

Educating Moroccan Youth for a Productive Future

Three Recommendations for Aligning University Programs and Job Market Needs in Morocco

2-3x

Youth unemployment is a global challenge.

Young people around the world are **two to three times** more likely to be out of work than their parents.¹

28%

In Morocco, the unemployment rate among youth (ages 15 to 24) remains high at 28 percent compared with 7 percent among those ages 25 and older.²



Job creation is not keeping pace with the growing working-age population.

In 2018, the job market in Morocco added roughly **two new jobs for every five new entrants** to the workforce.²



Young people with higher education are five times more likely to be unemployed than those without any degree.³

Youth make up nearly 26 percent of Morocco's total population, representing significant untapped potential that can power the economy.⁴

Youth Employment Challenges in Morocco

New research on job market trends, higher education, and employment stakeholders (such as private sector businesses and recruitment agencies) offers insights into some of the challenges for addressing youth unemployment in Morocco.^{5,6}



Many stakeholders are not communicating with one another about job market needs. Employment stakeholders include recruitment agencies, private sector companies, academic institutions, vocational training centers, and youth.



Current university programs are not being adapted for job market skills. Without current and reliable information about the technical expertise and skills that employers need, universities are not able to tailor course offerings to best prepare students for the workforce.





Career guidance is not offered to young people before they pursue vocational training or higher education, which directly impacts their ability to make informed choices about their future careers. Gaps in career guidance also exist once students are enrolled in education and vocational programs and as they transition into the labor market.



“Soft” skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem solving, are not emphasized in academic coursework, but are highly valued in professional settings.

Sector-Specific Insights and Opportunities

This research also identified several insights for two leading sectors for job growth—**Business Process Outsourcing**, such as customer service, accounting, or personnel management, and **Information Technology Outsourcing**, such as software development and information technology support.⁵

	Business Process Outsourcing 	Information Technology Outsourcing 
Profile:	Offers a starting salary above minimum wage for job seekers without significant education or experience.	Demands significant higher education and very specific technical expertise in particular computer programming languages.
Years of higher education:	Up to 2 years	About 5 years
Core capabilities:	Strong communications skills and customer service orientation	Computer programming languages Javascript, JAVA, and PHP
Language:	Fluency in French	French and English (preferred)
Most in-demand positions:	Call Center Agent, Human Resources Assistant, and Client Advisor	Analyst and Developer; Project Manager; Network Manager; Database Administrator; and Web Designer
Alignment Opportunity:	<i>Positions with lower educational requirements may require fluency in a second language such as French, but that proficiency level is typically achieved through higher education. Job requirements regarding level of education and desired language skills should be aligned.</i>	<i>Current educational programs focus on the most common international computer programming languages, but these are not used by most local employers. In order to prepare students for work in the local IT sector, university curriculums should emphasize Javascript, JAVA, and PHP.</i>

A Path Forward: Align Youth Job Seekers' Skills With Job Market Demands

Recent research suggests greater collaboration and alignment across a range of employment stakeholders will lead to better job preparedness and more employment opportunities for youth. In addition, young people need to play an active role in preparing for their futures. Ongoing research on job market trends will be needed to continue aligning university and vocational training system offerings with changing job market demands.

- 1 Universities and training centers need to align academic coursework and training programs with job market needs** to ensure young people are equipped with the technical expertise, language skills, and soft skills required to navigate the workplace successfully.
- 2 Local governments and policymakers need to improve the business environment** by introducing incentives that encourage closer collaboration among employment stakeholders; scaling up career centers; and engaging the private sector on curriculum development to promote job creation and increase employment among youth.
- 3 Private sector companies and recruitment agencies need to work with academic intuitions to reach youth with information on viable career pathways**, provide advice on curriculum content, and offer internships to realize a workforce that will meet their needs.

Acknowledgments

This document was produced by the **Population Reference Bureau** under the **Research Technical Assistance Center** (RTAC). RTAC is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of contract no. 7200AA18R00023. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of RTAC and NORC at the University of Chicago, and do not necessarily reflect the views or recommendations of USAID or the United States Government. The purpose of the document is to provide easily digestible information on research produced under a separate government project (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS); Cooperative Agreement no. AID-OAA-A-11-00012). Neither NAS nor USAID is responsible for the contents or findings of the original research, as that is the sole responsibility of the researcher(s). Furthermore, as related studies may be ongoing, the contents of this document are subject to change in the future.

The information presented in this factsheet is based on research led by Dr. Ghita Mezzour and her team at the International University of Rabat, Morocco and published in the following conference papers cited in the references: "Social Network Analysis of Job Market Stakeholders in Morocco" and "Analyzing the Needs of the Offshore Sector in Morocco."

May 2019
© Population Reference Bureau

References

- 1 International Labour Organization (ILO), *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a Better Working Future* (Geneva: ILO, 2017).
- 2 *Advisory Note From the High Commission on the Main Indicators of the Labor Market in the Third Quarter of 2018* (Rabat, Morocco: High Commission for Planning, 2018). Note: The International Labour Organization defines youth unemployment as the share of the labor force ages 15 to 24 without work but available for and seeking employment; see ILO, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2015: KILM 10. Youth Unemployment* (Geneva: ILO, 2015).
- 3 World Bank, *Labor Market in Morocco: Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2017).
- 4 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook 2016-2017: Morocco* (Washington, DC: CIA, 2016).
- 5 Imane Khaouja, Ibrahim Rahhal, Mehdi El Ouali, Ghita Mezzour, Kathleen M. Carley, and Ismail Kassou, "Analyzing the Needs of the Offshore Sector in Morocco," paper presented at the IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON), April 2018, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain.
- 6 Imane Khaouja, Ibtissam Makdoun, Ghita Mezzour, Ibrahim Rahhal, Hanane Bencheikroun, Yousra El Hatib, and Ismail Kassou, "Social Network Analysis of Job Market Stakeholders in Morocco," paper presented at the International Conference on Social Computing, Behavioral-Cultural Modeling & Prediction and Behavior Representation in Modeling and Simulation (SBP-BRIMS), July 2017, Washington, DC, USA.