrounds – have the right soft and technical skills, an increasing number of private sector companies are seeing the value in “hiring young”.

The political climate in MENA has also created additional challenges for EFE. The increased instability in the years since the start of the Arab Spring has slowed both local and foreign investment, which is reflected in the low rates of job growth across the region. Indeed in some cases, political tensions and operational difficulties have led companies to reduce the number of job offers they had previously committed, or to freeze hiring while political tensions flare.

Despite these challenges, EFE has maintained a 73% job placement rate for its job-track graduates. In some locations where job opportunities are extremely limited, such as the inner regions of Tunisia or Yemen, EFE has successfully launched entrepreneurship

programmes for youth that create a viable path for self-employment or the creation of micro-businesses.

Please describe the areas, if any, where the projects fell short of its objectives.

Initially, EFE-Maroc had planned to build the capacity of 27 Maisons des Jeunes to manage implementation of the Finding a Job Is a Job program. However, structural obstacles and under-resourcing in the Maisons des Jeunes made this wide-scale capacity-building impossible.

Instead, EFE-Maroc collaborated with five Maisons des Jeunes, which provided space for training but were planning or managing training programmes. Additionally, EFE was able to shape the new strategy developed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports to revamp the use of Maisons des Jeunes.

What have been the main enablers and their importance/relevance for the success of the practice implementation?

Several factors have been particularly relevant for the success of the EFE model:

Demand-driven approach: EFE’s training model begins with the hiring needs of local employers, and programmes and curricula are tailored to meet the requirements of businesses that commit to hiring EFE graduates. As a result, graduates have the skills that hiring managers seek, as well as crucial soft skills that are necessary to succeed in interviews.

Local ownership: Operating across the MENA region, EFE has learned that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for creating job opportunities for youth. Local ownership, made possible by the “social franchise” model, empowers local board and staff members to take appropriate action.

These leaders have a deep understanding of the dynamics in their communities and expansive networks as well. They are able to mobilize diverse resources and optimize EFE’s operations in specific labour, economic, political and social contexts. The local expertise of EFE affiliates also helps EFE to take advantage of less apparent opportunities and sidestep potential disasters. Investing in this local ownership enhances the long-term sustainability of EFE’s work.

Credibility: Building credibility and cultivating a critical mass of programme beneficiaries and partners built the momentum necessary to scale programmes rapidly. EFE alumni who return to deliver inspirational speeches to current trainees or network with fresh alumni provide important role models that convince students and companies that the training is worth pursuing, and help overcome the lack of trust described earlier. Employer partners that are “return customers” and repeatedly hire EFE graduates invite EFE reach out to their own business networks and help to convince their corporate peers to become involved.

Engaging Youth: EFE has found that engaging young people in programme design, implementation and evaluation is a valuable method for keeping courses fresh and relevant to rapid changes in workplace demands and employer needs. For example, at the urging of programme graduates, EFE-Maroc developed specialized programming in Business French to enhance the employability of graduates.

What were the lessons learned from this activity?

With locally run affiliates already on the ground for years prior to the Arab Spring, EFE has grown exponentially since the launch of its first class in 2006. At the time of writing of this practice (April 2014), the EFE Network had placed over 4,520 youth into employment, with job retention at nearly 80%. An additional 12,230 youth have been trained in entrepreneurship, employment and job-search skills, and 50% of EFE’s graduates are young women.

The Morocco expansion project presented a new set of challenges and lessons learned, and it serves as a model for EFE and others in a similar context for scaling-up programmes and operations. Indeed, to scale up the model, EFE needed to cultivate a broad range of stakeholders and leverage public-private partnerships – including public education institutions and governments with which it is partnering – to achieve systemic change in national education systems.

Endnotes

- ¹ <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21576657-around-world-almost-300m-15-24-year-olds-are-not-working-what-has-caused>
- ² McAuliffe J. and Nahhas di Florio J., “It’s all about the jobs”, Innovations, Washington DC, 10-12 September 2013
- ³ Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation and PricewaterhouseCoopers, Arab Human Capital Challenge: The Voice of CEOs. Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2008.

References

International Labour Organization, “Global Employment Trends 2014: risk of a jobless recovery”

Websites

Education For Employment Website: www.efe.org
EFE-Maroc’s website: <http://efemaroc.org/>