World Bank engagement in the Education sector in Morocco

The World Bank has a longstanding engagement in the education sector in Morocco combining financial and technical support, research and knowledge production on one of the country’s most strategic human development sectors.

The World Bank has mobilized a number of instruments to support the Government of Morocco in its reflection and reform path to improve education quality, enhance sector’s performance, benchmark Morocco’s education system in comparison to countries in the region as well sharing of best practices from successful reform programs worldwide.

In recent years, the World Bank has mobilized key financing aimed to support Morocco’s critical reforms in the education sector. It provided advice to the Government in the definition of priority measures to effectively upgrade the sector, notably in terms of universal access, quality of education, and sector governance. In 2010 and 2013, with a total of $ 160 million, the Education Reform Development Policy Loan (two tranches) was mobilized to enhance sector performance, in the context of the ongoing 2009-2012 Education Emergency Program and 2013-2016 Education Action Plan. It specifically provided financial and technical support to implement critical reforms and introduce good practices in the sector management.

These operations contributed to achieve almost universal access to primary school in the country and to improve enrollment in lower secondary school in both urban and rural areas. However, the operations did not manage to reduce disparities between urban and rural areas and inequalities between boys and girls. In 2014, the net enrollment rate in lower secondary school was only 33.7% in rural areas against 83.2% in urban areas. The transition rate from primary to secondary school was only 48.7% for the girls and 58.4% for the boys, with no significant progress since 2011.

To enhance education skills to fit a gradually demanding labor market, the World Bank allocated a total of $ 200 million as part of the Skills and Employment Development Policy Loan (SEDPL) (two tranches granted in 2012 and 2014) to equip graduates with the right skills for the labor market and upgrade employment services to match them with available jobs. The project supported government plans to expand the reach of the national employment agency, ANAPEC, beyond graduates, to offer services to less-qualified individuals. It also contributed to create a legal status for self-employed individuals who want to exit the shadow economy, in exchange for a package of benefits. Finally, it improved information quality and availability to facilitate employment policy decisions. The operations outcomes showed an upward trend in terms of internal efficiency in both vocational training and university programs. However, placement into jobs remained unclear. While job-related training did not perform as expected, opportunities for such training increased. Outcomes were mixed in terms of effectiveness of intermediation services and formalization of micro-enterprises, but the labor market information system was strengthened.

The World Bank coordinates its action with other international donors in Morocco to ensure the relevance and complementarity of operations in the education sector. This is done through joint missions, sharing of analytical products, and dialogue in the education donors’ group quarterly meetings. Beside its financial and technical support, the World Bank has dedicated extensive sector research and launched a number of regional initiatives to enhance education sector performance and support the Government’s reforms. These include:

Technical support to the government:
- A public expenditure review to track inefficiencies in the education sector’s budget management (2014)
- A survey on service delivery indicators in education in coordination with ONDH (in progress)

Knowledge:
- A research paper on Inequality of opportunity in ECD in Morocco over time (2016)
- An education chapter in the recent Morocco Country Economic Memorandum (2017)

Regional initiatives:
- Morocco is part of the World Bank/Islamic Development Bank-led regional initiative called E4C (Education for Competitiveness) aimed at enhancing the region’s education performance (2016)

For more details, please refer to the attached notes describing the above-mentioned reports and initiatives.

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### Early childhood development in Morocco and the MENA region

The World Bank released in 2015 a comprehensive report on the state of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. With data gathered in twelve countries, the report titled “Expanding Opportunities for the Next Generation, Early Childhood Development in MENA” reveals serious deficits in early childhood development and large inequalities that are holding the region back, and provides guidelines for policies to ensure all children can reach their full potential.

Report highlights:

**Early childhood is the most important stage for human development and investing in ECD is a powerful way of building human capital for the next generations.** Deficits early in life tend to be irreversible and to perpetuate the cycle of poverty and inequality. Disadvantaged children receive the greatest benefits from early interventions, however, in MENA the most disadvantaged children are the least likely to receive developmental support.

**The MENA region’s investment in ECD is among the lowest in the world.** In 2011, gross enrollment in pre-primary education stood at 27%, half the world rate. MENA countries have the world’s highest rates of violent discipline and the region has the lowest coverage of iodine. There is also a serious shortage of data and research on ECD which make it difficult for policymakers to prioritize ECD investments.

**In Morocco, strong inequalities persist in children’s chances of healthy ECD based on the circumstances of their birth.**

- **Health and survival:** The most advantaged child is almost certain to have good early health outcomes, nearly 100% chances of prenatal care, delivery care and immunizations, and a low chance of infant mortality. In contrast, as of 2012, the least advantaged child has only a 54% chance of prenatal care, a 40% chance of skilled delivery, a 65% chance of full immunization, and a 2.2% chance of dying in the first year of life.

- **Nutrition:** As of 2011, 28% of the poorest children were stunted compared to 7% of the richest. Likewise, in 2006/07, the least advantaged child has a 1% chance of access to adequately iodized salt compared to a 38% chance for the most advantaged child.

- **Cognitive, social and emotional development:** In 2012, the least advantaged child had a 45% chance of getting early childhood care and education (ECCE) compared to a 95% chance for the most advantaged. The least advantaged child is almost guaranteed of being violently disciplined (99%) while the most advantaged child has a substantial but lower chance (74%).

**Several circumstances appear to be contributing to inequality in ECD in Morocco:** In 2012, 36–37% of the inequality in prenatal and delivery care was due to wealth and 21–25% due to mother’s education. Wealth plays a significant role in children being stunted or underweight, as well as in access to ECCE (40% in 2012) and development activities (30% in 2011).
Urban-rural disparities are particularly large contributors to inequality in ECCE (39% in 2012) and development activities (35% in 2011). Regional disparities make particularly large contributions to inequality in work, including domestic work (36%) at age five and violent discipline (51%). Notably, the child’s gender contributes very little to inequality of opportunity in ECD.

There is a potential to enhance ECD interventions and achieve better results for the most vulnerable children in Morocco. The country could benefit from some proven ECD practices and opportunities for enhancing its ECD outcomes, specifically through scalable and effective interventions to improve the availability of iodized salt, prevent stunting, expand access to early stimulation, parenting programs and preschool. The availability of data about ECD is crucial to build effective ECD policies and to monitor progress. Developing integrated strategies and establishing a leading ECD council to improve the coordination between the multiple sectors would also contribute to improving ECD outcomes. Finally, financing is often seen as a challenge since government budgets are limited and often insufficient. However, it is important to note that the returns to ECD interventions are disproportionately high compared to interventions at other phases in life and that some of the interventions mentioned above are quite cost-effective.

Sources:
Expanding opportunities for the next generation: ECD in the MENA. Safaa El Kogali and Caroline Kraft, 2015

Country Economic Memorandum: “Morocco by the year 2040: Investing in Intangible Capital to Accelerate Economic Emergence,” World Bank, 2017

With a view to sustainably accelerating economic growth and achieving more inclusive human and social development by 2040, the memorandum underscores the importance of investing in intangible capital. Human capital, like health, education, and early childhood development, is a core component of intangible capital.

In order to fast track its economic development, the Kingdom of Morocco must place education at the heart of its reforms. Morocco has made significant progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and access to education has steadily improved at all levels over the past 15 years. However, the quality of educational outcomes remains low. For example, despite almost universal access to primary education, almost one third of the Moroccan population is illiterate and a mere 21 percent of children under the age of 10 master the basics of reading, as against an average of 87 percent in the countries that participated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Calculated for the population aged 25 and over, the average number of years of schooling was 4.4 years in 2013, well below the world average of 7.7 years, the average for Arab countries (6.3 Years) and close to that of countries with weak human development (4.1 years). International assessments of Moroccan pupils in mathematics, reading, and science rank Morocco among the worst performers in the MENA region. The system also tends to perpetuate social inequalities and determinism, prompting the creation of a veritable “educational divide” between parallel educational worlds delimited by the financial capacity of households.

Education has been one of the highest priorities of Morocco since 1999, as evidenced by the adoption of the National Charter for Education and Training, the Emergency Plan, the vision of the SESFRC and the Royal Guidelines. The history of the sector suggests that, in order to be effective, the educational reform reforms advocated today if they are to be effective, the education reforms recommended today by the 2015-2030 strategic vision must be realistic and selective. The adaptability of the education system and the quality of education must be accorded top priority, in view of their key role in strengthening the country’s human capital. For the reforms to be effective, they must first tackle major constraints and bring about a significant improvement in Moroccan students’ level of education. This would require an overhaul of the education system in order to guarantee the transfer of positive values and the acquisition of basic skills, improved teacher recruitment and training, the adoption of a new school governance structure to provide better service to students, the development of alternative educational options that foster educational competition, and the promotion of 21st century skills in order to reap the benefits of the digital revolution.

Not enough attention is paid to care and support for early childhood development in Morocco. Although reading and play are critical to development in the early years, only 21 percent of young Moroccan children live in households with at least
three books and 34 percent have no toys in the home. Owing to inadequate post-natal care and flawed, unequal immunization coverage, the infant mortality rate (27 deaths per 1,000 births) is high and above the average for the MENA region. Children under 5 years of age in the poorest segment of the population are three times more likely to die from preventable injuries or childhood illnesses. A large number of young Moroccan children continue to suffer from nutritional deficiencies and are therefore more predisposed to cognitive deficits, serious health problems, lower productivity, and earning lower incomes as adults. In addition, parental stimulation and nurturing are not commonly practiced, even though they are essential factors for the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children. Finally, violent discipline is still widespread in Morocco.

Care and support for early childhood development should be a national priority, as these areas are the foundation on which to generate the returns on future investments in education and health. This calls for awareness-raising and public information activities to combat misconceptions about early childhood development. Owing to the cross-sectoral nature of this issue, Morocco should more effectively coordinate public programs and policies, including by identifying a single organization that would be responsible for defining the country's vision and objectives for early childhood development. Additional quality investments in pre-primary education are also recommended to secure improved educational outcomes generated by early interventions. Lastly, targeted training and information campaigns must be put in place to enhance the role and involvement of parents, in particular fathers.

The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) in Morocco

The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) is designed to help countries reform and strengthen their education systems by providing them with a framework for analysis and access to an international knowledge base. The SABER program uses diagnostic and information-gathering tools to generate knowledge and comparative data on educational systems' institutions and policies. It also makes it possible to evaluate and compare educational policies against recognized international standards and highlights the main policy options deemed effective for improving sector performance.

To date, the SABER approach has been used in more than 140 countries and in a dozen different areas, including, for example, early childhood development, teachers, private sector participation, and school finances. Three SABER reports on Morocco were drafted between 2015 and 2017 in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education. These reports are publicly available at http://saber.worldbank.org.

SABER-Teachers Report, Morocco, 2017: The study reveals that the policy on teachers could be strengthened to attract the best candidates, provide teachers with useful initial training, support them through continuous training to improve teaching practices, ensure that teachers are monitored and supervised by competent school principals, motivate teachers to perform, and ensure that the system for monitoring teaching and learning effectively contributes to improved classroom learning.

SABER School Autonomy and Accountability Report, Morocco, 2015: The report pointed out that the composition and method for electing the members of the School Management Council did not allow for a balanced representation or effective participation of the various groups in the management of schools. The selection criteria, training, and the overall incentive system do not promote the development of real leadership at the level of school principal. There are also no formal criteria for evaluating the performance of school institutions or a comparative analysis of results based on standardized student tests; as a result, no evaluation is provided to institutions to improve learning.

SABER Student Assessment Report, Morocco, 2015: The study shows that classroom assessment is used more as an administrative tool than as a pedagogical resource. It also indicates that teachers' assessment practices are relatively weak, while mechanisms for verifying the quality of classroom assessments are limited. The formal quality assurance mechanisms for the baccalaureate examinations are also limited and cheating is a serious problem. Morocco has administered national, large-scale standardized assessments (National Program for the Assessment of Learning) and has participated in several international assessments (PIRLS, TIMSS). Morocco allocates regular funding to these activities and meets technical quality standards. However, the results are not analyzed at the school level and teachers do not have the opportunity to benefit from them to improve their practices.
The “Education for Competitiveness” Initiative in the MENA

Developed jointly by the World Bank Group and the Islamic Development Bank Group, the “Education for Competitiveness” (E4C) initiative was launched in 2015 to support MENA countries in improving quality and relevance of education for better life opportunities.

The E4C initiative supports innovative and transformational interventions aiming at expanding early childhood development, strengthening early grade learning, promoting information for accountability, enhancing career guidance and opportunities, and boosting 21st century skills and values.

More specifically, E4C supports MENA countries through (i) the development of a regional agenda for education based on global experience with local solutions, (ii) the development of regional public goods and opportunities for exchange, (iii) coordination of partners and (iv) direct country-level support.

The E4C initiative has made significant progress to date, particularly in terms of building a regional agenda and partner coordination:

- The E4C framework was developed through online and face-to-face wide consultations that reached over 200,000 people in 8 countries in 2015. The framework was discussed in an Education Ministerial Meeting in Rabat in February 2016 and endorsed during the MENA Ministers of Education Annual Meeting in Jordan in December 2016.
- A key feature of E4C is the strengthening of existing partnerships and formation of new partnerships with international, regional and local stakeholders. Through these partnerships, E4C benefits from advocacy, financing and knowledge sharing. Several key organizations are currently partnering or have expressed interest in joining the initiative, including the Agence Française de Développement, the European Union, the European Investment Bank, UNESCO, ISESCO, UNICEF, USAID, Dubai Cares or the Al Ghurair Foundation for Education.
- Representatives from 15 MENA countries met at a high-level workshop on Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Kuwait in February 2017 and agreed on a roadmap for expanding quality ECE in the region. Agreement was reached on 5 areas of cooperation: (i) regional minimum standards for ECE, (ii) regional communication and advocacy materials, (iii) a regional tool for measuring child development outcomes, (iv) an ECE costing tool, and (v) a set of mechanisms for the periodic and systematic exchange of regional success stories in ECE.

The MENA University Governance Program

The MENA University Governance Program stems from a partnership between the Education Global Practice of the World Bank and the Marseille Center for Mediterranean Integration. Its purpose is to address equitable access to tertiary education in the MENA region, inconsistent quality of tertiary education institutions across the region, and discrepancies between graduates’ skills and the skills demanded by the labor market.

The University Governance Screening Card

Under the program, a University Governance Screening Card (UGSC) has been developed and adapted to assess the extent to which tertiary education institutions in the MENA region are following governance practices aligned with their institutional goals and international trends, while monitoring their progress over time. This benchmarking tool has proven useful not only for MENA institutions, but is also in demand by other regions, therein offering the potential to be up-scaled and replicated trans-regionally. At present, over 120 universities from across eight countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and the West Bank and Gaza) have participated in the benchmarking exercise in 2012 and 2016. Two major regional reports have been produced: Universities through the looking Glass: Benchmarking University Governance to Enable Higher Education Modernization in MENA in 2012, and Benchmarking Governance as a Tool for Promoting Change: 100 Universities in MENA Paving the Way in 2013. A third regional report is expected in 2018. This longitudinal observation of the development of tertiary education institutions in the MENA region is one of a kind that has not been documented. These benchmarking opportunities provide objective means for institutions of tertiary education to gain a better understanding of their governance practices and view them in light of international trends and peer institutional practices.

MENA Tertiary Education Network
Following the first round of the UGSC benchmarking exercise, a Regional Tertiary Education Network has been established as a platform to promote the exchange of information and lessons learned from the implementation of reforms, notably through the organization of annual conferences. Successive conferences have been organized in Cairo (2011), Rabat (2012), Tunis (2014), Beirut (2015), Algiers (2016) and Marseille (2017) demonstrating the increased interest on this collaborative agenda in the region. At the multi-country level, it aims to create a solid knowledge base from which to foster collaboration and cooperation. At the country level, its objective is to support capacity building at individual tertiary education institutions, through a focus on six priority areas: (i) Institutional Governance (ii) Internationalization of Tertiary Education (iii) Financial Sustainability (iv) Quality Assurance (v) Developing Innovation Systems and (vi) Monitoring Results and Benchmarking; with the overall aim of improving tertiary education provision.

**Participation of Morocco**

The participation of Moroccan institutions in this program has been strongly supported by The Ministry of Higher Education and the Instance Nationale d’Evaluation du Conseil Supérieur de l’Education (, de la Formation et de la Recherche Scientifique (INE-CSEFRS) National evaluation unit within the Higher Council for Education). Between 2012 and 2016, 16 Moroccan universities have participated in the benchmarking exercise and sent representatives to the network events:

- Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi - Tetouan
- Université Cadi Ayyad - Marrakech
- Université Chouaib Doukkali – El Jadida
- Université Hassan 1er - Settat
- Université Hassan II- Casablanca
- Université Ibn Zohr - Agadir
- Université Ibn Tofail – Kénitra
- Université Mohammed V - Rabat
- Université Moulay Ismail - Meknes
- Université Sidi M. Ben Abdellah - Fès
- Université Al Akhawayn - Ifrane
- Universiapolis Agadir
- Université Euro-méditerranéenne de Fès
- Université Internationale de Casablanca
- Université Internationale de Rabat
- Université Mundiapolis à Casablanca
The partnership approach
Key to the program has been the strong collaborative work between the World Bank and the Center for Mediterranean Integration, and with universities and quality assurance organizations and governments in the MENA region. In addition, the Program greatly benefits from the partnership with relevant regional and international organizations including the Association of Arab Universities (AARU), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), UNESCO, UNIMED, the International Association of Universities (IAU), OECD, EUA, AUF and the British Council, among others.

For further information on the program, including analytical reports resulting from previous benchmarking exercise and regional conferences, please visit: http://cmimarseille.org/highereducation/

Towards a more accountable education system
“Linking Education and Accountability for Development” project

Since the adoption of its new constitution in 2011, Morocco has undertaken extensive reforms of its governance system, with special emphasis on strengthening the role and participation of civil society in monitoring public policies to enhance the accountability and performance of public institutions and services.

Objectives
The project “Linking Education and Accountability for Development” is being implemented as a part of these reforms and seeks to strengthen the role and participation of civil society and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) in monitoring and evaluating primary education in Morocco. This innovative social accountability project is being implemented by CARE Morocco in partnership with the Near East Foundation. The project was awarded grant funding from the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) and is supported and administered by the World Bank Group.

The aim of the project is to strengthen dialogue and collaboration among various stakeholders (parents, principals, teachers, and students) to promote better monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education in selected primary schools. The project is being implemented in collaboration with the Provincial Departments of Education and Training of Sidi Bernoussi (Casablanca-Settat) and El Haouz (Marrakesh-Safi), the Regional Academy of Education and Training (AREF) of Marrakesh-Safi and the National Federation of Parent Associations of Morocco.

Beneficiaries:
The beneficiaries of the project in the Sidi Bernoussi (Casablanca-Settat) and El Haouz (Marrakesh-Safi) provinces are:

- 50 primary schools;
- 50 parent-teacher associations (PTAs);
- 20 members of the teaching staff of the Provincial Departments and Regional Academies of Education and Training (AREF).

Main outcomes:
Since its launch, the project has helped to:

- Develop a participatory social accountability mechanism called “General School Newsletter” to ensure transparent communication on the resources available to schools; promote participatory evaluation of the state of affairs and of the priorities to be implemented, and involve stakeholders in the preparation of a plan of action to address the main constraints found to be affecting schools. This social accountability mechanism has been deployed in each of the 20 schools targeted under the project (10 in each of the two regions) and will be further implemented in 30 other schools during the 2017-2018 school year;
- Strengthen the capacity of 26 PTAs, comprising over 950 parents (including 495 mothers), in the areas of social accountability, management of associations, gender perspective, and governance; This capacity building program will reach 24 other PTAs during the 2017-2018 school year.
- Strengthen the capacity of 316 teachers (including 91 women) employed in the selected schools and provincial departments to encourage them to improve the level of communication and collaboration with parent associations in relation to the monitoring and implementation of action plans;
- Strengthen the capacity of parent associations to make proposals. Parents may now make use of a tool that has been developed for evaluating the quality of teaching and of the teaching staff to convey their proposals to the provincial and regional authorities in the education sector.

**Important facts:**

Amount of grant: $719,998.17  
Start of the project: September 2014  
Closing date: September 2018  
Partners: CARE Morocco, Near East Foundation, National Federation of Teacher Associations of Morocco (FNAPEM), Provincial Departments of Education and Training in the provinces of Sidi Bernoussi (Casablanca-Settat) and El Haouz (Marrakesh-Safi), AREF of Marrakesh-Safi, GPSA.

**About GPSA:** The Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) is an initiative of the World Bank Group. It aims to help civil society and public authorities to collaborate in addressing the major governance challenges in developing countries. To this end, the GPSA provides sustained strategic support to initiatives undertaken by civil society organizations in the area of social accountability, designed to bring about greater transparency and embed practices of accountability. The objective is to create a favorable environment for using citizen feedback to resolve fundamental problems of service delivery and to enhance the effectiveness of public institutions.

**Contacts – Care Morocco:**
CARE International MOROCCO:  
Hlima Razkaoui – Country Director (razkaoui@caremaroc.org).  
Youssef Bouallala – Projects Coordinator (bouallala@caremaroc.org).  
http://www.caremaroc.org/  
http://www.thegpsa.org/sa/

**Contacts - World Bank:**
Fadila Caillaud – Program Leader, Human Development – Maghreb Region – fcaillaud@worldbank.org  
Ibtissam Alaoui – Communications Officer – ialaoui@worldbank.org