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OCEMO SURVEY ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS

Initial findings

In the Mediterranean basin, the social and professional integration of one portion of the youth population is problematic. The most vulnerable are young people without certification and certain university graduates.

Alongside the 'Nouvelle Chance' (New Chance) programme carried out with the support of the Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency, AFD), OCEMO's youth programme, conceived by Professor Jean-Louis Reiffers, seeks to create comparable data on the situation of young people and their expectations. The goal is to help provide public and private decision-makers with better guidance on measures aimed at young people.

A first survey in the Marrakesh-Tensift El Haouz (MTH) region was carried out in 2013 in partnership with Morocco's National Observatory on Human Development and with technical support from the statistics department of the High Commission for Planning (HCP). The decision to concentrate on one region stems from the conviction that actions for young people require the involvement of local officials.

This is Morocco's first regional survey on young people. It is fully consistent with the country's new strategy of advanced regionalisation. Its original data constitute a unique body of material for enriching regional debate on young people and helping to ground public policy in territorial realities. It is seen by the Moroccan partners as an example of good practice in co-operation.

This regional survey provides an opportunity for local players to discuss the proposed Regional Youth Observatory. It also constitutes a good practice which could be transposed to the country's other regions.

The OCEMO survey, a good practice in decentralised co-operation

The OCEMO survey is intended to produce knowledge serving to guide action. It is part of the Office's youth programme, which also includes operational actions such as the emblematic **MedNC project** (Box 1).



MedNC
Network

From the outset of the project, OCEMO has worked in close association with its Moroccan partners. In a good practice of mutual learning, they have been involved since the conception phase of the survey.

Box 1

The **MedNC** programme consists of developing a network of certified 'New Chance' schemes which draw on the experience of the French *Écoles de la Deuxième Chance* (Second Chance Schools) but are specifically adapted to the contexts and needs of the Mediterranean countries. Its objective is to offer a concrete response to the sizeable economic and social challenge of youth unemployment in the Mediterranean region.

The issue: providing young school dropouts and unemployed graduates with basic skills and an educational pathway including in-company experience.

Conceived as an alternative to the classic education system, this programme is directed by OCEMO in partnership with the *École de la Deuxième Chance (E2C)* in Marseilles and with support from the Agence Française de Développement.



Three strong points:

1 The OCEMO survey is the first regional survey on young people in Morocco. It thus fills in significant gaps in territorial information at a time when Morocco is preparing to implement an institutional reform for advanced regionalisation. In addition, it complements the national surveys already conducted by the HCP and the World Bank.

2 The survey has contributed to the capacity building of Morocco's local and national expertise:



The programme for computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) was developed locally by a young self-employed computer specialist.

3 The project comes under an original partnership associating the university (Cadi Ayyad), regional and local authorities (City of Marrakesh, Regional Council), devolved state services, NGOs, national institutions (the HCP and our key partner, the National Observatory on Human Development) and international institutions. Given its composition, moreover, OCEMO can serve as a pivot for strengthening relations between local players in the Marrakesh region and those of France's Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region (Departmental Council, Regional Council, NGOs, universities, City of Marseilles).

Box 2

The sample includes just over **1,300 young people**. Face-to-face interviews were first conducted with the head of household and then with the young person or persons (chosen at random). As many as five visits were sometimes necessary in order to reach the individuals selected but the final response rate was quite high (**94%**). In addition, nearly **90%** of the young people queried accepted to reply to a future youth survey.

The random nature of the sample and the extremely high response rate ensure the reliability of the findings.

The region chosen for the survey is quite diversified (rural and urban areas, mountains and valleys, coastline, etc.); it includes **10%** of Morocco's population. The age group selected (**ages 15-34**) is broad enough to observe the first jobs of higher education graduates and the first self-employed activities, as well as the first work experiences of teenagers with little formal education.

Three phases of exploitation :

The first phase, the production of data, is completed. The survey protocol (methodology and questionnaire) necessary for transposition to another region or country has been successfully tested (Box 2).

The second, the scientific utilisation, is being organised with support from members of OCEMO's research section and that of Cadi Ayyad University. Three studies are presently being prepared from the survey's interim database. Analytical reports will thus be made available to the different stakeholders.

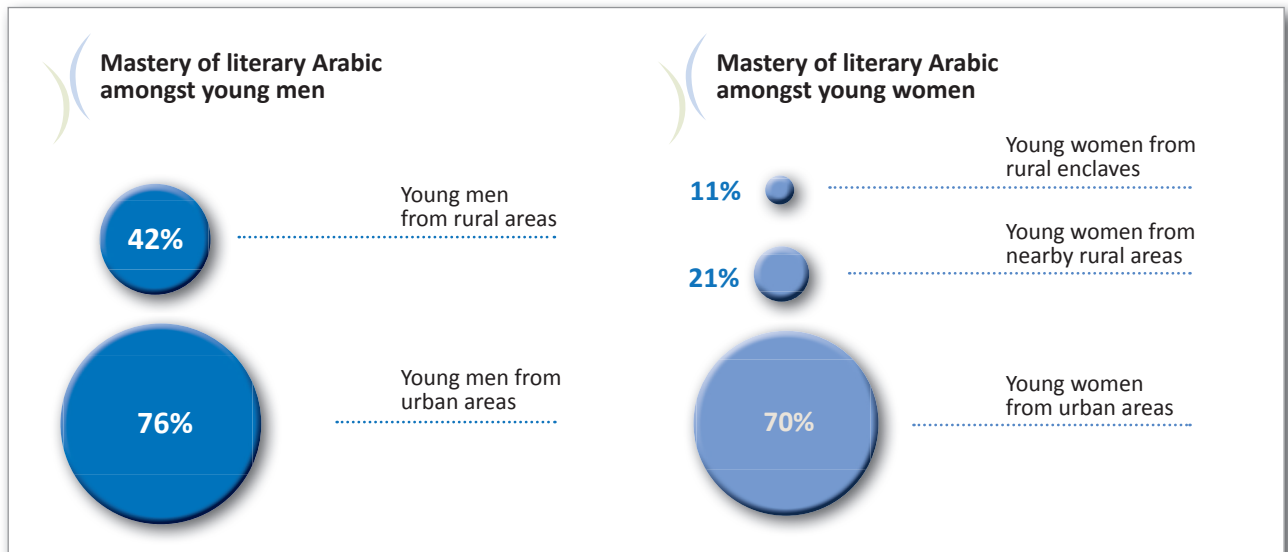
The third consists of involving local players in the utilisation of the findings to support their measures for young people. The partnership which is being set up (information producers, researchers, local and regional authorities and other local players) should result in a first Regional Youth Observatory. The president of the Marrakesh-Tensift-El Haouz Regional Council has agreed in principle to sponsor its creation.

Initial findings

The identification of a territorial divide which is an obstacle to development : this divide exists not only between urban and rural areas but also between remote rural enclaves (**12.5%** of young people live more than 90 minutes away from the urban centres) and rural areas closer to the cities and towns. This divide especially affects young women.

- ▶ In terms of **access to education** : **25%** of the young people queried have never or almost never attended school. This is the case for **1%** of the young men and **12%** of the young women in urban areas, **23%** of the young men and **48%** of the young women in the nearby rural areas and **36%** of the young men and **57%** of the young women in the rural enclaves.
- ▶ In terms of **written language proficiency** : over **70%** of urban youth, men or women, have good or very good mastery of written Arabic, but this is the case for only **42%** of the young men in rural areas. Mastery of the written language is rare amongst young rural women : **21%** near cities and towns and **11%** in the remote areas. On the average, a little more than half the young people have limited written language skills (see Figure).

Figure



Very high expectations of better quality jobs : a large majority of the young people (**75%**) state their desire to obtain a job providing social protection. This is the case for men and women alike, whether they are students or already in the labour market.

This expectation can be related to the difficult vocational integration of the young people queried, who are outsiders where the labour market is concerned. The jobs they hold often provide neither social nor legal protection : **39%** of the young people queried who hold jobs work for family members (mainly parents or spouses), without wages or social protection ; nearly **90%** of those in employment have neither social security nor a complementary insurance scheme ; **71%** of the young wage-earners have no work contract and **69%** of them declare that their employers belong to the informal sector (**58%** excluding agriculture).

The lack of social protection is not the only indicator of the poor quality of the jobs : about half of those with non-family employment consider themselves overqualified for the job they occupy and **56%** of them are underemployed. Moreover, **51%** of the young people queried who have a job state that they would like another one, mainly in order to increase their incomes.

The desire for social protection does not, however, imply a preference for public-sector employment. Most of those seeking a job do not indicate any preference concerning the potential employer's institutional category.

Severe vulnerability of the young people with the least training : recent graduates show a higher unemployment rate but school dropouts are farther removed from the job market (some of them are so discouraged that they have given up looking for work and are thus out of the labour force).

When they have jobs, the dropouts more often work for their families or informal enterprises than the graduates.

Diversity of expectations and attitudes towards the society, apart from the consensus on employment. The responses to general opinion questions permit the differentiation of five groups of young people (depending on their occupational expectations, their priorities for the future, their perceived freedom to make decisions and their representation of professional success).

- Young people confident about the future,
- Young people in upward mobility,
- Young people who are relatively free,
- Young people without occupational expectations,
- Young people in unstable situations.

Of the latter two groups (**40%** of the total), the former remains on the margins of the job market whilst the latter's professional and financial situation remains precarious. The professional insecurity experienced by certain young people has consequences on the other transitions to adulthood (leaving home and starting a family : between 30 and 34 years of age, **31%** of the young men and **19%** of the young women are still single ; at the same age, **38%** of the young women are living with their parents or in-laws, as is the case for **55%** of the young men queried).



Possibilities for local action

Given the demographic pressure Morocco is presently facing, it is necessary to create new economic opportunities in order to reduce youth unemployment. Self-employment (**30%** of non-family employment in the survey) could thus be developed.

Alongside useful regulatory measures (such as the status of 'solo-entrepreneur' which is being studied in Morocco, or fiscal and para-fiscal advantages to stimulate formal business start-up), two kinds of initiatives are worth considering :

- **training schemes,**
- **support schemes.**

Local players are in the best position to implement them.

Training schemes should be organised so as to cover all the individuals' needs (transportation, accommodations, healthcare, etc.). They can be introduced within the school system as a means of avoiding early school-leaving. For schemes aimed at women and young people already in the labour market, work-linked training seems the most appropriate.

Training schemes

Within the school system :

- ▶ **In rural areas, improving access to education :** developing good practices to re-examine educational provision in rural and mountain areas, for example through local community schools (at present lacking in the MTH region). These are rural schools providing children/young people with overall services including student housing, education, transportation and healthcare. They are based on a partnership package (local and regional authorities, devolved ministerial departments, NGOs, Morocco's Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion Foundation), with a key role assigned to the national education system.

- ▶ **Promoting initiation to entrepreneurship very early on,** from primary school, through appropriate teaching practices (workshops encouraging the young people's resourcefulness and autonomy). In addition, vocational discovery classes can be offered at the end of lower secondary education.

Outside the school system :

- ▶ **Providing young drop-outs with work-linked training including certification of the skills acquired :** this is the objective of the MedNC project, which is also open to unemployed recent graduates. The programme includes basic skills needed for business start-up.
- ▶ **Training highly vulnerable rural women** through income-generating activities including an alphabetisation component ; evaluating existing mechanisms in order to spread good practices.
- ▶ **Developing young people's basic transversal skills** (language proficiency, internet). The local and regional levels are well suited to this kind of actions.

Support schemes

- ▶ Promoting the development of schemes to **accompany the economic and social integration of disadvantaged young people** (e.g., Local Employment Missions or integration through work : at present, the Moroccan Public Employment Service mainly provides support for graduates).
- ▶ **Providing support for business start-ups and self-employment,** following an analysis of what does and does not work with solo entrepreneurship.

Future prospects

Exploitation of the **OCEMO** database through publications and provision of individual datasets to the scientific community ;

Continuation of the collaboration with partners from the MTH region in order to set up the Regional Youth Observatory ;

Prolongation of positive contacts with the Moroccan partners in order to extend the survey to one or two other regions in Morocco with scientific support from **OCEMO** ;

More broadly, development of this kind of approach in other countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.

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