

***Yallah: A Life Skills program
promoting Math, Science, and
Peacebuilding in
El Hajeb, Morocco***

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Abstract

For the past 20 years the Maghreb region of North Africa has been experiencing a rise in youth unemployment. This has been brought on by a youth bulge, a small increase of positions in the private sector and decrease of positions in the public sector, and a mismatch of skills necessary for employment. Many youths leave university unable to find employment because their degrees in humanities or language studies do not adequately prepare them for private sector employment. As seen in the Arab Spring in Tunisia, lack of employment can result in feelings of deprivation which can escalate to violence. One proposed programmatic method has been to change the focus in education towards science and mathematics. This project will propose a program which teaches life skills and promotes Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics- (STEM-) for young women at youth centers (*Dar Chebab*) in the Atlas Mountains near universities in Ifrane, Fez and Meknes. The program would be enacted in collaboration with Peace Corps volunteers and national volunteers of Morocco. The proposal for this project will be primarily based on academic research and anecdotal experience working with the United States Peace Corps at a youth center in El Hajeb, Morocco.

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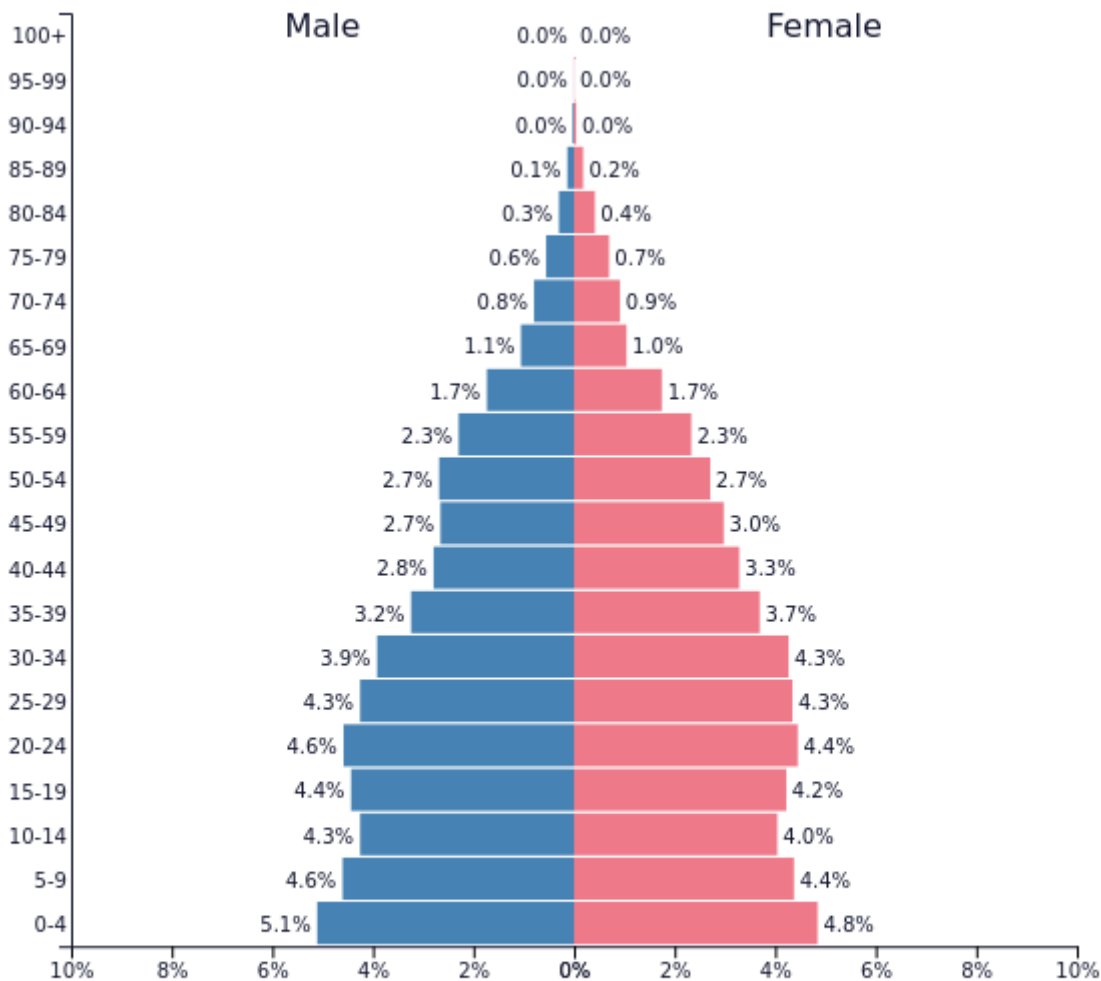
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Introduction

The Maghreb region, consisting of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment globally. While these three countries have made great strides in the availability of public education, committing roughly 20 percent of their budgets to education (Subrahmanyam 2011, p. 5), there is still a disconnect between the education youth receive and the needs of the labour market. This commitment to education is positive, as the current generation in the Maghreb is much better educated than older generations. The literacy rate in Tunisia, for example, grew from 16 percent in 1955 to 74 percent in 2003 (Subrahmanyam, 2011, p.5). However, due to the previously mentioned disconnect between education and the needs of the labour market, the education youth receive does not make them competitive applicants both nationally and internationally. This results in large populations of university-educated students untrained for what is needed by the actual labour market.

While this population may have the financial resources to attend university, they are still vulnerable to poverty and unemployment. In fact, a university education is now known to make youth less hireable. In 2003 it was found that 61 percent of young people with higher education in Morocco were unemployed (Subrahmanyam, 2011 p.7). Universities have created an oversupply of students in arts and humanities-based subjects, while there is an undersupply of engineers, scientists and technicians. These are noted as careers which drive economic growth in other regions. The private sector would rather hire skilled workers, and what the universities produce are unskilled youth with specialties in 'soft' subjects (Subrahmanyam, 2011 p.7). While more students may be educated, that does not mean that there are more opportunities available or created for those students.



PopulationPyramid.net

Morocco - 2015
Population: 34,377,510

(Population Pyramid, 2015)

Unemployment in the Maghreb is also affected by quite a large youth bulge, as youth aged 15-30 make up most of the population. These 'youth bulges' occur at one point in nearly every country, when rapid mortality and fertility rates slow down, meaning that more infants and children survive childhood. This later results in a large group of young people at the prime working age. The above population pyramid demonstrates Morocco's youth bulge, as of the 2015 census. According to the 2015 census, women ages 15 to 30 makeup 12.9 percent of the population, and men make up 13.3 percent,



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creating a country with 26.2 percent of its citizens between ages of 15 and 30 (Population Pyramid, 2015). Youth in Morocco, if we define youth as people between the ages of 15 and 30, constitute over a fourth of the population. Although they make up a large portion of the population, they are challenged with marginalization, exclusion from the labour market, and misrepresentation in governance.

If handled strategically, youth bulges can be a great opportunity for countries and their labour markets. This has been the case in countries such as Japan. However, in the case of the Maghreb, “Both supply and demand factors have been responsible for the rise in unemployment. On the supply side rapid population growth of earlier periods has increased the size of the labour force, especially the young, and on the demand side, economic growth and job creation have fallen far behind the labour supply” (Messkoub 2008, p. 12). Job creation has not been fast or sustainable enough for the demand, resulting in a rather large part of the population (i.e. youth and women) facing marginalization and exclusion from the labour force. This also creates a situation where youth are seen both as docile agents in the problem to be solved and the people who created the problem. They are not given the opportunity to change or find solutions to the problem, but instead policy makers decide what is to be done for the youth, especially in terms of unemployment and peacebuilding.

This has also created a situation where young Moroccans have felt the need to leave the country to find success. This ‘brain drain’ has occurred as educated young Moroccans have not been able to find stable employment which matches their skill set. The fact is that, more than 3 million Moroccans, roughly 10 percent of the total population reside outside of the country (Bordat, et al. 2011, p.98). Many of these young Moroccans, both urban and rural, have emigrated abroad to work as migrant workers. Therefore, the lack of employment has caused young educated Moroccans to take lower level positions in other countries because of an assumed stability and higher wage. Due to this, the United States Peace Corps



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has reached an agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco to supply skilled youth development volunteers to work with both urban and rural university and secondary students. Peace Corps volunteers work with these youth in terms of gender and development, life skills, community economic development, among other programs.

Relevance to Peace and Development

The youth unemployment situation in Morocco and associated youth development programs directly relates to positive peace and sustainable development. Positive peace, as outlined by Johan Galtung, is described as a pattern of cooperation and integration within societies, and therefore, as social welfare for all citizens (Galtung, 1983, p.283). This social welfare relates to a society rooted in equality for all citizens, whom are free from economic, social, and political marginalization. As positive peace is more than the absence of violence, programs related to enhancing peace should not solely target violence but should also promote social welfare. Then, programming should target both aspects of positive and negative peace. Prevention of violence is a part of peacebuilding, indeed, but as Davis-Vengoechea notes, peacemakers simply targeting violence will remain oblivious to deeper issues which concern peace (2004 p.12). Educating someone solely to prevent violence, creates a false peace where the individual's needs, and desires are not considered.

In this regard, the perception of peace education and programming based on peace is at times quite narrow. Educating individuals for employment and educating for peace often are not placed together, even though both these are connected in promoting empowerment. Peace education concerns both individual and community learning, as, "It works for the empowerment of people to be active and full participants in the decisions and environments that affects their lives" (Lederach, 1996, p. 21). This sort of education empowers the individual, but also nurtures and educates for collaboration and



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community. Peace Education, should then be immersed in all sorts of subjects, be it mathematics, business, the sciences, as well as humanities.

While community and collaboration are strongly valued in Moroccan culture, the culture of the Moroccan education system has become highly competitive. This culture of competition, as named by Karlberg in his essay on Normative Adversarialism (2004), permeates every level of Moroccan education. Large classroom sizes create a classroom environment, where if a student is not heard, they are not remembered or graded well by teachers. Clearly, these grades can greatly affect which universities students attend, and if they find work after university. This culture of competition has been one of the causes of rampant cheating in yearly exams, teacher corruption, and a large distrust of between students, teachers, and administration. This creates two problems for young Moroccans. The first problem is a cognitive dissonance, where many Moroccan cultural values are community driven, yet the educational and labour environment is competition driven. The second is the skills mismatch, where academically students learn to work competitively, but have not fully developed cooperation or teambuilding skills required by most employers.

According to Karlberg, a growing number of economic theory has found that mutual and communal cooperation is more beneficial than self-interest (2004). While the act of searching for employment may at times be individualistic, the act of work is more often collaborative and community driven. Regarding educating for employment, the one thing nearly all positions require are conflict resolution skills and collaboration. Nearly all programs which educate using life skills have components related to conflict resolution and workplace collaboration.

Youth life skills programs are not meant to further the competitive culture found in schools, but instead intended to help young people understand and nurture their full potentials. Thus, empowering individuals through these programs gives them a voice, empowers a community, and contributes to



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peacebuilding and inclusion. Inclusion, capacity building, and community resilience reinforcing directly relate to peacebuilding efforts, and are reinforced in life skills programs. To prepare young people for in these programs is to prepare youth for peace.

UN Programs related to Peace and Youth

As part of the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have set forth an agenda to, “mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind” (United Nations, 2015). These seventeen goals have been enacted and call on all countries collaborate with this agenda. These goals and the call for action are directly in line with peacebuilding. As, “Peace-making equally involves the task and priority of systematic transformation, of increasing justice and equality in the world. It is the construction of a global community involving the task of changing oppressive systems, sharing resources, fairly and promoting nonviolent resolution of conflict between peoples” (Lederach, 1996, p.20)

While all the Sustainable Development goals can relate to youth empowerment, certain have more of a connection. The following Sustainable Development Goals have a direct impact on youth development and empowerment:

- Goal 4 Quality Education
- Goal 5 Gender Equality
- Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities
- Goal 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

These goals can be found at the heart of the UN Resolution 2250 focused on Youth, Peace and Security. Established in 2015, UN Resolution 2250 focuses on Youth, Peace and Security. According to



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this mandate, youth are defined as persons between the ages of 18 and 29. This population is the largest the world has ever known and are the demographic most often affected by violence and armed conflicts.

This resolution is important because it further recognizes that youth should be reintegrated into all levels of society of which they had been marginalized. Quality education, decent employment, and political inclusion are just a few of the ways in which youth can be reintegrated into societies in which they had been marginalized. Furthermore, it establishes that, “youth should actively be engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation, and that a large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity if inclusive policies are in place” (United Nations, 2015). While a large youth population is often seen as a problem by governments and policy makers, the resolution further reinforces the idea of youth as opportunity and change makers.

This resolution directly relates to youth unemployment, in that it promotes policies of socio economic inclusion. Member states are urged to adopt policies to promote inclusion and facilitate environments in which youth have agency and can positively contribute to peacebuilding efforts. This would contribute to an environment of positive peace, in which youth are fully satisfied in their needs, and are then able to participate and promote peacebuilding in their society. Through working with programs that promote capacity and skill building, youth are more able to integrate themselves into society and prevent further conflict.

Recently, the United Nations established the Youth Strategy 2030, to further reintegrate youth in peace processes. The vision that guides this strategy is that of, “A world in which the human rights of every young person are realized; that ensures every young person is empowered to achieve their full potential; and that recognizes young people’s agency, resilience and their positive contributions as agents



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of change" (UN Youth Strategy, 2018, p. 5). This recognition of young people's capacities, is at the heart of creating effective peacebuilding and programming involving young people.

The Capability Approach

It is common knowledge that education, training and development should be empowering. Empowerment through the capability approach acknowledges that in judging the quality of life we should consider what people are able to achieve, different people and societies may differ in their capacities to attain valuable achievements. In this approach capabilities reflect a person's ability to achieve a given function. Functions refer to what a person manages to do depending on a range of personal and social factors (Clark, 2005, p. 4). Women in much of the world lack support for fundamental functions of human life, that is, women have fewer opportunities than man in most spheres, economically, socially, personally, and in education. The human development report of 1997 found that no country treats its women as well as its men, according a complex measure that include life expectancy, wealth, and education (Nussbaum 2001, p. 2). Although 1997 was over twenty years ago, this continues to be the case, as no country treats its women as well as its men. Considering this approach and the fact that women have more challenges, education and development must work to understand individual's capabilities.

An educational approach focused on capabilities, understands and works with the participants based on their level, understanding, needs, and desires. This type of approach directly works to empower the learner, if we define empowerment as the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. (Bordat et al 2011, p. 92). This relates to the individual's ability to make effective decisions and convert those decisions into desired outcomes. Empowerment, which works best at a grassroots level focus, increases the control people have of their lives as a process and goal. Capacity building and empowerment trainings in which individuals'



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capabilities are understood will theoretically have a larger impact, as those individuals are given the tools to empower themselves through both the trainings and outcomes.

Education

Education in Morocco

Morocco has compulsory and publicly-funded education through secondary school. University and graduate programs are also funded by the government, resulting in an ever-growing number of young university graduates. While Morocco has invested heavily in its education sector devoting 20 percent of the total government budget to education, the quality of what students are learning has lowered as the quantity of students continues to rise (Subrahmanyam, 2011, p. 2). Morocco's education system produces a massive number of students whose studies do not prepare them for private sector employment, while public sector employment growth has failed to increase. This lack of opportunities has caused youth to focus on finding work abroad, resulting in a brain drain in which highly skilled young people leaving the country.

Curriculums tend to prioritize language over math- and science-based subjects, with French as the principal language for teaching science- and math-based subjects and vocational training programs (Subrahmanyam 2011, p. 7). This fails to attract students to math- and science-based subject, because for many French is their second or third language. In fact, in 2003 it was found that 75 percent of Moroccan university students enrolled in social science-, education- or humanities-based university programs, while only 18 percent enrolled in scientific-, technical- or engineering- based subjects (Subrahmanyam, 2011, p. 6) What results is a severe unemployment rate of the young university educated population.

The 2011 Arab Springs in Tunisia and Egypt were both associated with a persistent lack of opportunities and marginalization in the labor market for youth. These two events served as a wakeup call for Morocco and other North African countries. In Morocco, the two marginalized groups youth and



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women, make up a majority of the population. Both these groups have faced exclusion and marginalization regarding participation in the labor force. In fact, unemployment among Moroccan youth is almost three and a half times as high compared to the labor force and young people under the age of 35 makeup 65.5 percent of Morocco's population (Hassi 2011, p. 169). The question is how to keep a majority of the population from feeling deprived and develop initiatives or programs associated with easing their deprivation.

Female Representation in Moroccan Universities

The representation of women in universities is quite often a crucial tool for social change, as professors are often tasked with influencing future change makers and leaders within societies. Basically, female professors and their students tend to enact change regarding gender and development. For this reason, bridging generations between teachers and students to further promote education and social change is quite important in the field of mathematics and sciences. In Moroccan universities there is still a considerable amount of inequality, although most of the personnel are women. According to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report Gender Review, the feminization of the teaching workforce is a well-known phenomenon, but less attention is paid to the fact there is still an imbalance in men's favor in education management and leadership positions (2018, p. 23). According to this report, women occupy proportionally fewer number of positions of responsibility or authority in the university systems, however most countries do not collect or publish data on gender in educational leadership (UNESCO 2018, p. 23). It has been found that academic achievements of females decrease dramatically when in relation with employments, especially in the higher spheres of decision-making positions in both public and private sector (Slaoui & Belghiti 2018, p 31).

The number of women who are professors or have leadership roles within faculties of mathematics and sciences are significantly fewer than their counterparts in other faculties. In Meknes, at



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Moulay Ismail University, during the 2014/2015 school, only 21.2% of faculty positions were occupied by females (Llorent Bedmar, et al. 2017, p. 35). One could argue that this creates an even larger gender gap in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. This inequality is further perceived in the lack of women in the coordination of opportunities for research and international congresses. However, the lack of leadership roles is not solely confined to Moroccan universities. While Morocco has experienced growth in the field of gender equality, the sexual division of labour, both in public and private labour markets, has allocated women to secondary and subordinate roles. Due to systemic gender biases women are less likely to gain equal access to employment, especially in leadership roles. This reinstates a cultural and systemic violence where women are absent in leadership, employment, and even peacebuilding.

Development Approaches

Active Labour Market Programs

The causes of this remarkably high level of youth unemployment must be understood to effectively create programming that will aid the unemployed. Morocco, as well as Algeria and Tunisia, has enacted several active labor market policies (ALMPs) targeted at unemployed university-educated young adults. As previously stated youth bulges in population and youth unemployment are not something solely specific to Morocco. Instead youth unemployment is an unfortunate phenomenon that occurs through the world, and across different cultures and countries. Active Labour Market programs are typically considered publicly funded programs that are aimed to improve employment prospects for participants. Usually, ALMPS include employment services and job search assistance, subsidized employment, and/or skills training.

The programs focused on youth integration have been enacted in many different contexts, cultures and countries. Active Labour Market programs are designed to enhance labour reintegration



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within existing institutional or governmental constraints. This can be understood as preparing the young people for the context they are seeking employment in. It can be affected by the education system, market regulations, and cultural constraints. However, at times these programs have little focus on young people's needs or aspirations and are not developed in coordination with young people. In this case, jobs created through these programs may often be non-skilled or casual work and fail to consider young people's desires for meaningful employment. Therefore, these programs must consider the different contexts and the desires of young people to be truly effective.

When analyzing youth unemployment, there are five general categories that limit young people's integration into the labour market. These are job skills constraints, lack of labour demand, job search constraints, firm start up constraints, and social constraints. Job skills constraints are characterized by a lack of basic skills, technical skills or behavioral skills, or a skills mismatch. Lack of labour demand is defined by slow economic growth resulting in a lack of available jobs. Job search constraints are related to misinformation or a lack of information on available jobs. Firm start up constraints include a lack of access to financial capital, employment or business connections. Social constraint can be viewed as social or cultural norms that limit a person's skill development or entrance into the labour market. Each population and subpopulation face different challenges and constraint depending on their demographic and characteristics. Thus, the interventions enacted must correspond to the constraint that affects the target population.

Cunningham et al developed a table (2010, p. 3) on constraints and interventions (found in the appendix) that further elaborates on the categories of constraints and possible ALMP interventions. Each constraint is characterized by several sub constraints which could affect the target audiences. Then the table lists possible interventions split into two categories, those which have been successful based on evidence, and those which are theoretically sound but have been had mixed reviews in practice. One



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intervention indicated in Cunningham's table for youth programs, which can be found in the appendix, are training programs known as training "plus" or comprehensive programs. These programs focus on more than one constraint which challenges the target group. (2010, p. 3) They are defined as programs which combine technical training with behavior skills trainings, internships, employment services, and accreditation. This gives value to the assertion that youth unemployment programs must be diverse and multifaceted to be successful. They must also be tailored or customized to the targeted group, as not all programs will work for all groups. Currently most programs developed by governments, NGOs, and foundations take this approach and are training plus programs. In the following pages I will analyze such programs developed by different stakeholders to enhance youth employment within the Moroccan context.

Moroccan Governmental Initiatives

On average, the Moroccan economy creates 200,000 jobs every year, while 300,000 individuals enter the labor market (Hassi 2011, p. 170). Although there is a large portion of the population unemployed, the unemployed do not benefit from any sort of employment insurance or income support systems (Hassi 2011, p. 170). However, in 2000, the Moroccan government did create the *Agence Nationale de promotion de l'emploi et de compétences*, or the National Agency for promoting employment and competencies. This agency aims at advising employers and individuals who are seeking employment. A main component of this agency is the provision of preferential loans to young graduates looking to start their own businesses. It also subsidizes internships through *Action-Emploi*, the Employment Action program, funding a portion of training of employees and providing tax cuts to employers (Hassi 2011, p. 170).

There may be a need for more Active Labour Market programs through the Moroccan government that focus on training as most agencies only focus on entrepreneurship skills and



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employment subsidies. This is in contrast with that fact that most public university students are unable to produce the skills that would make them competitive to employers or business investors. While the Employment Agency and Action Employment offer services, these services only reach a fraction of the university-educated population. Cohen found that most graduates from Moroccan public universities “[...] cannot become managers in multinationals or start businesses that serve multinationals because they typically lack the bilingualism and skills of personal presentation that come from having studied at French schools, traveling overseas, and socialization” (2003, p. 177). While a skills mismatch is partially to blame in unemployment, so is the inequality associated with government programs and education.

In terms of employment training, the Moroccan government generally has neglected taking charge as training has been thought to be the responsibility of the private employers. However, one of the main actors associated with vocational and technical training is a governmental program, *Office de la formation professionnelle et la promotion du travail*, the Office for vocational training and work promotion. This office is responsible for training in 237 public institutions providing 390 specializations, 243 schools, and 1572 private institutions (Hassi 2011, p 172). While these programs provide vocational training to many students throughout the country, the unemployment rate among these graduates is still between 18 and 36 percent (Hassi 2011, p. 172). While being more in line with what the labour market needs, a closer connection between the vocational schools and labour market has yet to be achieved.

Other Initiatives in the Maghreb

Tunisia

The Arab Spring in 2010 and the Jasmine revolution have changed the focus to youth unemployment in Tunisia, as it was quite clear youth unemployment was one of the main triggers that contributed to the revolution. The Arab spring and Jasmine revolution began with the startling self-immolation of recent graduate Mohamed Bouazizi, who had been unable to find decent employment.



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Looking at the current and historical situation, it is obvious that, “Tackling graduate unemployment in Tunisia will need a multi-pronged approach, including education reforms, private sector development, but also changes in labour market institutions, and a range of active labour market policies to help graduates’ transition from education into work” (Broecke, 2013, p. 2). However, this is true among most countries confronted with youth unemployment, there is not just one solution to the problem and those solutions should be as multifaceted and complex as the problem of unemployment is.

One proposed solution that the Tunisian government has undertaken is an employment subsidy program known as *Stage d’Initiation à la Vie Professionnelle*, or SIVP. This translates to, an Introduction or Initiation into Professional life. This program has been Tunisia’s largest running labour market program. The goal of the program was to introduce more first-time employees into the labour market, through employment subsidies which created incentives for employers to hire first time job seekers. This program directly targeted unemployed recent graduates, because it’s objective or goal was to reduce the cost of hiring young workers while increasing the demand for labour (Broecke 2013, p. 2).

However, the size of the program also reduced efficiency and quality of the component involved with employment training. In 2010, the programs graduate placements were quite low, at 23 percent, and the vocational training component was almost completely absent. It has also been found that the risk of unemployment was negatively associated with the time of participation in SIVP, meaning that those who need SIVP the most are the ones who must wait the longest to participate (Broecke 2013, p. 6). This also suggests that the program does not target those who need it the most as effectively. Due to these factors the program was discontinued in 2009, replaced by the *Cheque d’Appui a l’Emploi*, or the Employment Support Check, which does not include an employment training component.



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The Amal program is another government program meant to target unemployed recent graduates. This program was created and enacted in response to the Arab Spring and Jasmine revolution in 2011. There was a call for transformation of current labour force programs, and the transitional government created Amal, meaning hope. This program was meant to facilitate the school to work transition for university graduates, by assisting young people in search for a job or internship and providing complementary training. The program also included a monthly allowance of 200 Tunisian Dinars for one year, and health insurance coverages to beneficiaries genuinely looking for jobs (Angel-Undinola & Leon Solano, 2011, p. 2).

In the pre-program analysis, the World Bank acknowledged that, “AMAL is the first large-scale publicly financed comprehensive youth program in the region. If well-implemented and carefully evaluated, AMAL could become a building block for a comprehensive reform of youth employment programs in the region” (Angel-Undinola & Leon Salano, 2011, p. 1). The World bank indicated that it would be successful, because its program was directly linked to internships, provided youth with life skills and practical experience, and used experimental non-traditional techniques in implementation of the program.

Initially the program was inspired and modelled after Chile’s youth development program *Chile Joven*, the implementation of AMAL consisted of components focused on coaching and trainings. The first part, coaching, focused on helping young people identify, develop and meet their professional goals and objectives. This was done in connection with a life skills training which was implemented to build psychosocial and interpersonal skills to help make informed and integrated young workers. Students also underwent a training to help them acquire new skills to be valuable to the labour market and participated in on the job training through internships associated with the program.



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The program had initially high enrolment in 2011 and reached roughly 170,000 youth. The largest numbers were found in the urban areas, of Tunis, Sfax, Gafsa, Nabeul, and Medenine. These cities had the highest percentage of unemployed university graduates in the country. While the Tunisian government and the World Bank initially had strong hopes for this program, it only functioned for a year due to costliness. The program was found to be too expensive for the government, and not benefiting enough participants to prove successful (Zouari 2014 p.12).

The post-revolution government has made a consistent effort to work to try to make an impact on youth unemployment through ALMPs in Tunisia. The continuing challenge facing the government is the costliness of these programs and what effect they are having on the youth populations. Programs like AMAL are likely to be successful if the funds and coordination are present and cohesive. It is likely that the two most well-known ALMPs in Tunisia, SVIP and AMAL, could have been more successful if the government had involved more stakeholders in the implementation. For both programs, the government could have solely focused on employment subsidies while working with an NGO for life skills or employment training. As seen with the education system, when the government invests too much, the quantity is held higher than quality. Although, after the 2011 Arab spring, the Tunisian government has found several donors, including the European Union, the World Bank, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Initiatives through Non-Governmental Organizations

Several non-governmental organizations work in connection with youth unemployment in Morocco. The International Youth Foundation (IYF) has an office in Casablanca, and American volunteers with the US Peace Corps have implemented IYF life skills programming at youth centers throughout the country. In Morocco, due to volunteers working in various communities, the IYF's reach of participants is country wide. However, there still is the problem in recruiting IYF life skills trainers.



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The question is, why would an unemployed recent graduate devote time to training other individuals for employment when they also need to find work? Peace Corps volunteers have encountered this problem quite frequently, where a Moroccan volunteer counterpart would suddenly leave due a new employment opportunity.

From 2006 to 2009 USAID operated a program called *Linking Youth with Knowledge and Opportunities in Microfinance*, or LYKOM. Lykom, which in the Moroccan dialect of Arabic means ‘for you’, was a program created by USAID, Save the Children, and Fondation Zakoura Microcredit. The goal of the product was to enhance financial and nonfinancial services for youth and their families. In doing so, the program would develop youth in a way that prepared them to access appropriate financial services, such as loans. By the end of the program in 2009, 400 youth had been enrolled, 165 had completed the program, and only ninety-four had taken out loans. These loans were on average 5,500 Moroccan Dirhams, roughly 550 euros, and had been repaid 100 percent according to loan officers. (Meissner, 2009, p. 4.)

The program was actualized in three cities, Casablanca, El Jadida, and Tiflet. It consisted of twelve hours of class instruction for six weeks. Upon completion of the course, participants were offered a loan with Zakoura Microcredit. However, clients were required to open a bank account at La Poste Maroc, as Zakoura could not legally take deposits. This is interesting because from the start of the program, LYKOM targeted a population of students that were not extremely vulnerable. The universities in Rabat and Casablanca are generally thought to be the public universities where the wealthier population of students attend. Most of the students in this program were economically active, in that they had already had some sort of financial or employment experience. In fact, to take out a loan, participants needed a viable business plan or income generation strategy. It was also difficult to find partners willing



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to provide training and aid in creating a business plan or strategy to qualify participants for the loan (Meissner 2009, p. 3).

One of the problems associated with this and other programs is the focus on entrepreneurship skills. Entrepreneurship training is important for some youth, but not all. Not all have the background, skills or desires associated with running a business. In a practical sense, not everyone can be a business owner, and it is not sustainable to think that everyone could be. In some sense LYKOM did work, especially for the 94 loan recipients who started projects (Meissner 2009, p. 4) However, programs like this should be reproducible in other parts of the country to achieve lasting social impact and significantly help reduce youth unemployment. This would not be as effective with students in rural areas or smaller cities, such as those around Meknes and Fes.

Science and Technology Based Programs

The United States Department of State and USAID have enacted several programs focused on promoting gender equality and employment opportunities through science- and technology-based programs. However, much like the initiatives previously mentioned, these tend to take place in larger cities, such as Casablanca or Rabat. In some cases, many of the activities related to the program, take place outside of the Kingdom of Morocco. This makes such programs less accessible for certain women, who would be able unable to travel or devote time to such programs. In a sense these programs have been developed for more privileged urban elite women. Generally, this does not have a 'trickle down' effect where these women would teach or lead young women in less urban environments.

Two programs initiated by the Department of State and USAID; the Tech Women Initiative, and NEXXt Scholars Initiative, take place in the United States. The Tech Women Initiative works closely with American Universities and follows the Mutual and Cultural Exchange act of 1961 by Senator William J Fulbright (Ameli-Ranani 2017, p. 23). This program is much like a Fulbright fellowship, which



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allows researchers from different countries to study or research in the United States. The program, which is conducted in San Francisco, Silicon Valley and Washington, emphasizes the scientific empowerment of women to reach their full potential. The goal of the program is to empower the next generation of women leaders in STEM by providing them access and opportunity to advance their careers, pursue their dreams and become role models for women and girls in their communities. However, one might question how much impact the Tech Women has, as these women are most often from the urban elite, whose community is already quite progressive in terms of educational development. Also, as most of the program takes place in the United States, and most participants have already received their degrees in science-based programs, it does not accomplish the goal of promoting science- and math-based studies within Morocco, especially rural Morocco.

The NEXXT Scholars Initiative offers female students from Muslim majority countries the opportunity to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics based subjects at Universities in the United States. Students apply directly to participating women's universities in the United States, and once accepted they are matched to the Nexxt Scholars program. According to the US Department of State website, "All NeXXt Scholars receive access to the STEM community through their 5-year membership to the New York Academy of Sciences. Scholars are also individually matched with a successful female professional in a STEM-related field who serves as a mentor, providing one-on-one support regarding career paths and professional development" (US Department of State, n.d). While this a great opportunity for young women wanting to study a STEM based degree, it only affects a certain portion of the population. This program is also highly competitive and does not solely focus on Morocco, instead it accepts applicants from the Middle East North Africa region.



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Dar Si Hmad

The Non-Governmental Organization Dar Si Hmad in the Agadir region of Morocco has started a STEM based water school for young girls. This region of the country has historically faced persistent drought, while also being affected by state neglect and structural poverty. The project started with the NGO and engineers working together to create a fog collection system that delivers potable water to hundreds of rural residents. The humanitarian technology initiative sought to: promote fog as a viable source of potable water, provide clean water, free women and children from collecting water, contribute to stabilizing communities through sustainable development, and integrate emerging technology through enhancing water security (Dodson & Bargach, 2015, pg. 1).

After the Fog project was initially successful, the STEM based water school took effect. The water school program has successfully implemented 3 editions in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The program brings together volunteers, educators, environmentalists, and scientists, each contributing a different dynamic to an inclusive environmental and science-based education program. According to the website of Dar Si Hmad, "The Water School is a 10-lesson program, focused on the local reality while also opening new, global, and academic horizons. It uses activities and games, applied learning, and outputs as tools. The Water School gives children a new environment to discover and instills a sense of commitment to big issues. The Water school through Dar Si Hmad utilizes a STEM curriculum to instill active learning and discovery relation to problematic environmental situations" (Dar Si Hmad, n.d).

Dar Si Hmad has also had a part in developing programs associated with life skills and STEM. Since 2013 Dar Si Hmad has developed training programs for youth in the Agadir Province. This training program, known as RISE, consists of 250 hours of trainings, personal and professional development, and workshops over a period of 8 months. From the RISE program, successful participants are selected to be a part of the Environmental Youth Ambassadors program. 2015-2016, the first year of the program



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was elaborated over 7 months and ended with the youth ambassador's participation in the COP22 Environmental summit in Marrakech. This program has been a great example in creating programming associated with life skills and STEM courses (Dar Si Hmad, n.d).

The US Peace Corps

The United States Peace Corps has had an active role in peace and development work in Morocco since 1963. That is, since 1963 the United States government has sent volunteers to the kingdom of Morocco. The mission of the US Peace Corps, to promote world peace and friendship, is accomplished by three goals:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. To help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of the Americans.

(United States Peace Corps, n.d)

The US Peace Corps sends qualified volunteers to over 60 countries to work in 5 sectors, youth development, education, agriculture, health, and community development. Volunteers receive intensive language and cultural training upon entering their host country for two and a half months and learn best practices in working sustainably. For over 5 decades the US Peace Corps has been a successful in promoting cross-cultural dialogue and friendship, while aiding in international development projects.

While in Morocco, US Peace Corps volunteers work within the Youth Development sector. Most are placed in government established youth centers and coordinate a variety of programs and activities related to Youth empowerment and development. Many Moroccan Peace Corps volunteers currently implement life skills programs provided by the International Youth Foundation at the youth center, and have also implemented CLIMB, an environmental science program. CLIMB; or Creating Leadership in the Mountains and Beyond, implements an environmental education and life skills program with the end



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goal of climbing Mount Toubkal. Student learn about the environment and science, while preparing to climb the tallest mountain in North Africa. This instil leadership skills and knowledge and appreciation of the environment.

As Peace Corps volunteers have experience implementing projects throughout the country, it makes sense that a STEAM based project should be implemented within the Peace Corps community.

Project

Preconditions

Before starting a project, several pre-conditions must be met to ethically and sustainably have the desired effect. The following preconditions are required for this project:

- Invitation by the United States Peace Corps, Community, Associations and Country
- Acceptance of project by the community
- Project receives funding
- There is sufficient safety and security to carry out our project.

Without these preconditions, all projects cannot be ethically or realistically met. If a volunteer or their project is not invited or accepted, it would therefore be unethical and unsustainable to continue with such intentions. As US Peace Corps volunteers are invited by the Kingdom of Morocco and Peace Corps, and they perform a community assessment to understand community engagement, the first two preconditions have been met. Having been a Peace Corps volunteer in the community of El Hajeb, I have done these necessary steps previously and would be able to reintegrate and implement a program. Peace Corps volunteers are given a stipend to continue their work in their host country, which enables them to work and carry out projects. When additional monetary support is need, volunteers and their counterparts can apply to several small grants through the organization. Lastly, to place a volunteer in a community, the US Peace Corps must first access the safety and security of the community. These include several



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safety and security checks made by members of the Safety and Security team. If the city is deemed too dangerous, a volunteer is not placed there. Therefore, all preconditions have been met, and it is ethically, sustainable, and safe to propose a project in the city of El Hajeb, and Peace Corps sites within the Kingdom of Morocco.

Justification

One of the main recurring problems facing youth in Morocco is the mismatch of skills between what students can provide and what companies need. The education system in Morocco focuses primarily on humanities- and language-based courses, while math and sciences are viewed by students as less interesting and unimportant. The education system and training programs often do not have a middle ground to connect what has been learned at schools with practical information.

Objective

The main objective of this project is to increase interest in math and science-based courses. This project will propose an applicable program which connects life skills and peace education programs with the promotion of scientific- and mathematics-based content for young women in the Mid-Atlas mountain region.

Inspiration for Project

I first thought of this project long before attending the Universitat Jaume I. I was at a cousin's lunch at my student's house, one of my last few months living in El Hajeb. My student, Kawthar was 12 years old in 2016 when I worked in the community. She told me she wanted to be a medical doctor, and I was excited for her to continue her academic journey in the sciences. However, I doubted the likelihood of whether she would be supported by her community, academia, and the state to become a doctor. It hurt to doubt whether her goals were realistic in the context that she lived. Was her French adequate to understand all the scientific materials? Was the school curriculum adequate to prepare her for



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university level science courses? Did she have adequate life skills to prepare her to live far from her family to attend a medical program? She is now 14 and beginning the courses of action in high school to hopefully achieve her goal. I hope that she can work past these challenges she does achieve her goal and becomes a doctor.

When writing this proposal, I thought of exactly who I wanted to participate, I thought of the girls I had worked with for two years, Wahiba, Khoula, Kawthar, and Ihssan. These girls, who were originally not let into the youth center, were the ones who later waited outside the center and attended all my programs and classes. When we did an exercise in community mapping, they later listed the youth center as the most important part of the community for them. I wanted to create a program focused on these young women, to reinforce how important they are to the community and the future of Moroccan society. While I hope the program does promote an interest in Science and Math, the underlying goal is that these girls have the skills to choose and develop goals to attain their choices. I hope this program reinforces their capacities and strengths and gives them the ability to make the future a bit brighter.

Stakeholder Analysis

As part of the analysis phase before the planning of the project, one of the primary steps is to conduct a stakeholder analysis on the community in question. The analysis will serve as an effective tool which will aid during the planning and implementation of the project. In this context, a stakeholder is understood as a group of people that may be affected, positively or negatively, by the proposed project. The analysis also insures that the following concepts are identified and understood.

- Interests, needs and capabilities
- Groups that can be directly involved
- Potential partnerships and oppositions



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- Changes of practices or attitudes desired from: a sector of the population, an organization, or social groups
- The mandate, capabilities and resources of the organization to execute the project
- Mandates, resources, policies and priorities of external (funding) agencies
- Problems perceived by each group
- Potential conflicts than may arise at any phase of the project cycle

The following groups have been identified as stakeholders in the project:

- Youth of El Hajeb
- Young Women of El Hajeb
- Youth Associations
- US Peace Corps
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Youth and Sports, El Hajeb Delegation
- Youth Center of El Hajeb
- Parents

After identifying these groups as Stakeholders, each group has been analysed to understand the interest, problems perceived, resources and mandates and potential conflicts. Not all stakeholders will be involved with the project, that is not the ambition, but instead the analysis looks at all those who may be affected or who can affect the project. These stakeholders were then analysed, and a table was created, which can be found in the appendix. It was found that some interests were prevalent among many groups, while others were specific. For example, young women and the more generalized 'youth' have many interests in common, but young woman may have more problems perceived based on cultural constraints. Culturally, young women are often required to spend much more time at home helping their parents and



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are not allowed to be out late. Thus, this scheduling difficulty must be considered when planning and implementing programming for young women. The ministry of education and teachers have the same interest in educating youth but face different challenges and have different mandates.

The main beneficiaries would in fact be the young women ages 15-25 involved in the life skills program, although these ages may vary. This project will connect these youth with current and former female university students studying mathematics- and science-based fields from Moroccan universities. The beneficiaries will benefit from a renewed interest in studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-based fields at the university, and a chance to develop soft skills needed for future employment. These students would receive support from a Peace Corps volunteer and the female university students who take on the role of life skills trainers. This connection in age and background with participants will create a connection and establish this as a program by youth for youth. Young people are more likely to share and participate if they feel comfortable in the space created. It is my hope that a peer led program will further facilitate this comfortable safe space.

Having worked in Morocco, it is common knowledge that projects rarely are successful without the support of youth associations, the dar chabab, and the local ministry of youth and sports. All 3 would be of great importance in the development, and implementation of the project. The youth associations have the most direct access of youth and are able to generate interest much easier than other stakeholders.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Dar Chabab provide the location and ministry approval for programs through the dar chabab. This support may not seem as important, but history shows that action within the ministry can directly affect youth development projects in smaller communities. This was the case in 2015, when King Mohammed VI dismissed Minister of Youth and Sports, Mohamed Ouzzine because of corruption and mishandling of funds resulting in a highly publicized flooding and destruction of a soccer stadium in Rabat. This caused the shutdown of the Ministry and all youth centers



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and camps to shut down throughout the country, directly affecting the work of Peace Corps volunteers and youth associations.

El Hajeb

As a Peace Corps volunteer, El Hajeb was the city I worked in for nearly two years. El Hajeb has had a long but often interrupted history with Peace Corps volunteers. This is because placement of volunteers depends on different factors, and at times the city was found to not require a volunteer. Along with a history of cooperation with the United States Peace Corps, the city of El Hajeb also cooperated with JICA; the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Peace Corps volunteers have worked with different associations, at the youth center, women's center and girls' boarding house, while JICA sends nurses who work at the hospitals and women's associations.

Located in the center of Northern Morocco, El Hajeb is within an hour of three larger cities which contain three different universities. The proximity of El Hajeb to the larger cities of Ifrane, Fez and Meknes has not created an economic boom. Instead the main generator of income for the town, the onion crop, has not generated sufficient or meaningful jobs in the El Hajeb province. Like other small cities in Morocco, El Hajeb suffers from a brain drain, as there are neither university programs nor sufficient jobs for young people in the city.

The project would be implemented primarily at the Dar Chabab (youth center) in the lower part of the city of El Hajeb. This part of the city has historically been the more neglected and marginalized, with the community reflecting that neglect and marginalization. Many young people continue to live at home without employment and spend their time loitering in lower El Hajeb. This also gives more of a perception that the lower part of the city is more dangerous, as this loitering tends to increase harassment. Because of this, many of the students do not see a reason or necessity to attend university. The university



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students in El Hajeb usually return to the city without employment and experience demoralization and restlessness, which can be a precursor to instability and conflict.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a key aspect of this project. Therefore, the majority of the program is set to be delivered by Moroccan counterparts and youth associations. Working with a youth association is of the utmost importance when programming for sustainability, as they are permanent fixtures in the community. Unfortunately, I cannot give the name of a specific association, as youth associations change their names frequently in El Hajeb. When I worked in the community, I frequently collaborated with an association called, *AMACHE*. This association is still active, but they have joined another association and changed their name.

The goal of the program is to create something that could be reproducible without the support of US Peace Corps volunteers. All manuals and lesson plans are both in Moroccan Arabic and English, to facilitate an easy passage of information. The main responsibility of the Peace Corps volunteer is to schedule and to coordinate with the youth involved, the youth center, the youth associations, and Peace Corps. Once this has been done, most of the responsibility rests with the counterparts, associations, and youth involved.

As this program is set to be implemented by youth for youth, those who had gone through the initial program would be able to facilitate the following programs. If this program was enjoyed and accepted by the community, it could then easily be reintroduced the following spring or academic year. The following year, youth would also have more of an input on the facilitation and delivery of the course, editing what would need to be edited in the curriculum. It will also further connect young people with the Ministry of Youth and Sports delegation in El Hajeb, youth associations, and other leaders. Thus,



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the entire idea of the project is based on sustainability and giving young people a voice in their education and community.

Implementation

Students from universities in Fez, Meknes, and Ifrane would be invited to work with a United States Peace Corps volunteer in El Hajeb through the program. The proposed project would utilize one or two of these students or recently graduated youth as counterparts for a life skills program in the youth center. With aid of local associations, the youth center, and town hall, we would find and invite them to work as counterparts to provide life skills and STEM training courses to teenage students. For the pilot program, a training of trainers would need to be established and these counterparts would need to understand the commitment of providing the course for 6 months. The pilot program would begin without direct funds as much of the resources would be provided by the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the US Peace Corps. If needed, a portion of the program be funded through a small grant program associated with the US Peace Corps

Being a trainer would also increase the young women's work experience and soft skills, which would help them to easier find employment. This life skills program would be different from other programs previously enacted in the city, as it would have a component directly related to STEM based programs. Life skills programs often teach how to apply to jobs or act in a work environment, or other useful skills, however these skills are often generalized to all students. This program would teach life skills, but it would so in a way centred around STEM professionals and students.

Classes would be an hour long and take place two days a week. Wednesdays and Saturdays would be the most optimal days, as based on schedule reviews, these are the days students are most free and the youth center is open. As the program would start in the fall, we would try to set the time table earlier in the day, as it is a perceived safety issue for girls to be out after dark.



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The course would last 6 months and be implemented using a Life Skills manual developed by USAID and the United States Peace Corps. Peace Corps volunteers and their counterparts are trained as trainers biannually to implement this life skills program. This manual is structured with 4 units, consisting of 24 lessons. The 4 units are as follows: 1. Personal Development 2. Interpersonal Development 3. Goal Setting and Action Planning 4. Teamwork and Leadership. While the manual does not specifically address certain subjects, classes such as resume building, employment technology, and professional behaviours would be added in. The manual is available in English and Moroccan Arabic, so that all courses would be implemented and delivered in Moroccan Arabic, to fully adapt to the participants learning abilities. Whereas the school system may teach in French, the program is in the students first language, so they can completely understand the materials.

Wednesdays would thus consist of life skills classes, and Saturdays would consist of STEM focused activities. In the appendix, I have attached the full table of contents from the USAID life skills manual, and a proposed table of contents on STEM focused activities. The STEM based activities would also be implemented in four parts, slowly becoming more complicated as the program progresses. The four units would be influenced by the organization SciGirls Connect, but would change based on the language, needs, culture, and interests in the community. SciGirls Connect is a curriculum created with the explicit purpose to get girls interested in STEM fields. All STEM programs would also be implemented in Moroccan Arabic to facilitate better understanding. The units would consist of the following: 1. Citizen Science (Introduction, data collection and practice) 2 El Hajeb, the Environment and Living Things (Biology) 3. Engineering 4. Technology.

As El Hajeb is situated in the mid-Atlas Mountains, the program would also try and use the natural environment as a source of educational engagement. Based on the lessons and the weather, field



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trips would be implemented to get a first-hand view of environmental science. This would be especially true during the environmental section, as the region has several forests, lakes, and rivers.

Based on the availability and desire from universities to collaborate with the project, once a month a class would be focused on collaborating with teachers, professors and experts in science. This would include teachers, professors or experts in fields related to Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics leading sessions related to their field. Field trips to universities would be integrated to facilitate the participants interacting with female experts while learning important skills.

The program would conclude with a STEM exhibition for the community, where the students would reveal what they had learned by way of a STEM related project. To further enable a culture of collaboration, a collaborative community service project would also be implemented with together with a youth association. This would include the young people and association leaders performing a needs assessment of the town and figuring out a feasible community-based development project. This would further reconnect the youth with their community and community leaders, while giving them an agency to decide what would be best for them and their community.

Calendar of Implementation

As previously stated, this will be a six-month program to take place at the youth center in the lower part of El Hajeb. Six months has been an intentional move, as year programs generally are not supported as well due to the school year and holidays. Monitoring would take place throughout the program with attendance sheets for each class. Students would be evaluated at the end of each lesson with a review and assessment. Association leaders and the youth center leadership would make their own reports on the program. Peace Corps volunteers must report and evaluate their programs every six months via the Volunteer Report Form. Therefore, this monitoring and evaluation software would be utilized to evaluate the program.



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To create a programming based on the youth, a seasonal calendar created by the youth would be used to illustrate the best months to work. The month of August, all youth centers in Morocco are closed for holidays, so very little can be done during this month. Attention needs to be paid to holidays in the Islamic calendar, as it is a rotating calendar. Ramadan, the Eid Al-Fitr, and the Eid Al Adha are times in which programming would have to be stopped or changed. Often during Ramadan, youth associations will hold events for young people, but other programming is very difficult to implement. The following are the 2019 dates for Ramadan, the Eid al-Fitr, and the Eid Al-Adha:

- Ramadan: May 5, 2019 to June 4th, 2019
- Eid Al-Fitr: June 4th, 2019 to June 5th, 2019
- Eid Al Adha: August 11th, 2019 to August 13th, 2019

The following would be a proposed calendar of implementation:

- May-August 2019:
 - Meet with Associations to discuss programs, possible collaboration, and possible youth counterparts.
 - May: Meet with youth center director and delegate from the Ministry of Youth and Sports to explain program and get support.
 - June-July: Attend Life Skills training workshop through Peace Corps Morocco with counterpart or association member.
- September 2019:
 - Train other interested association leaders in life skills training
 - Visit the high school and middle school and make announcements for all programs at the Dar Chabab in 2019.
 - Meet with the principals of both schools and explain program



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- Hand out flyers to students and teachers
- Promote the program with association leaders, find students through the associations at well.
- Schedule meetings with nearby University science departments to discuss collaboration.
- Obtain a list of students interested
- October:
 - Beginning of October: Visit the students and meet their parents, explain the program and what it will consist of.
 - Mid October to Mid-February: Begin Program,
 - UNIT 1: Personal Development; Citizen Science
 - To take place: Mid October to Mid-November
 - This unit would introduce the student to themselves and their development and would also introduce the basics of scientific practice. Students would get an understanding of the scientific method and an overview of the course. Different women in science would be examined, and introductory experiments based on their works would be introduced.
 - UNIT 2: Interpersonal Development; El Hajeb and the Environment and Living Things
 - Mid- November to January
 - This UNIT focuses on interpersonal relationships, development, and collaboration. Conflict Resolution, problem solving, collaboration is all covered in different lessons. We connect this with biology and

environmental science. Students will learn about the environment they live in while understanding collaboration in Nature.

- UNIT 3: Goal Setting and Action Planning and Engineering
 - January to February
 - This portion of the program would be focused on students putting into action what they had already learned. While in the engineering portion of the program, students would be asked to brainstorm ideas for the science exhibition at the end of the program.

- UNIT 4: Team Building and Leadership, Technology
 - February to March
 - This portion of the program is focused on team building and community engagement. The participants would be working with the youth association to put into effect their community service project. In the technology portion, participants would learn about technological innovation happening in Morocco and abroad and become innovators themselves.

- March:
 - Science Exhibition with the help of youth association
 - Community service project with the help of youth associations
 - End of course celebration

Resources

The budget of this project is quite simple, in that the sample size of participants will be quite small. The maximum number of students that life skills programs can support is twenty, after that it is



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much more difficult to facilitate effective learning. Concerning funding, the first pilot of this project would be implemented without a grant or direct funding. Regarding resources, the project is to be community driven and owned, so outside funding does not seem applicable or sustainable. Most of the resources needed are provided by the youth center, youth associations, and the US Peace Corps.

The following are resources covered by the youth center and the ministry of youth and sports:

- Classroom Spaces, with tables, chairs
- Wireless Internet Connection
- White Boards
- Printing of Ministry Approved flyers and announcements
- Plates, Cups, Teapots for community events
- Butane Gas for preparing tea and food for community events.

The following are generally provided by youth associations to programming:

- Food and drink (usually tea and cookies)
- Volunteers
- Beneficiaries (these associations have direct access to the youth populations and are generally the most trusted bodies working with youth).

The following is provided by the US Peace Corps in Morocco:

- Life Skills trainings to Peace Corps Volunteers and Moroccan counterparts
- Life Skills manuals in Arabic and English
- Materials associated with the program (Flip Chart Paper, printer paper, white board markers, permanent markers)
- Possible grant based on needs of the program

Resources provided by the Peace Corps Volunteer:



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- Materials not provided by Peace Corps (pens, markers, lined paper)
- Printed paper not associated directly with the Dar Chebab or Ministry of Youth and Sports (This relates to handouts used in lesson plans)

Limitations

I have proposed this program under the assumption that the project would be accepted in its entirety in the community of El Hajeb. This is also under the assumption that a Peace Corps volunteer is placed in the community and is interested and able to collaborate on this program. This aspect of programming is not within my control, but I still have a number of contacts with association leaders and counterparts and would be able to help start the implementation of a program without a Peace Corps volunteer present. As Peace Corps Volunteers, we do not work in Morocco to save or provide development to the youth, that is unsustainable. I do not come or propose this project with any such vision of grandeur, if there is no PCV in El Hajeb, the project would continue without a Peace Corps involvement. However, due to the availability of resources provided by Peace Corps, another option would be to implement the program in neighbouring towns, such as Agorai, Ain Cheggag, or Azrou, which have also had a strong Peace Corps presence.

One of the main limitations that Peace Corps volunteers face in Morocco, is lack of interest or availability of parties to implement such programs. Oftentimes potential counterparts or associations are not ready or able to work with a project, even though the beneficiaries are present and interested. This can often be resolved by further integration into the community. Having lived in the community for two years, I have several contacts from youth associations interested in working with the project. This also is a time related limitation, as certain times of the year associations, youth, and officials are unable to help in the implementation of projects. This is particularly true during the end of spring, summer, and Ramadan.



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Programming associated with gender and development is generally welcome, as the Kingdom of Morocco has in recent years devoted a large amount of resources to gender and development. However, while working in Morocco with girls, a few times I was asked, ‘Why would you program for girls, when you could do something more important, like organize this for the young men?’. While I agree both groups of youth should benefit from life skills and peace education, girls also have the right to be the important ones in their education. As this program deals with confidence building and adolescence, I believe that for the Moroccan context, have a program specifically created for young women is important. There will be biases against the program by those in the community, but there are also those allies who will help the young beneficiaries to flourish.

Future Proposals

This proposal was written with the idea that life skills, and peacebuilding should be easy to implement. I wrote it knowing what was available and unavailable at most youth centers in the Kingdom of Morocco. I knew the limitations of resources and did not want to develop a program that could not be sustainably done. This was why I chose to write a program that does not employ staff nor has a budget. This is a program, in theory, could be made available to Peace Corps volunteers because it requires little besides what they already have.

Sustainability in mind, in the future, it would be interesting to be able to send the students on excursions to meet great female minds in the country. This would require a grant, parent approval, Ministry approval, a greater connection with Moroccan universities, and a group of volunteers willing to act as chaperones. It is entirely possible to do this, but I think it would be best to create a program that is very easy to recreate first, and then work on one that is more difficult to implement. This could even lead to a program in which young minds are sent to different conferences or abroad, or El Hajej



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could host a national, or even, international women in science conference. The sky is the limit, if people from the region are involved in the planning and implementation.

Conclusion

The Kingdom of Morocco is a middle-income country challenged with a highly educated youth bulge. Many Active Labour Market programs have been proposed to combat this program and help youth better prepare themselves for the labour market. These programs are designed to enhance labour integration of young people while working within different constraints. These constraints depend on the different countries and cultures which may be affected by youth unemployment. Many times, these programs do not listen directly to the beneficiaries and are developed by seeing youth as a problem. The ones that are the most effective are created with the consent and input of youth. Because of this the most effective ALMPs have been comprehensive plus programs combine technical training with behaviour skills trainings, internships, employment services, and accreditation. Programs analysed in this paper have served as examples of Comprehensive-Plus working in the Moroccan context.

Recently several organizations have implemented Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) based programs to increase students and employment in these fields. As 80 percent of Moroccan students elect humanities-based fields of studies, the labour market lacks trained individuals with Science and Math-based experience. Many of these programs also aim to enhance female integration into such fields. Programs such as Tech Women and the Nexxt Scholars Program, implemented by USAID, focused on women already in STEM based fields. Moroccan NGO Dar Si Hmad's fog school worked with adolescent young women to instil both an awareness of the environment and science and math-based fields of employment.

The program in which I have proposed would elect elements from many of the programs analysed. As previously stated, a great deal of this project will rely on US Peace Corps volunteers



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currently in the Kingdom of Morocco. Since a portion of the volunteers' work is to integrate and understand their local community, establishing projects with these workers would be easier and more effective than with other NGOs or aid organizations. Some of this project proposal has in fact been based on CLIMB, a Peace Corps Morocco environmental science program. Unlike CLIMB, which focused on outdoor education and leadership, the proposed program would focus more broadly on math and science education while implementing life skills.

While this and other programs may not be the answer to youth unemployment they do aid in youth integration into the labour market, youth inclusion, and the reinforcement of a peaceful and resilient civil society. While initially not viewed as a path to peace, the promotion of math and science-based studies and implementation of life skills trainings can be a path to aid youth in finding a passion, sustainable income, and collaborative skills and peacebuilding skills.



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Appendix 1: Table of Constraints and Interventions

Cunningham, Wendy; Sanchez Puerte, Maria; Wuermti, Alice. (2010) “Active Labour Market Programs for Youth: A Framework Guide to Youth Employment Interventions” *World Bank Employment Policy Primer*

A Framework to Guide Youth Employment Interventions

Table 1: The Menu of Constraints and Interventions

Constraints		Possible ALMP interventions	
		Evidence-based interventions	Mixed evidence, theoretically sound
Job-relevant skills constraints	Insufficient basic skills	• Information about the value of education	• Second chance programs
	Technical skills mismatch	• Training “plus”/comprehensive programs • Information on returns to technical specialties	• On-the-job training
	Behavioral skills mismatch		• Behavioral skills training
	Insufficient entrepreneurial skills		• Entrepreneurial training
Lack of labor demand	Slow job-growth economy	• Wage or training subsidies	• Public service programs • Labor-intensive public works
	Employer discrimination	• Affirmative action programs	• Subsidies to employers who hire target groups • Employee mentoring
Job search constraints	Job matching	• Employment services	• Technology-based information sharing
	Signaling Competencies		• Skills certification • Training center accreditation
Firm start-up constraints	Lack of access to financial or social capital	• Comprehensive entrepreneurship programs	• Microfinance
Social constraints on the supply side	Excluded-group constraints (ethnicity, gender, etc)	• Target excluded-group’s participation in programs • Non-traditional skills training • Safe training/employment spaces for specific groups	• Adjusted program content/design to account for excluded-group specific needs

Appendix 2:

Stakeholder Analysis Table

Groups	Interests	Problems Perceived	Resources and Mandates	Potential Conflicts
Youth	Basic needs, income, wellbeing, employment	Low income, inequality, lack of employment, boredom	Energy, education, multilingual abilities	Social unrest, boredom, lack of opportunities, brain drain
Young Women	Basic needs, income, wellbeing, employment	Low income, inequality, lack of employment, boredom, familial pressures	Energy, education, multilingual abilities	Social unrest, boredom, lack of opportunities, brain drain
Youth Associations	Enrollment, income from enrollment/government, youth development	Lack of interest, lack of money, corruption	Energetic volunteers, government grants, facilities, planned and organized activities	Conflicts among different associations, ministry staff, corruption
US Peace Corps	Development	Lack of support to volunteers, government bureaucracy	Trained volunteers, government support, money, facilities, planned activities	Lack of support, conflicts with local partners, government bureaucracy
Peace Corps Volunteers	Development, education, community engagement, gender and development	Lack of support by Peace Corps, local partners,	Energy, knowledge, training, government support	Conflict with local partners, supervisors.

		government officials Economic hardship Cultural differences Lack of cultural/local knowledge.		
Ministry of Education	Education	Corruption, overcrowding in the schools, lack of funding, disinterested teachers	Facilities, knowledge, government support	Disinterested teachers, teachers' strikes, students' strikes, government corruption
Ministry of Youth and Sports	Youth development, education	Lack of youth, programming	Money, government support, activities	Corruption, uninterested employees
Youth Center	Youth development, income	Lack of people, programming, only 2 full time staff,	Facilities, Peace Corps volunteers, associations	Conflicts between youth center staff, association leaders, and youth.
Parents	Basic needs, income, wellbeing, employment, their children	Worries about children, lack of income,	Food, Care, clothing, accommodation	Conflicts between youth and parents

Appendix 3: Life Skills and Leadership Manual Table of Contents

Life Skills and Leadership Manual

Peace Corps Office of Overseas Training and Support

Life Skills and Leadership Manual Contents

Introduction

Unit 1: Personal Development

Session 1: Me and My Assets	1
Session 2: Stages of Adolescence	13
Session 3: Building Self-Confidence	26
Session 4: Choosing Positive Values	41
Session 5: Understanding Mental Models.....	54
Session 6: Stress and Emotions	66
Session 7: Surviving Tough Times	80

Unit 2: Interpersonal Development

Session 1: Active Listening	1
Session 2: Positive Communication	16
Session 3: Making Decisions	36
Session 4: Creative Ideas	61
Session 5: Negative to Positive	74
Session 6: Solving Problems	89
Session 7: Looking at Conflict	103
Session 8: Collaboration	114

Unit 3: Goal Setting and Action Planning

Session 1: Goal Setting, the Basics	1
Session 2: SMART Goals	15
Session 3: Steps for Action	30
Session 4: Setting Priorities, Managing Time	49

Unit 4: Teamwork and Leadership

Session 1: What is a Leader?	1
Session 2: Team Leadership	17
Session 3: My Leadership Role (Optional)	33
Session 4: The Project Cycle	46
Session 5: Our Project	62
Session 6: Celebration and Reflection	80

Appendix 4: Table of Contents for Stem Program

The majority of the lessons have been elaborated from SciGirls Connect, www.scigirlsconnect.org

<p>Unit 1: Citizen Science</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to the Course 2. The Scientific Method 3. Women in Science: Marie Curie 4. Invent your own science game 5. Recycling 6. Volcanos 7. Gravity Egg Challenge
<p>Unit 2: El Hajeb, the Environment, and Living Things</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plants Count 2. Field trip to analyse plants in El Hajeb 3. Herbivores and Omnivores 4. Women in Science: Jane Goodall 5. Human Biology 6. Women in Science: Ismahane Elouafi 7. Working out: Girls stay healthy
<p>Unit 3: Engineering</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: Think, Plan, Build, The engineering process 2. Women in Engineering: Dr. Hayat Sindi 3. Understanding Bicycle Power 4. Crank it up: Design a Moving Sculpture 5. Design Session: Start Planning a project 6. Design Session 2
<p>Unit 4: Technology</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Technology 2. Robotics 3. Passion for Pixels 4. High Tech Fashion 5. Conductive Dough Creatures 6. End of Course Mini Party



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