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Youth Exclusion in Morocco: Context, Consequences, and Policies

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THE MIDDLE EAST YOUTH INITIATIVE
WORKING PAPER



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YOUTH EXCLUSION IN MOROCCO

In this paper we highlight five main drivers as well as areas which reinforce economic exclusion of youth in Morocco: 1) poor macro-economic performance; 2) rapid urbanization; 3) persistent poverty; 4) poorly performing labor markets; 5) family dynamics

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currently, the age structure of the Moroccan population is characterized by the predominance of youth aged 15-24. The share of youth in the population grew from about 17 percent in 1971 to a little over 21 percent in 2004. This “youth bulge” is regarded as one of the main causes of unemployment because the number of jobseekers is increasing much faster than the number of jobs that the economy can create. While this argument may seem legitimate in light of the current economic context, a youth bulge should naturally be considered a “demographic gift.” By building the human capital of young workers and providing them with opportunities to use their skills, Morocco can increase incomes per capita, bolster savings and improve social welfare.

But unfortunately, today’s youth face severe economic and social exclusion hampering their transitions to adulthood. Youth exclusion is determined by many factors including illiteracy and unemployment. But moreover, exclusion is not just a condition but rather a process which marginalizes certain individuals. This process varies with context (e.g.

urban versus rural) and is constantly evolving. In this paper we will outline how youth cohort and their expectations and focus on the economic dimensions of youth exclusion. In understanding the consequences of economic exclusion, however, we also extend our analysis to look at various social and political dimensions.

DRIVERS OF YOUTH ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

In this paper we highlight five main drivers as well as areas which reinforce economic exclusion of youth in Morocco: 1) poor macro-economic performance; 2) rapid urbanization; 3) persistent poverty; 4) poorly performing labor markets; 5) family dynamics

1. Poor macro-economic performance. Since its independence in 1956 Morocco has been on of the few Arab nations which opted for a market economy and openness to global markets from the start. In 1983, Morocco adopted a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to address a budget deficit that amounted to 9.2 percent of GDP. This had been reduced to about 2 percent. But

the SAP had serious social consequences. Furthermore, despite accelerating liberalization, economic openness, privatization, and the signing of free trade agreements, Morocco's economic performance has been characterized by sluggish long-term GDP growth and wild fluctuations in short-term growth. This poor macroeconomic performance has been exacerbated by the rising youth bulge and the pressure it exerts on the economy. However, while youth exert pressure on the economy they are also those most vulnerable to its weaknesses.

2. **Rapid urbanization.** During the last four decades, the Moroccan population has urbanized rapidly. The size of the urban population increased from 3.4 million in 1960 to 16.7 million in 2005, an average annual growth of nearly 3.5 percent. This urbanization has had several effects particularly with regards to youth. First, it increases pressure on the urban labor market, where the situation is already critical. Rural migrants settle most of the time in substandard living environments often characterized with poverty and exposed to delinquency. Finally, disrupting traditional ways of life, urbanization influences youth's expectations, values, and their vision of work, family and marriage in ways that often times lead to great frustration and disappointment.
3. **Persistent poverty.** The proportion of Moroccans living in poverty rose from 13 to 19 percent between 1991 and 1999. In 2000-01, 14 percent of youth aged 15-24 were poor; this amounted to about 1 in every five poor people being a young person. This perpetuates a vicious cycle of economic and social exclusion that youth are particularly vulnerable to.
4. **Poorly performing labor market.** The situation in the Moroccan labor market has deteriorated markedly since the beginning of the 1980s in terms of access to jobs and their quality. The national unemployment rate rose from 8.8 percent in 1971 to 16 per cent in 1994. While conditions somewhat improved during the 2000s, with overall unemployment dropping to 11 per cent in 2005, urban labor markets have been faring the worst with unemployment rates doubling between 1982 and 2000, from 11.7 to 22 per-

cent. Many of the improvements in unemployment rates mask significant disproportions with the young, educated and women being the most disadvantaged. The results are a decline in wage work, widespread underemployment and a resulting marked increase in informal jobs.

5. **Changing family dynamics.** In this rapidly changing environment, the dynamics of the Moroccan family as it had been for previous generations is also evolving. Conceptions of hierarchy, respect for elders and authority, as well as particular gender roles within the traditional Moroccan family structure are being challenged by a new generation of youth. This generation which is exposed to the norms of global modernity is more concerned with the primacy of the individual and his/her autonomy and personal success. Thus, relationships between parents and children have changed and previously assigned roles and expectations of youth in general and the sexes in particular are constantly being negotiated. Despite this evolution, the family continues to be a vital safety net for youth. Confronted with the precariousness of the economy along with its consequences for financial independence, marriage and access to the status of adulthood, the family remains a refuge for young people. Therefore today's generation is caught between relying on the family for economic support while also desiring greater autonomy.

YOUTH ECONOMIC EXCLUSION TRENDS AND ISSUES

Youth represent the population group facing the most challenges in the Moroccan labor market. Their economic exclusion manifests itself in high unemployment rates and low quality employment.

Despite the fact that youth only make up 25.1 percent of the labor force, this cohort of ages 15-24 constituted 35.7 percent of all of the unemployed, with 33.2 percent in urban and 50.3 percent in rural areas. First time job seekers account for almost 65 percent of total unemployed youth. While in urban settings women are more likely to be unemployed, in rural areas, the unemployment rate of men is nearly three times that of women.

Higher levels of education actually correspond to higher levels of unemployment in the Moroccan

context. This is true for youth of both sexes and in both urban and rural areas. The unemployment rates vary from 7.7 percent for workers without any educational attainment, 28.1 percent for those with a primary education and 61.2 percent for those with a high school degree and higher. This phenomenon is due to the mismatch between the skills acquired through the education system and labor market needs, sluggish job creation, and a stubborn preference for salaried work in the public sector on the part of youth. The structural nature of unemployment is compounded by the long spells of joblessness that youth endure. On average, two out of three unemployed youth are jobless for at least 12 months. The likelihood of longer periods of unemployment is again higher for the more educated, women, and those living in urban settings.

Quality of employment is critical for young people as the skills and on the job-training they receive determines their future employment prospects and earnings. In Morocco, youth are resorting to small-scale trades, which generally are less well paid, unstable, and frequently are in the informal sector. This is especially true of youth in the countryside.

CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH EXCLUSION

Exclusion resulting from failure in the labor market affects not only unemployed educated youth, but their families as well. This is especially true for economically-underprivileged parents who have invested substantial resources so that their children can succeed in school and thereafter find decent jobs, preferably in the public sector. The economic exclusion of educated youth especially created frustrations which resulted in social tensions manifested in riots and protests.

Family formation is also becoming difficult, as evidenced by young people delaying marriage because of job shortages and insufficient income compared with the continually rising cost of living. Youth in general, and those aged 15-24 in particular, are marrying later. In 1960, the mean age at first marriage was not higher than 18 for women and 24 for men. In 2004, these changed to 31.2 for men and 26.3 for women – some of the highest rates in the developing world.

Finally, a significant part of the population, comprising a large number of youth is being lured to emigrate in hope of a better life. In Morocco, as in the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the phenomenon of emigration, especially illegally into Europe has begun to assume alarming dimensions. The extent of this phenomenon reveals a widespread malaise and despair among the youth who will do anything, including risk their lives, to cross the Mediterranean. Morocco is thereby losing the very youth it needs to build its economy.

POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Far from being ignored, unemployment has been a focus of attention for the government. In fact, the 1990s saw a plethora of programs and measures which aimed to address various facets of the problem. Yet over a decade later the situation is far from improved. While a portion of this may be explained by high labor force growth, a more realistic assessment takes the programs and initiatives to task.

Through the countless speculations over the failure of such programs in bringing about adequate change three main explanations stand out. First and foremost is the lack of a long term strategy bringing the myriad of measures and initiatives under a comprehensive framework and coordinating between them with efficiency. Second is the absence of follow ups and evaluation mechanisms without which there can be no assessment of the real economic and social impacts of the programs. Finally most of these programs were aimed at income generation with very specific “quick-fix” targets without focusing on the nature of employment gained and whether it was relevant, working conditions and the social impacts on the workers and their societies.

One example that stands out is the amount of resources the government has allocated to entrepreneurship and self-employment programs and policies despite the fact that very few young people are interested in this type of work or see it as a viable alternative to paid-employment.

Finally, in 2005, the government adopted a national strategy that aimed to create 200,000 employment opportunities for graduates by 2008. The strategy has three goals: to promote wage employment, to

support self-employment, and lift the public sector's stranglehold over the labor market. The strategy is ambitious and the government's efforts praiseworthy. However, it will remain to be seen whether these programs and policies can have positive impact deliver without replicating the same inadequacies of the past decade.

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The challenges remain staggering for securing the future of young Moroccans. In the years to come, the needs in new employment positions are twice the number of jobs that the economy creates currently. It is also expected that two Moroccans of three will be living in urban areas by 2015, with all the consequences on youth exclusion that those figures carry with them. The problems of children's schooling, particularly of girls in rural areas, the high school dropout rates the unemployment of graduates, and the significant delays in marriage with their consequential social implications, are all serious problems that need to be addressed.

Currently effective policy development is undermined by an intellectual void on youth research. While there are a number surveys on youth in Morocco, most fail to capture the economic and social exclusion of youth and their attitudes, behaviors and needs.

The effectiveness of current youth policies and programs are also an area that calls for much research and evaluation. Too often, the government in its attempt to 'fix' unemployment and other facets of economic exclusion set up programs and policies that would seem to address the challenges without actually taking youth's preferences and needs into account. We therefore argue that it would be useful to study the feasibility of creating an observatory for youth which would gather youth specific, updated data which can lead to a comprehensive understanding of the status of youth in Morocco. This will provide the foundation for better policy and program development and a more secure future for Morocco.

I. GROWING UP IN MOROCCO

The age structure of the population of Morocco is skewed toward youth, with those aged 15–24 constituting a very large proportion. This group has grown substantially in recent decades, rising from about 17 percent in 1971 to a little over 21 percent, or 6 million youth, in 2004. Even though the share of this cohort is expected to decline to 18 per cent in 2014, its relative weight will remain considerable, greatly impacting the future of Morocco.

Unfortunately, today's youth make up the part of the population that faces severe economic and social exclusion that hampers their successful transition to adulthood. Youth exclusion is generated by many factors such as illiteracy and unemployment. Moreover, exclusion is not just a condition but rather a process which marginalizes certain individuals. This process varies with context (e.g. urban versus rural) and is constantly evolving. (Kasriel, 2005). Given this complexity, it is not possible to cover all of the aspects of exclusion in Morocco in a single paper.

Instead, we focus on the economic dimensions of youth exclusion and how the country's economic and social institutions are responding to the presence of a large youth cohort and their expectations. In urban areas youth are facing many difficulties in finding work; in rural areas it is more the case of precariousness of the jobs offered to them. Indeed, young people are increasingly affected by this form of exclusion because of deteriorating employment prospects, especially for university graduates, reflecting the poor match between the education and training system and the requirements of the labor market. It also reflects the paucity of decent jobs that match youth aspirations. Under the impact of unemployment and poverty, youth often are relegated to second-tier jobs in activities that pay minimal or no compensation, are unstable, provide little added value, and belong to the informal sector.

They are thus deprived of working conditions that are conducive to furthering their careers, hence undermining their motivation to contribute to the development of their country.

In understanding the consequences of economic exclusion, we extend our analysis to look at the critical social and political dimensions. For many young Moroccans, family formation is becoming difficult, as evidenced by young people delaying marriage because of the job shortage and insufficient income compared with the continually rising cost of living. In addition, an increasing number of young Moroccans aspire to a life in another country with better economic prospects, and so emigration, especially to Europe, has increased by all legal and illegal means. Whilst providing a safety net and a way out for youth, especially highly qualified ones, migration is depriving Morocco of the part of its population that it most needs to build its economy and whose education absorbed substantial public funds in a nation with limited resources.

The goal of this paper is to use available data to examine the economic exclusion of Moroccan youth aged 15–24—its dimensions and implications. We begin by presenting the demographic weight of youth. Then we will address their economic, demographic, cultural, and social environment in which young Moroccans are coming of age. Subsequently, we will seek to underscore the socialization of youth by gender and their relationships with their parents. We will address the aspects relevant to the economic exclusion of youth. The final section will examine a series of government policies for combating exclusion. In conclusion, we will identify further research that may contribute to a more thorough knowledge and better grasp of the economic exclusion of youth so as to promote the design of inclusion policies that are coherent and effective.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

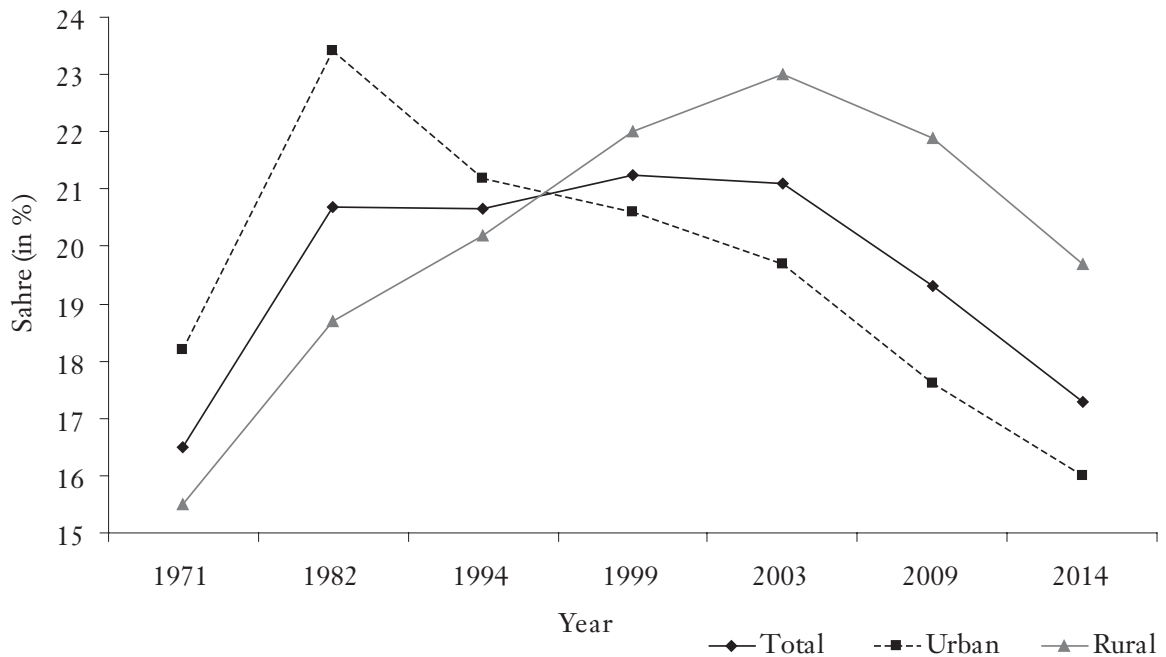
The roots of the changes sweeping Moroccan society can be found in demographic growth. In 2004, the population of Morocco was 29.9 million, compared with 11.6 million in 1960. The country is experiencing a slowdown in the rate of population growth, which fell from 2.6 per cent between 1971 and 1982 to 2.1 per cent between 1982 and 1994 and then plummeted to 1.4 per cent between 1994 and 2004. This significant decline in population growth reflects Morocco's entry into what has been called the "demographic transition." This is characterized by an ongoing drop in mortality rates followed by an accelerated reduction in fertility.

The current age structure of the Moroccan population is characterized by the predominance of youth aged 15–24. This cohort reached 2.5 million individuals at the beginning of the 1970s, growing to 6 million in 2004. The size of the youth population will continue to grow until 2010, when it will reach 6.5 million.

Figure 2-1 illustrates the past and future trend in the share of youth aged 15–24 in the total population. The graph shows the growth of youth as a share of the population from about 17 percent in 1971 to a little over 21 percent in 2004. As a result of the demographic transition, the share of this cohort will decline in coming years to around 18 percent in 2014.

The "youth bulge" is often blamed for many problems in Morocco. It generates enormous needs in education and training, employment, and housing. For instance, the share of the public expenditure on education in the government budget is significantly high and increases continuously—28.2 percent in 2003, up from 24.1 percent in 1990—which limits the capacity of the government to invest in other sectors. Also, the youth bulge is regarded as one of the main causes of youth unemployment because the number of jobseekers is increasing much

Figure 2-1: Evolution of the share of people aged 15-24 (1971-2014), by Area, in percent



Source: Author.

...the youth bulge should naturally be considered a “demographic gift.” By building the human capital of young workers and providing them with opportunities to use their skills, Morocco can increase incomes per capita, bolster savings and improve social welfare.

faster than the number of jobs that the economy can create.

While these arguments are legitimate, at least in light of the current situation, the youth bulge should naturally be considered a “demographic gift.” By building the human capital of young workers and providing them with opportunities to use their skills, Morocco can increase incomes per capita, bolster savings and improve social welfare.

However timing is critical to reap the benefits of having a large working age population as future

trends point towards an ageing Moroccan society. While the Moroccan population is youthful today, it is nonetheless on a course, because of the ongoing decline in fertility, to becoming a population increasingly affected by ageing. Consequently, the weight of the under-15 cohort will continue to decrease in the future relative to the 15-59 and 60-plus cohorts. Indeed, this under-15 group, representing about 44.4 percent of the population in 1960, only accounted for 31 percent in 2004 and is projected to account for a mere 25.9 percent of the total population in 2014.

III. YOUTH ECONOMIC EXCLUSION: THE CONTEXT & DRIVERS

The arrival of a youth bulge in Morocco coincides with five inter-related drivers which provide a context in which young people are being excluded: i) Poor macro-economic performance; ii) rapid urbanization; iii) persistent poverty; iii) poorly performing labor markets; iv) family dynamics

POOR MACRO-ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Morocco opted for a market economy and openness to global markets as of independence in 1956. In 1983, Morocco adopted a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to address a budget deficit that amounted to 9.2 percent of GDP. This had been reduced to about 2 percent. But the SAP had serious social consequences. There were several reforms in the 1990s and early 2000s that were intended to better prepare the Moroccan economy for globalization and to capitalize on the opportunities it presents. But despite accelerating liberaliza-

tion, economic openness, privatization, and the signing of free trade agreements, Morocco's economic performance has been characterized by sluggish long-term GDP growth and wild fluctuations in short-term growth. This reflects volatility in agricultural output, which is highly dependent on annual precipitation. This is clarified in Table 3-1.

From 1990 to 2003, nominal GDP progressed at a mean annual growth rate of 5.3 percent. In constant prices, GDP growth over the same period was on the order of 2.5 to 2.8 percent annually, or one point above the demographic growth rate, on average. Per capita income growth was low and per capita GDP rose from \$690 in 1960 to \$1,440 in 2005.

Sluggish economic growth coinciding with a burgeoning youth population has created an unfavorable environment for many young people to suc-

Table 3-1: Annual Variation of the Total GDP and Agricultural GDP between 1992 and 2004, in constant 1980 prices.

Years	Annual variation of	
	Total GDP	Agricultural GDP
1992	- 4.0%	- 36.9%
1993	- 1.0%	- 4.7%
1994	+ 10.4%	+ 61.4%
1995	- 7.0%	- 43.9%
1996	+ 12.0%	+ 78.0%
1997	- 2.2%	- 26.5%
1998	+ 6.8 %	+ 24.7%
1999	- 0.7%	- 19.8%
2000	+ 0.3%	- 16.7%
2001	+ 6.3%	+ 27%
2002	+ 3.2%	+ 5.6%
2003	+ 5.5%	+ 18.0%
2004	+ 4.2%	+ 1.9%

Source: Lahlou (2006).

cessfully transition to adulthood. In this regard, three main trends stand out in their disproportionate effects on youth welfare and inclusion:

INCREASING URBANIZATION

During the last four decades, the Moroccan population has urbanized rapidly. The size of the urban population increased from 3.4 million in 1960 to 16.7 million in 2005—a average annual growth of nearly 3.5 percent—whereas the size of the rural population went up from 8.2 million to 13.5 million during the same period, an average annual growth of 1.1 percent. Since 1994, the size of the urban population has been greater than the size of the rural population.

Table 3-2 shows that the growth rate of the urban population was greater than that of the total population, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. During the last decade, there was a slowdown in the increase of the urban population, which is linked to the slowdown in the increase of the total population; yet urban population increased by nearly 3 percent, that is, 1.2 points more than the increase in the total population. By the next decade, two of three Moroccans are expected to live in urban areas. (see Table 3-3).

These facts are significant because urbanization has direct consequences on youth. First, it increases pressure on the urban labor market, where the situation is already critical, so that youth increasingly are exposed to exclusion from the labor market. Second, rural exodus often is linked to the deterioration of the farmers' standard of living. Rural migrants settle most of the time in unhealthy accommodations in shantytowns and support the extension of informal activities. Therefore, youth are exposed to poverty and its consequences, such as delinquency, drugs, prostitution, begging, suicide, crime, religious extremism, and emigration. Finally, disrupting traditional ways of life, urbanization influences youth expectations, values, and their vision of work, family and marriage.

PERSISTENT POVERTY

The proportion of Moroccans living in poverty rose from 13 to 19 percent between 1991 and 1999. Poverty is twice as common in rural areas—27 per cent in 1999—as in urban areas—12 per cent. Also, while the rural population only represented 46 percent of the total in 1999, the proportion of those in poverty was 66 percent—two of three poor people lived in the countryside.¹ Moreover, poverty primarily afflicts women and workers in the informal sector,

Table 3-2: Annual rate of growth of the total population and the urban population

Years	1961	1970	1982	1994	2002
Rate of increase of the size of the population	2.54	2.57	2.94	1.92	1.58
Rate of increase of the size of the urban population	4.24	4.32	4.48	2.42	2.85

Source: Mejjati-Alami (2006).

contributing largely to the extension of informal activities because of its impact on incomes (Mejjati-Alami, 2006).

In 2000-01, 14 percent of youth aged 15-24 were poor so that nearly 20 percent of all poor people in the country are between the ages of 15 and 24. Poverty is much more widespread among rural youth—21.9 percent—than among those in the cities—6.9 percent. This incidence of youth poverty is explained by the persistence of unemployment among young labor force participants and, in particular, by the great number of dependents in large households with a young composition.

POOR LABOR MARKET SITUATION AND DETERIORATING QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Labor markets are a critical determinant of youth welfare: it is where the young earn an income which influences their consumption, living standards and prospects for household formation. Despite its centrality, the situation in the labor market has deteriorated markedly since the beginning of the 1980s in terms of access to jobs and their quality. The national unemployment rate rose from 8.8 percent in 1971 to 10.7 percent in 1982 then to 16 per cent in 1994. The situation improved during the 2000s,

with unemployment dropping to 11 per cent in 2005. Urban labor markets fare the worst with urban unemployment doubling between 1982 and 2000, rising from 11.7 to 22 percent. In 2005, this rate was down to 16.3 percent but still five times higher than the rural unemployment rate. Many of the improvements in unemployment rates mask significant disadvantages prevalent by age, gender, and level of education. The categories most affected by unemployment are youth, women, and educated workers.

Sectoral distribution of the workforce provides insights into how the opportunities available to first time job seekers have been changing over time. More than half of the workforce is employed in the agriculture sector – a proportion relatively high compared to 35 percent average of other lower middle income countries (Agenor & El Aynaoui 2004). Morocco is witnessing a decline in employment in the industrial and manufacturing sectors along with a reduced rate of creation of new positions in public service. The share of the public sector in total employment – often the preferred sector of employment amongst degree holders - fell from 11.5 percent in 1995 to 8.5 percent in 2005. Conversely, the share of the tertiary sector rose from 25 to 35.5 percent during the same period. This ex-

Table 3-3: Evolution of the Share of Urban and Rural Populations in the Total Population from 1960 to 2019

	1960	1971	1982	1994	2004	2009	2019
Rural	70.8%	65%	57.4%	48.8%	45%	38.4%	32.4%
Urban	29.2%	35%	42.6%	51.2%	55%	61.6%	67.6%

Source: Lahlou (2006).

pansion of the tertiary sector attests to the size of the service and commerce industries and their informal aspects.

Young, new labor market entrants often depend on work in the informal sector in Morocco. The size of the informal sector in nonagricultural employment is 39 percent. Nearly one worker in three (31.2 percent) is an unpaid family worker, a rate that is much higher in rural areas. The 2004 study by the *Secrétariat d'État à la FP* of the employment of graduates from vocational training indicates that self-employment, selected by a large proportion of graduates, essentially occurs in an informal framework. Indeed, two of three graduates who are working for themselves set up informal businesses working as handymen or family workers. Furthermore, there is some evidence which supports the notion that the Moroccan labor market is growing in informality, given both the size of the informal sector and the decline in wage work.

Wage work also seems to be in decline. The proportion of wage earners in the labor force fell from 43.3 percent in 1987 to 39.4 percent in 1995 and to 37.4 percent in 2005. In urban areas, where wage work is the dominant form of employment, this proportion fell from 63.7 percent in 1995 to 60.7 percent in 2005.

Wage work is also becoming more precarious because of underemployment and the rise in temporary positions. The temporary nature of wage employment adds to its unreliability and fosters moonlighting in the informal sector. The increase in unemployment and the shortage of wage work have fostered the growth of non-wage and atypical forms of activity (Mejjati-Alami, 2006). The Moroccan labor market is experiencing a progressive shift of assets into the tertiary sector—services and commerce—which is increasingly informal, at the expense of the secondary and, to some extent, primary sectors.

CHANGING FAMILY DYNAMICS

The family, which constitutes that intimate environment that most influences the expectations and values of youth, is a critical institution which determines the transitions of youth in Moroccan society. How-

ever, increased urbanization and modernization has changed family dynamics in Morocco. The relationship between youth and their families is undergoing radical transformations, altering notions of what it means to be included and excluded.

In Morocco, as in the Arab and Muslim worlds in general, the family has been organized along exclusively masculine filiations under the authority of the head of the family—the oldest male. The primacy of the group over the individual is constantly reiterated, the family is the base unit of the society (Ajbilou, 1999), and the roles of the members are fixed and immutable. The roles of siblings are prescribed according to gender, with a predominance of power assigned to males. “In this so-called patriarchal system, attitudes toward marriage and procreation were dictated by the desire to protect the economic and social interests of the family.” (Camilleri 1973).²

The family institution in Morocco is very different today from what it was forty years ago, both in its organizational structure and, naturally, in the changing relationships between parents and children over time. The traditional cultural model is being supplanted by another lifestyle that is increasingly characterized by the emergence and affirmation of the individual, who is progressively master of his or her own behavior, ways of acting and thinking, and decisions. As El Harrass (1997) writes, “Many youth are now defying the authority of their parents, without necessarily possessing the asset of an income or education. They tend to assume all decisions that affect them, and limit the intervention of their parents to the formalization of a de facto situation.”

Despite this evolution in the relationship between parents and children, family continues to be a vital safety net for youth. Confronted with the vagaries of education and employment, along with their consequences for financial independence and those of marriage and access to the status of adulthood, the family remains a refuge for young people. Therefore today's generation is caught between relying on the family for economic support while also desiring greater autonomy.

IV. ECONOMIC EXCLUSION OF YOUTH:³ TRENDS & ISSUES

Youth are the population group most affected by problems besetting the Moroccan labor market. Their economic exclusion can be examined by looking at the following dimensions: i) youth participation in the labor market; ii) youth unemployment rates; iv) and finally quality of employment.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR MARKET

The number of young people 15–24 participating in the labor market was estimated at 2,763,000 in 2004, a decline of 3.6 percent from 1999. This decrease in the labor supply primarily affected youth in urban environments, where labor participation dropped by 9.4 percent. Youth in rural areas have also experienced declines in participation, though at lower rates than their urban counterparts. The reduced supply of labor was largely attributable to young women; their participation in the labor market decreased by 11.9 percent between 1999 and 2004, with urban young women exiting the most.

These trends are partially explained by school retention since the proportion of youth at school rose from 25.7 percent in 1999 to 30.6 percent in 2004—from 30 to 34.2 percent for men and from 21.5 to 26.9 percent for women. It is worth noting that the percentage of young people in school is over three times as high in the cities as in the countryside.

A sign of the rising education level of youth, especially in urban areas, is the increase in the proportion of young workers who have a diploma—all levels and types combined. This rose by over two points between 1999 and 2004, from 30.1 to 32.5 percent—from 50 to 55.3 percent in the cities and from 17.2 to 19.2 percent in the countryside.

The decision to remain in school longer is probably related to the situation in the labor market. In fact, Bougroum et al (2002) observe that participation in the education system is less and less a deliberate choice of youth. Many of the youth simply stay in school because of the unfavorable situation in the

Table 4-1: Labor Force Participation Rate of Young People 15-24, by Level of Diploma, Gender and Area (in percent)

	Level of the diploma	Urban		Rural		Total	
		1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004
Males	- Uneducated /no diploma	88.2	86.5	90.2	88.4	89.6	87.8
	- Less than secondary	39.9	37.4	59.7	51.5	46.3	42.5
	- Secondary and above	27.4	24.2	35.2	34.5	28.4	25.3
	Total	53.7	48.6	80.5	75.1	67.0	62.3
Females	- Uneducated /no diploma	26.6	22.1	41.0	37.6	36.4	33.0
	- Less than secondary	16.7	12.5	24.0	18.4	17.7	13.6
	- Secondary and above	22.2	20.9	33.4	24.9	22.6	21.1
	Total	20.9	16.6	39.4	34.8	29.7	25.1
Both genders	- Uneducated /no diploma	53.7	50.0	62.9	61.1	60.0	57.9
	- Less than secondary	28.7	25.3	51.3	42.7	34.3	30.3
	- Secondary and above	24.8	22.4	34.9	32.0	25.6	23.1
	Total	37.0	32.1	60.4	56.3	48.3	44.0

Source: Author.

labor market. According to the authors, school has become a type of refuge for the potentially jobless, who have no alternatives. This behavior, especially as it relates to university studies, is encouraged by policies providing open access to universities and free tuition.

Still, youth remain underrepresented in the labor force. In 2004, they constituted 25.1 percent of the labor force, which is five points below their share of the adult population, or 30 percent. Rural youth have a greater presence in the labor force, representing 31.9 percent of the total rural labor force, compared with 18.4 percent of the urban labor force for young city dwellers. Rural youth also tend to be relatively less educated and more easily enter the labor market because of the economy's organization in rural areas, which is based on family-owned enterprises or farms.

The participation rate is much higher for men than for women—62.3 vs. 25.1 percent in 2004

(Table 4-1). These gender disparities are a function of the areas in which they live. In urban centers, 48.6 percent of men are active vs. 16.6 percent of women. In rural areas, these rates are 75.1 and 34.8 percent, respectively. In the case of rural women, it is difficult to capture or reflect their situation in the labor market using traditional statistical methods. Because they usually work in family-owned enterprises or farms, they easily may switch between employment and inactivity with no transitional period of unemployment.⁴

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The 15-24 year old age cohort is most vulnerable to unemployment, especially in urban areas. In 2004, the number of unemployed youth was 425,000, of which 93.9 percent were urban and 73.6 percent were men. Relative to other categories of labor, young people are overrepresented in the unemployed population by a wide margin. They constituted 35.7 percent of all of the unemployed—33.2

Table 4-2: Unemployment Rate of Youth 15-24 by Level of Diploma, Gender and Area (in percent)

	Level of the diploma	Urban		Rural		Total	
		1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004
Males	- Uneducated /no diploma	29.2	21.4	8.5	4.5	14.8	9.0
	- Less than secondary	44.9	37.5	18.8	11.2	34.0	25.9
	- Secondary and above	63.7	66.0	37.1	24.1	59.4	59.9
	Total	37.8	31.7	10.9	6.1	21.8	15.8
Females	- Uneducated /no diploma	23.5	18.9	2.5	1.3	7.4	4.8
	- Less than secondary	48.7	46.3	19.2	9.0	43.2	37.2
	- Secondary and above	61.6	62.2	68.5	71.9	61.9	62.6
	Total	37.9	37.3	3.6	2.1	16.4	14.5
Both genders	- Uneducated /no diploma	27.6	20.8	6.3	3.4	12.3	7.7
	- Less than secondary	46.0	39.6	18.8	11.0	36.0	28.1
	- Secondary and above	62.8	64.1	42.2	33.7	60.5	61.2
	Total	37.8	33.2	8.6	5.0	20.1	15.4

Source: Author.

percent in urban and 50.3 percent in rural areas—while only making up 25.1 percent of the labor force—18.4 percent in urban and 31.9 percent in rural areas (Table 4-2).

The majority of the unemployed youth are first time job seekers. First time job seekers account for almost 65 percent of total unemployed youth, with 68 percent in the cities and 48.9 percent in the countryside. In urban environments, the situation for workers improves markedly with age but remains critical even for individuals who are well into their adult lives. The unemployment rate in 2004 fell to 26 percent among those aged 25–34, which is still extremely high, especially considering the many educated workers in that group. Within the 35–44 cohort, the unemployment rate was 10.4 percent. Again, this is high, considering that most of the unemployed were still seeking their first job. Finally, the unemployment rate fell to 3.8 percent among urban workers aged forty-five and over. In short, access to jobs in the cities is a long process that probably consists of a succession of downward revisions of expectations—becoming more realistic with regard to the situation of the labor market, incrementally resulting in a convergence of possibilities and expectations.

By gender, when urban and rural areas are combined, unemployment rates are comparable—15.8 vs. 14.5 percent for women. In urban environments, women run a higher risk than men of being unemployed—37.3 vs. 31.7 percent. In rural areas, however, the unemployment rate of men is nearly three times that of women. This may not reflect better labor market outcomes for rural women as much as the sense these women have fewer opportunities available to them and their decision to remain outside of the labor force instead of looking for employment.

Unemployment among educated youth has remained persistently high. One of the advantages of education is the low risk of unemployment associated with high levels of schooling. Education should foster job market integration and stimulate economic growth. In Morocco, this reasoning does not apply. The more advanced the degree, the higher the level of unemployment. This is true for youth of

both sexes and in both urban and rural areas. Nationally, the unemployment rate ranges from 7.7 percent for workers with no diploma to 28.1 percent for those with a diploma below the secondary level to 61.2 percent for those with a diploma from secondary studies or higher. Clearly, the latter group—in particular those possessing university degrees—are relatively scarce in the 15–24 cohort.⁵ Even in the case of the 25–34 cohort, their unemployment rate remains disproportionate, at 40 percent. This situation is explained by a mismatch between the education system and the labor market, sluggish job creation by the economy, and by the preference of educated youth for salaried work in the formal sector, in particular the civil service.

Despite the decline in the aggregate unemployment rate in the last seven years, the situation of young workers with an advanced diploma, secondary or higher, deteriorated during that same period, raising serious questions about the usefulness of investments in education. The position of the country is that the low level of education hampers its socio-economic development. But what return can youth hope for from education in light of the situation that awaits them on the labor market?

The problem of unemployment among degree holders, which initially seemed to be a natural upshot of the government's contraction as an employer subsequent to implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program in 1983—and which, at the time, was treated as a business cycle phenomenon that would rapidly dissipate—persists and is even worse over twenty years later. It has mutated into a structural problem and a source of serious social tensions.

The structural nature of unemployment also is apparent in the long spells of joblessness that youth endure. Two of three unemployed young people—66.4 percent—were without work for at least a year. This rate was 71 percent for women and 64.8 percent for men, 71.5 percent in urban areas vs. 46.6 percent in rural areas. Educated young workers are likely to experience long-term unemployment. More than 70 percent of the unemployed with a degree below the secondary level and 68.6 percent of the unemployed with diplomas and degrees at the

secondary level or higher are unemployed for at least a year.

QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Quality of employment is critical for young people as the skills and on the job-training they receive determines their future employment prospects and earnings. In Morocco, Youth are resorting to small-scale trades, which generally are less well paid, unstable, and frequently are in the informal sector. This is especially true of youth in the countryside.

Rural youth have fewer options in terms of sector of activity. In 2004, 80.1 percent of men and 90.5 percent of women were working in the agricultural sector. The size of this sector had not changed since 1999. In the urban environment, the sectors of activity are relatively more varied, especially in the case of men. Women essentially work in such sectors as industry—53.7 percent—and services other than commerce—33.1 percent. Men are present in more sectors, notably in industry, 28.3 percent; commerce, 27 percent; services other than commerce, 26.2 percent; and construction and public works, 13.4 percent. Compared with 1999, we observe a trend toward work in the services sector, which is linked to the increasing informality of jobs held by youth.

The public sector, with its “good” jobs—relative to the labor market situation in Morocco—scarcely registers in youth employment. The vast majority of young men work in the private sector and the same is true of women.

In cities, most private sector work involves either low skilled wage work or crafts. Almost 40 percent of men end up as nonagricultural laborers and warehousemen, and 34 percent as artisans and skilled labor in the handcrafts. Only about 10 percent end up in the private sector as shopkeepers or commercial intermediaries. Over the last decade, the share of the “nonagricultural laborers, warehousemen and workers of small jobs” has increased from 30 percent to 40 percent.

The situation in the countryside is more revealing: 77.2 percent of employed men and 89.9 percent of employed women have jobs as “laborers and agricultural and fishing manpower.” Also, “nonagricul-

tural laborers, warehousemen and workers of small jobs” account for 9.4 percent of employed men and 2.5 percent of employed women. In rural areas, the share of the dominant group “laborers and agricultural and fishing manpower” grew, for both men—from 75.9 to 77.2 percent—and women—from 86.7 to 89.9 percent.

The urban environment is characterized by the preponderance of wage work. However, a non-negligible proportion of young city dwellers, especially men, is employed without pay as “family workers and apprentices”—27.1 percent of men and 11.3 percent of women. Compared with 1999, men are opting more for self-employment—from 14.6 percent in 1999 to 18 percent in 2004—while wage work is expanding in the case of women—from 71.9 percent in 1999 to 78.7 percent in 2004. Comparison of these trends with those observed in the employment rate suggests that the decline in the employment rate of urban women is probably associated with difficulties in finding wage work while men have maintained their employment rate by entertaining other job options. We would also propose that government provisions to encourage young people to create new businesses seem unable to attract young women.

This situation for youth is more precarious in rural areas. Access to wage work appears to be the exception for youth. In 2004, three of four men and nine of ten women held non-wage jobs. This form of employment has expanded since 1999 by 4.4 points for men and 2.8 for women. Conversely, the share of wage work was only 21.4 percent among men and 6.5 percent among women in 2004.

Unfortunately, we have no recent data on other aspects of youth employment such as wages, the number of hours worked, or the permanence of the job that would let us form a comprehensive picture of the situation for young people in the labor market. However, using data from the 1998 labor force survey in urban areas, we have generated some relevant statistics. The numbers are revealing in terms of the vulnerability of youth in the labor market.

Eighty-seven percent of urban wage workers aged 15–24 earned less than the minimum wage, which should normally be paid to unskilled entrants to the

labor market. There was no significant difference between the two sexes. Moreover, the average monthly income of young city dwellers in 1998 amounted to scarcely 49 percent of the global mean wage and 68 percent of the minimum wage. Minimum wage legislation appears not to be benefiting young workers, despite the fact that this wage was raised 26 times in the past 52 years.

Youth work an average of five hours more than the overall average, 53 vs. 48 hours. They are relegated

to second-tier jobs that are poorly paid and impose longer hours of work than the mean. Consequently, when they strive to avoid unemployment, they find themselves cut off from decent jobs. Surprisingly, however, many of these young workers—about 28 percent—indicated that they felt underemployed and would prefer to work more hours. This represented only 9.5 percent of the workers aged 25 and over. Confronted with low hourly wages, youth seek to increase their hours of work, or to accumulate jobs, in order to increase their total income.

V. CONSEQUENCES OF ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

MARRIAGE INCREASINGLY DEFERRED

The economic exclusion of youth seems to promote delay in family formation. Indeed, youth in general, and those aged 15-24 in particular, are marrying later and later. Of course, several decades ago, there was a consensus that Moroccan society was characterized by very early marriage. In 1960, the mean age at first marriage was not higher than 18 for women and 24 for men. As the table below shows, this situation no longer prevails, given a marked increase in age at first marriage for both young men and women.

In 2004, the average age at first marriage was 31.2 for men and 26.3 for women—a mean age difference of nearly 4.8. The difference between genders in age at first marriage is based on the cultural understanding of the roles of the sexes. It represents the organization of Moroccan society and, consequently, the relationships and power structures between men and women that continue to comply with a social standard based on the pre-eminence of the man in marriage.

The following table attests to a significant contraction in marriage among those aged 15–24. For men, the situation of the 15–19 cohort has changed little over time, mostly because the legal marrying age is

set at eighteen.⁶ For women in the same age group, the rate of single women increased by 21 percent in thirty years. Thus, the trend has been toward the disappearance of early marriage to which women were subjected in the past, which often interfered with their education. In the 20–24 cohort, marriage has declined precipitously among women, so that in 2000, seven of ten women aged 20–24 were single, in contrast to two of ten in 1971. The number of male singles rose from 71.3 percent in 1971 to 93.4 percent in 2000.

The marked increase in the average age of marriage is the result of many interactive variables. We note developments in lifestyles and increased urbanization as two potential determinants. Education also seems to have had an impact on the institution of marriage since there is a significant difference in the mean age at first marriage between those who went to school and those who never did. Having attended school, even only at the grade school level, is sufficient to delay marriage by several years among youth. In addition, the schooling of women has improved their status, which had a net effect on the delay of marriage and on when couples choose to have children. Prolongation of studies is another factor that contributes to delaying marriage.

Table 5-1: Evolution of the Mean Age at First Marriage

	Year	1960	1971	1982	1987	1994	1998	2000	2004
Urban areas	Men	24.4	26.0	28.5	29.7	31.2	32.6	32.2	32.2
	Women	17.5	20.9	23.8	25.4	26.9	28.3	28.5	27.1
Rural areas	Men	23.8	24.2	25.6	26.1	28.3	28.8	29.9	29.5
	Women	17.2	18.5	20.8	21.5	24.2	25.5	25.7	25.5
Both areas	Men	24.0	25.0	27.2	27.9	30.0	31.1	31.9	31.2
	Women	17.5	19.3	22.3	23.4	25.8	27.1	27.4	26.3

Source: Author.

The increase in marriage age among cohorts that are usually already in the labor force, or at the end of their studies and entering adult life—25 years and over—reveals the complexity of influences at work. Changes in the views youth have of the family, pecuniary difficulties attributable to unemployment, the poor quality of jobs held by youth, the rising cost of living, and difficulties finding housing are all factors that contribute to the widespread delay in marriage among youth. According to the results of a survey (El Ghazali, 2004), youth cite three key reasons for being single:

- Inadequate financial means, especially because of unemployment—51 percent of the youth interviewed had no job, 81 percent still lived with their parents or family.
- Fear of the inability to assume the responsibility of marriage, 31 percent.
- Loss of individual freedom associated with marriage, 27 percent.

With regard to first marriages between unemployed and employed people, Ajbilou (2003) observes that the former marry relatively late compared with the latter. Indisputably, economic difficulties are among the most important factors keeping youth from

marrying very young, especially when we know that several years of working and saving are necessary in order to marry for the first time. In sum, the greater the monetary difficulties, the later the marriage; this is true for both men and women.

EMIGRATION

A significant part of the population, comprising of a large number of youth is being lured to emigrate in hope of a better life. In Morocco, as in the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the phenomenon of emigration, especially illegal, into Europe has begun to assume alarming dimensions. The extent of this phenomenon reveals a widespread malaise and despair among the youth who will do anything, including risk their lives, to cross the Mediterranean.

Confronted with the specter of unemployment, educational failure, and poverty, prospects for a better life appear stronger on the other side of the Mediterranean. Further, images conveyed by the media and by emigrants returning to Morocco on vacation with very visible signs of wealth—cars, clothes, and electronic devices, high levels of consumption and expenditures in real estate in Morocco—fuel the feelings of exclusion in youth and present the European El Dorado as the panacea for that

Table 5-2: Rate of Single People Among Youth (Percentage)

Year	Age group			
	15 to 19		20 to 24	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1971	96.9	70.2	71.3	20.4
1982	97.9	81.5	80.5	40.5
1994	99.0	87.2	89.0	55.6
2000	99.6	91.3	93.4	69.0

Source: Department of Statistics - Morocco (www.Statistic-hcp.ma/homfem2003.pdf).

exclusion. In fact, qualitative surveys conducted by CERED (Center for Demographic Research) in rural and semi-urban areas of Marrakech in 2003 confirm that assumption. They reveal a strong penchant for emigration among the youth. Among these youth, migration abroad is a dream for a high proportion of both boys and girls.

The issue of illegal emigration appears daily in the press and media, especially those of Europe and Africa. Each day, dozens, even hundreds, of illegal migrants are intercepted and sent back to their countries of origin—provided they are still alive. Once they have landed on European soil, these young illegal aliens find themselves confronted with a harsher reality, and the dream soon dissipates into disappointment and a new set of frustrations and exclusions. To return home to their countries of origin signifies failure and a loss of hope for these young migrants and their families. They will opt to resist any temptation to return, and instead will develop a unique and complex identity and some means of establishing themselves in their host country (M'Jid, 2000).

SERIOUS SOCIAL TENSIONS

The exclusion from employment and decent jobs, its repercussions on poverty combined with skeptic prospects for the future, has resulted in social uncertainty. Since the 1980s, with the emergence of unemployment of educated workers, education became a cause of exclusion from employment, against all logic. A university degree does not guarantee a job, as had been the case before. An increasing number of young graduates are forced to take jobs that do not correspond to their qualifications or degrees. This situation calls into question the common belief that a degree is insurance against unemployment, and sends contradictory signals to young people that securing better educations will not improve their lives.

Exclusion resulting from failure in the labor market affects not only unemployed educated youth, but

their families as well. This is especially true for economically-underprivileged parents who have invested substantial resources so that their children can succeed in school and thereafter find decent jobs, preferably in the public sector. The economic exclusion of educated and uneducated youth results leaves many of them looking for economic opportunities in developed countries. For those who do not succeed or who prefer to stay in Morocco, they add to the rank of unemployed workers or accept work in under qualified jobs.

Social tensions triggered by unemployment among educated workers manifested themselves in political action at the beginning of the 1990s, when “more than 300 unemployed graduates took over the handy craft complex in the city of Salé in order to be granted jobs.” (Bennani-Chraïbi 1995). In fact, there are almost daily demonstrations by youth demanding employment, especially public employment. Youth have used all possible means to push the government to react; hunger strikes and threats of collective suicide are some examples. These tensions have been accentuated by governmental failures to hold to promises made to youth and to meet youth needs. For example, as early as King Hassan II's speech of January 2, 1991 jobs were promised to unemployed youth, but these jobs did not materialize. Tensions are further increased by the media, which often promote the case of unemployed educated workers and report extensively on their demonstrations.

Terrorist attacks such as those on May 16, 2003 in Casablanca are regarded as a form of protest by youth against their economic exclusion. Following these attacks, which were perpetrated by young people from a poor urban area, the government and public realized the danger that youth exclusion represents to society and its future. Since then, the government has launched ambitious programs for socioeconomic development.

VI. POLICIES OF YOUTH INCLUSION

Today, giving young people a stake in society has become an urgent goal for policymakers and other actors. The government and the public are working together in fighting against the most severe forms of exclusion, namely poverty, lack of schooling, and unemployment. To boost human development and reinforce social policy, the government aimed its actions first and foremost at reforming the educational system, targeting poor quality and inefficiency; reducing infant mortality; and making health-care more accessible. In addition to the government's actions, civil society has become an important actor in the fight against poverty and exclusion of the vulnerable populations, in particular youth and women. Programs oriented toward young people put emphasis on economic inclusion through employment and training.

EDUCATION

Expanding access to education and increasing enrollment rates have been the most important goals behind Morocco's education policies. The reforms implemented in the mid-1980s targeted elementary education by making schooling compulsory until the age of fifteen. In 1999, the National Commission (COSEF)⁷ created by King Hassan II established fundamental principles for education reform. These included:

- Recognition of education and training as a national priority for the decade 2000-2010 and the commitment of the government to provide the funds needed for this. Public financial resources allocated to education will increase by 5 percent yearly.
- As of 2006-07, all children aged 4-16 should attend school.
- The progressive eradication of illiteracy among the adult population.
- The improvement and the reform of education programs and their contents in order to meet the needs of the labor market.

While the country has made considerable progress on many of these fronts, it still faces the challenge of improving the quality of education.

Participation at different levels of education has increased substantially during the last fifteen years.

The participation in preschool education, essentially private and intended for children in the 4-5 age group, increased by nearly 10 percentage points, rising from 40.5 percent in 1990 to 50 percent in 2004. At the elementary and secondary education levels, there was also an increase in enrollment rates. Between 1990-2004, the gross enrollment rate (GER)⁸ increased from 64.2 percent to 119.1 percent in the first stage of elementary education that is, the first six years of elementary education. Secondary education enrolment increased from 20.3 percent to 31.2 percent. In addition, the gap in the gross enrolment rates between girls and boys was reduced substantially.

The total enrollment rate of girls in the elementary school increased from 26 percent in 1990-91 to 101 per cent in 2003-04, a jump of 75 percentage points. Moreover, the increased participation of rural girls in elementary education, translated into a decrease in the parity between boys' and girls' participation from a ratio of 2.3 in 1990 to 1.1 in 2003. As for rates of retention, there was a general positive trend between 1991 and 1992 and between 2002 and 2003. The rate of retention increased by three percentage points at the first stage of elementary education, but this rate decreased by six points at the secondary education level.

Despite significant improvements in school enrollment, the quality and outcomes of education remain weak. Although education expenses exceeded 6 percent of GDP and 28 percent of the government budget in 2003, the outcomes were not satisfactory, especially regarding equality in access to education between genders and in urban and rural areas.

Reforms also were undertaken in order to facilitate access to employment for young people. These reforms include the development of vocational training (VT) programs to improve the employability and skills of young people in different jobs. The most important reform of the Moroccan VT system initiated in 1984 had the goal of improving links between training and the needs of the labor market.

In fact, the reform came about a year after the implementation of the SAP, an immediate consequence of which was worsening unemployment among

graduates following drastic cuts in public sector jobs. VT then was presented as a tool for socioeconomic development, facilitating young people's employment, mainly in the private sector, and allowing employers to have at their disposal a skilled workforce able to improve its performance and competitiveness. Moreover, this reform began just before the reform of the educational system in 1985, which sought to provide education to all school-aged children, to reduce the dropout rate, and to steer a larger proportion of students toward VT at different stages of their schooling.

During the first year of VT reform, 1984, the number of trainees increased by 66 percent compared with 1983. A rapid pace of growth was sustained; the numbers of graduates increased by 64 percent between 1988 and 2003, not including graduates of apprenticeship programs. When including apprenticeship programs and evening courses, the total annual number of VT graduates reached 81,000 in 2002, an 11 percent increase compared with 2001. The government set an objective the training of 400,000 young people between 2005 and 2007.

Unfortunately, such ambitious quantitative policies have too often ended up becoming unfulfilled political pledges with little or no follow-through on the resources and investments needed to reach these goals. The situation of VT graduates in the labor market remains far from satisfactory. In 2002, the unemployment rate among these young people ranged between 18 and 36 percent, depending on the level of training, compared with a national mean unemployment rate of 11.6 percent. Vocational Training education thus seems to have failed to significantly improve employment prospects for many youth.

EMPLOYMENT

Based on the idea that work is a fundamental element of social integration, the government's policies have focused on job creation and the fight against unemployment, especially among educated workers. Programs and initiatives have proliferated, often lacking evaluations to assess success. The government agency structures implementing these programs have also undergone changes; several agencies have been given the responsibility and re-

sources to tackle unemployment-related challenges, and the government has created new bodies with new mandates. In particular, direct youth employment policies and programs have tended to focus on discouraging public sector employment, encouraging entrepreneurship, private sector job placements/insertion programs and skills training.

Until 1983, the year of the implementation of adjustment policies, highly educated workers were guaranteed employment in the public sector. Today, employment opportunities in this sector are very limited, but there is still a strong preference among university graduates for securing a public sector job. This leads to many youth queuing up for a prospective public sector job and failing to pursue alternative options. Their expectations have not changed in line with the shifting realities of the labor market. In fact, educated youth continue to hold the government responsible for not investing enough in the social sectors and thus failing to create new government jobs.

Facing these claims, the government repeatedly emphasizes that employment of youth remains among its priorities. In order to discourage graduates from public sector employment, top leaders, including King Hassan, had been stressing the limitations of civil service in fulfilling the potential of youth. "The public sector" he asserted, "offers no opportunity to young workers looking to expand their horizons and wishing to fulfill their capacities...In the public sector, there is no place for adventure or imagination, and in it there is no freedom." However, the government's own role in sending soft yet credible signals needs further reconsideration.

The worsening unemployment problem among educated youth and other social tensions, led the government to create the National Council for Youth and Future in 1990.⁹ The main objective of the council was to stop the unemployment of graduates (Lahlou, 2006). The council did publish some studies, in particular one carried out in 1991 by the Ministry of the Interior that found that more than 100,000 graduates were unemployed at that time. However, the council's actions had little significance, as the continued unemployment of graduates

The national debate on unemployment and skills mismatches also resulted in a strategy, set up by public authorities, which sought to rectify the imbalance in the labor market for unemployed graduates with specific job creation initiatives. Among the main programs was the promulgation at the end of 1980s of the Law 36/87, also called the Young Entrepreneurs Loans Law, which encourages young graduates to create their own businesses.

has confirmed (El Aoufi and Bensaid 1990). Consequently, the National Council for Youth and Future became inactive.

Employment in the private sector ought to become a priority. In fact, one of the aims of the structural adjustment policies implemented in 1983 was to assign to the private sector a more important role in the economy, especially the creation of employment.¹⁰ The private sector would thus substitute for the public sector in the recruitment of educated workers. Also, the government considers that a strong and competitive economy that creates employment would be a natural solution to the problem of unemployed educated workers. A high and sustained growth of the modern private sector is the main objective for current economic policies.

The national debate on unemployment and skills mismatches also resulted in a strategy, set up by public authorities, which sought to rectify the imbalance in the labor market for unemployed graduates with specific job creation initiatives. Among the main programs was the promulgation at the end of 1980s of the Law 36/87, also called the Young Entrepreneurs Loans Law, which encourages young graduates to create their own businesses. Interested graduates are granted loans that can cover up to 90 percent of the total cost of their projects at preferential interest rates. Recently, the Ministry of Industry, Trade released a national strategy to support the creation and development of very small enterprises (VSE). The study reveals numerous barriers to the creation of VSE and, at the same time, em-

phasizes great opportunities for creating such businesses in Morocco. According to the study, VSE can capitalize on its potential by using assistance programs to create microfirms in different areas of the country and by targeting the informal sector, which represents a nursery of entrepreneurs and activities that can be integrated into the formal sector.

Another national program of support for the creation of enterprises, *Moukawalati* (My Business), seeks to promote self-employment among graduates. The objective is to contribute to reducing unemployment by granting long-term loans to young people at preferential rates to encourage them to create their own businesses. The program seeks to create 30,000 firms—requiring an amount of investment of up to 250,000 MAD (\$30 million) around the country by 2008, which could generate 90,000 jobs. The budget devoted to this program is 10 billion MAD (\$1.2 billion). This program is intended for graduates aged 20-45 with vocational training, secondary diplomas, or university degrees. *Moukawalati* also facilitates access to bank loans. In order to provide an incentive for commercial banks to participate in the program, the government guarantees 85 percent of the value of each loan. Candidates also benefit from an interest-free cash advance of up to 10 percent of their investments, up to 15,000 MAD (\$1800) refundable over six years.¹¹

Many of the initiatives encouraging self-employment seem to be based on the assumption that the scarcity of paid employment will drive more workers toward self-employment. The government has

implemented many programs to encourage and facilitate this shift. However, the effectiveness of these programs is questionable since experience in paid work is required before youth can excel in self-employment. In fact, age is found to correlate positively to self-employment, implying that the older one is, the higher the probability of self-employment. This of course indicates that when it comes to employment choices young people are not engaging in self-employment or entrepreneurship. Evidence shows that ironically preference for paid work significantly increased after the 1983 SAP and in spite of the multitude of programs introduced by the government to encourage self-employment. The preference for paid-employment versus self-employment is shaped by educational level. The higher the educational level the less likely the person would be interested in self-employment and their increased preference for protected (paid) employment. Given that a large number of today's unemployed youth have high educational attainment, the strategy to promote self employment is bound to have limited effectiveness.

In the early 1990s, the government established Law 16/87 that instituted tax incentives for young self-employed people with vocational training certificates and diplomas, excluding those at the specialized level. The establishment of a national program of training insertion consists of providing brief but targeted training for young unemployed graduates in order to meet the needs of the labor market. This initiative, elaborated by the National Council for the Future of Youth (CNJA) in 1992 (El Jai, 1997), was carried out in conjunction with trainers and professionals.

Following the claim that new graduates lack professional experience required by private firms, a program called Training for Employment was launched in 1993. This program, which has been updated over time, aims at facilitating the transition between school and employment for recent graduates through training for eighteen months in private companies. In the meantime, private companies that receive trainees would profit from skilled labor at a lower cost. Indeed, the government subsidizes wages paid to trainees and exempts companies that accept trainees from paying employers' contribu-

tions during a set period. Moreover, companies are not obliged to recruit the trainees at the end of the program. If they do, they are exonerated from all the costs relating to this recruitment, again for a set period.

At the national level, several initiatives were undertaken indirectly favoring job creation and opening up of the economy. In 2002, the Moroccan Government created a 550-square kilometer Special Development Zone in the north of the country, with the aim of developing this region as a strategic center for transportation, industry and trade while promoting job creation. The Tanger-Med Special Development Zone is managed by a governmental agency with privately held company status. Another wide scale national project is *Plan Azure* which is part of the *Plan Emergence* (Emergency Industrialization Plan) which aims to attract foreign investment and promote the tourism industry. *Plan Azure* which consists mainly of the construction and management of a series of recreation resorts which is expected to bring in 10 million tourists annually by 2010, and auto parts, textiles, agro-industry, offshoring and a number of other sectors. Some initiatives target youth's economic insertion, particularly encouraging job creation in the private sector and self-employment. As part of an economic plan, an "emergence" program was launched in September 2005. In addition to expected macroeconomic improvements, the program included many other proposals such as the reinforcement of the industrial sector through, in particular, the establishment of joint government-private sector contract programs; the development of a conceptual framework among the government, universities, and vocational training centers; the introduction of an unemployment insurance program; and the reform of the social security system by reducing the part of the pension in the gross salary which is considered too high while reinforcing the mechanisms of voluntary contributions (Ministry of Finance and Privatization, 2005).

Another notable policy was the labor code of 2003, which sought to create an environment favorable to investment. The two most important aspects of labor code reform were the reduction of labor costs and flexibility in recruitment and dismissal in order

to improve competitiveness and reduce employment rigidity.

Currently, the government seeks to create 200,000 jobs for young graduates by 2008 through a variety of programs and measures. The employment policy for 2008 seeks to eliminate barriers to the employment of workers according to their skills and suggests appropriate measures for each occupation. This policy rests on three essential ideas: promoting wage employment, encouraging and supporting self-employment, and ameliorating control of the labor market. Another program called *Idmaj* (Inclusion) supports employability of youth who lack work experience or suffer from skills mismatch. This program targets 100,000 people who would get their first paid jobs. Another program called *Taehil* (Qualification) is designed for young graduates and seeks to alleviate the discrepancy between education and training and the labor market's needs and will benefit 50,000 people. The budget allocated to this program is 500 million MAD (\$60 million) for 2006-08.

The program called Action to Undertake, based in the Vocational Training and Labor Promotion Office (OFPPT¹²), which is conducted by the Regional Centers of Training and Assistance for the Creation of Enterprises (CREFACE¹³), seeks to encourage the creation of firms by youth and develop necessary skills so they can strike out on their own. The *Centre Empretec Maroc*, (the Empretec Programme in Morocco) created by the OFPPT in collaboration with the UN Conference on Trade and Development, offers technical assistance to entrepreneurs.

Finally, reconciliation between labor supply and demand is provided for in government programs. A national agency for promoting employment and skills (ANAPEC¹⁴) was created in 2000 with the mission of seeking and gathering job offers from employers and matching them with the labor supply; receiving, informing, and advising job seekers; and assisting young entrepreneurs in fulfilling their economic projects. ANAPEC recently was reorganized in order to improve its efficiency. The government also announced the creation of an employment office that would monitor the Moroccan labor

market. This office would provide statistics for follow-up, evaluation, and analysis of the impact of the public employment programs.

In addition to the government's actions, local and international NGOs are also very active in youth employment. For example, micro-loans favor youth, women, and everyone who is excluded from the traditional credit system.

Despite all of these actions that are likely to have an impact on the economic inclusion of youth, most encounter obstacles to implementation because of a lack of coordination among the involved parties—education and training systems, social partners, economic agents—the absence of a real long-term employment strategy, and because there are no routine follow-ups and evaluations of active programs. Also, programs often are designed inadequately and are associated with high costs and negative economic and social returns. Finally, employment and anti-poverty policies are inadequate and often ineffective because they frequently only target access to work and activities that generate income. In doing so, they neglect the impact of such initiatives on working conditions and the structure of the economy, especially with regard to the development of informal activities and low-wage sectors.

POVERTY

Aware of the persistence of inequalities and the precarious living conditions for a significant part of the population, King Mohamed VI announced on May 18, 2005 the National Initiative of Human Development (INDH¹⁵). Its main objectives are to fight poverty and exclusion in both rural and urban areas in order to provide social protection to the vulnerable population. More precisely, INDH seeks to reduce inequalities through:

- Leveling the most underprivileged urban and rural districts that are deficient in basic infrastructures.
- Promoting economic activities to alleviate youth unemployment.
- Supporting people in situations of great vulnerability.

Ten billion MAD (\$1.2 billion) are expected to be

allocated for 2006-10 to finance this ambitious initiative. INDH seeks first to reinforce social equality of 360 of the poorest rural districts and 250 sections of the most underprivileged urban areas. It includes programs devoted to helping young people without shelter and street children. The program focuses on improving existing community centers, creating new centers, family reintegration, economic integration and training

The microfinance policy, inspired by the Grameen Bank experience in Bangladesh, already granted microcredit in Morocco, expected to reach 1 million people by 2010. About nine of ten clients are women, and the reimbursement rate has been 99 per cent to date. Social development and the fight against poverty are among the priorities of the national plan of economic and social development. Creation of the Agency of Economic and Social Development has as its principal objective the alleviation of poverty and socio-economic risks facing vulnerable populations. The intervention of the national aid, which exists since April 27, 1958, has reached 115,000 people.

Finally, Morocco's minimum wage policy is regarded as a way to curb poverty among the working poor by improving their standard of living. Other

possible rationales for minimum wage legislation are to prevent exploitation of the unorganized non-union sector, to prevent unfair low-wage competition, and even to discourage the development of low-wage sectors.

The nominal minimum hourly wage, normally paid to uneducated workers with no experience, has increased 26 times during the last 52 years—or one increase on average every two years. Table 6-3 shows the evolution of the minimum hourly wage in the nonagricultural sectors between 1948 and 2000. In constant prices, the minimum hourly wage increased on average 2.4 percent a year between 1996 and 2000 as opposed to 1.9 per cent for the inflation rate during the same period, on average per year.

Because youth are likely to be paid low wages, we expect them to benefit from the minimum wage legislation. But this legislation is not adhered to by some employers, especially those in the informal sector. As mentioned earlier, most of youth are paid below the minimum wage.

However even when enforced, minimum wage can end up distorting labor market outcomes in various ways. First, while an enforced minimum wage can

Table 6-1 Evolution of the Nominal Minimum Wage (Industry, Trade and Liberal Professions)

	1948	End 1950s	1962	1977	End 1980s	1996	2000
Nominal minimum hourly wage (MAD)	0.30	0.80	0.85	1.40	4.76	7.98	8.78
Number of increases of the minimum wage during the decade	...	8	1	4	7	5	1

offer protection to young workers, it can also undermine employment prospects for young job seekers by stifling job creation. Furthermore, the benefits of minimum wage in the Moroccan context are accrued more strongly by the uneducated and low skilled workers. Wage employment opportunities and wages have improved for low skilled youth, and part of this improvement can be attributed to significant increases in the minimum wage over the last two decades. However, in an economy in which the public sector has contracted without the emergence of a large private which can offer high skilled jobs, the educated youth appear less likely to benefit from increased in the minimum wage.

INCLUSION OF WOMEN

Moroccan society has like any traditional society treats boys and girls, men and women, differently. Inequality in the treatment of the sexes still exists despite many advances in favor of women in recent years. The representation of women in decision-making positions such as government and senior civil service positions, and their participation in economic development remain weak. Women also face barriers in access to education and decent employment. In rural areas girls' education is not perceived as a necessity and priority is given to the education of boys; girls are often perceived as being destined to perform household chores and marry. In urban areas, unemployment is a serious problem for young educated women – though more due to their educational levels rather than gender. Women also do not benefit from measures allowing them to reconcile work and family responsibilities, curbing their professional aspirations and leading many of them to stop working in order to take care of household responsibilities.

One of the institutional answers to official reports about the general situation of women and upheavals of family dynamics was the promulgation in 2003 of the new family code. It tends to respond to many socioeconomic changes and, in particular, their effects on the situation for women. If reforms brought about by the *Moudawana* (Family Code) in 1993 strive for a better application of the law, then the 2003 Family Code rests on the basic principle of seeking justice for women by promoting their status and creating equality between women and men.

The code also allows for the consolidation of child protection, preserving women's dignity by protecting them against violence, and improving women's economic status. The family consequently is put under the "joint responsibility of both spouses." Both spouses also are responsible equally within the household with regard to their children's education and economic management.

The code recognizes the woman as a citizen in response to Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This assumes equality in terms of rights and duties with the abolition of the traditional rule of "the obedience of the wife to her husband." The age of marriage is fixed at eighteen for women, up from fifteen. The traditional requirement for a male representative – often a father, uncle or brother – for a woman of age to complete her nuptials has been removed. A minor—under eighteen and above fifteen—can now choose the parent who would have custody over him or her in the event of a divorce. The wife has as much right as the husband to ask for divorce. Polygamy is subjected to conditions very difficult to meet. These reforms are a sign of an unprecedented change. Making them succeed and consolidating them is what is at stake in a national project that engages the government and society as a whole. But a long time may be needed for women to close the gap with men regarding their personal status.

POLITICS

Since the end of the 1990s, Morocco has been engaged in a transition that is reflected in a set of major reforms that seeks to speed democratic processes and to affirm the primacy of the law. We mention the adoption of the election code in 1997, which favored the development of transparency during the 2002 elections, the law relating to the regional organization of the kingdom, and laws concerning the organization of Parliament's Assembly of Representatives and Assembly of Councillors. Some progress in human rights also was achieved by reinforcing freedom of expression and by advocating national reconciliation through the creation of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission that seeks, among other things, to pay compensation for political victims. The Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture was created in 2003, strengthening the Berber

culture. All of these achievements have an impact on young people, opening new avenues to exercise their citizenship rights. Morocco lowered the voting age to eighteen, created a national forum for young people, and organized the tenth world youth day in 2003.

A recent survey by the NGO 2007 *Daba* concluded that 73 percent of young people think that they are not adequately represented by their elected officials and that 60 percent do not trust politicians. As a result, programs targeting youth are launched routinely in collaboration with NGOs. They are fo-

cused on the role of youth and the importance of their participation in the political process. The objective is to encourage youth to participate in political life and contribute to the consolidation of democracy by participating in elections, public discussions, and by joining political parties. At the same time, youth are given the opportunity to voice their concerns and expectations and to express themselves to politicians. Also, the government uses ads on radio, TV, and in newspapers to encourage youth to take part in building a “new Morocco” with a bright future.

VII CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In a society transformed by demographic growth, rapid urbanization, limited employment opportunities, and a substantial gap between education and training and labor market needs, the question of youth inclusion becomes a concern for public authorities and civil society. Progress toward reducing exclusion and its perverse effects has been modest. The policies and measures that were implemented did not achieve the expected results and youth's situation continues to worsen. In fact, public intervention was based mainly on the theory that economic growth would alleviate poverty and exclusion. This economic reasoning relegates to the second tier other important factors, such as political, social, cultural and religious issues, which also generate exclusion (Kasriel, 2005).

When we examine employment policies, we find that the government's role is often unpredictable and actions taken to improve the possibility of jobs for young workers are not well defined and often are designed outside of the general strategy that is intended to combat exclusion. Moreover, because of budget constraints, many programs for youth are selective and do not benefit all young people.

International organizations such as the UN Development Program, UNICEF, and NGOs try to implement programs to balance the deficiencies of the public sector. Civil society became a key actor because of its interventions and achievements for the improvement of the situation, the fight against poverty, and exclusion of young people and women. Yet, actions of NGOs, as those of the government, remain insufficient. Challenges remain staggering for Moroccans' future. In the years to come, the needs in new employment positions are twice the number of jobs that the economy creates currently. It is also expected that two of three Moroccans will be living in urban areas by 2015, with all the consequences on youth exclusion that those figures carry with them. The exorbitant illiteracy rate among the adult population, the problems of children's schooling, particularly of girls in rural areas, the high school dropout rates, and the unemployment of graduates are serious problems to tackle with regard to youth inclusion. Also, young people must affirm themselves as undeniable actors and as a priority target of public policies (Morocco, 2006).

Morocco will have to face a major challenge to integrate its youth in socioeconomic development. Youth constitute a huge human potential in Morocco that can greatly benefit the development of the country and its integration into the world economy. This requires the fulfillment of youth's needs in terms of education and training, health, leisure, and employment as part of coherent, integrated strategies among all of the involved organizations from government and the public (CERED, 2004). It is more efficient to target the sources of youth exclusion than to react to its consequences.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Even though available information overall provides a rich picture of the situation experienced by youth in Morocco, we think there is still a serious problem of data deficiency and a lack of adequate empirical knowledge on this subject, which in turn undermines the development of effective policies.

Existing research and reports on youth draw on survey data gathered in the context of other statistical reports whose principal subject is not necessarily this slice of the population, as well as from some limited surveys targeted specifically at youth but with differentially specified age groups. Existing research and reports on youth in Morocco draw largely on survey data gathered in the context of other statistical studies, such as household surveys and census, which do not focus necessarily on this slice of the population. Other studies focus on issues relevant to youth exclusion, such as employment, migration, housing and the family, but again focus on the entire population; impacts on youth are not necessarily their core focus.

Some surveys have been prepared on youth in Morocco. These include surveys of a national scope and surveys with a local scope. National youth surveys study economic, demographic, social, and cultural characteristics of youth as well as their behaviors and attitudes toward their family and economic, social, and political environments. Local studies address issues related to information on reproductive health, the relationships of adolescents to their families, delinquency, and the consumption of narcotics in specific areas of Morocco. However, their usefulness is often challenged by their failure

in capturing the impact of economic and social exclusion of youth and their attitudes, behaviors and needs.

To our knowledge, there is no survey that tackles the impact of social exclusion on young people who are moving into adulthood. In this context, our understanding of what precisely is happening to youth remains limited. We suggest dealing with this problem in future research. The first step in curbing youth exclusion is to identify the appropriate data. Basically, we have to answer the following question: What kind of data do we need in order to assess youth exclusion adequately? The second step is to find a way to combine these data in order to make an overall judgment of the situation—the kind of index allowing for comparisons with other countries.

Morocco created observatories monitor the status and well being of certain groups of the population—such as the children and the poor. It would be useful to examine the feasibility of creating an observatory for youth. This organization would be in charge of keeping up with youth through suitable statistics, studying their meaning, and gauging the expectations of youth.

Unemployment is probably the most critical problem faced by young graduates in Morocco. During the last 20 years, the government relied extensively on self-employment as a solution to this problem. But results are not satisfactory. For instance, Boudarbat (2006) shows that despite the contrac-

tion of salaried employment opportunities for university graduates and public policies encouraging self-employment, the number of those who would consider self-employment as an alternative to unemployment did not increase among this group. This seems to indicate that there is nothing positive to gain from self-employment over wage employment, including wages and other working conditions. In this case, we do not expect graduates to be attracted to self-employment. We are not sure that the government tried to evaluate the reaction before spending substantial funds on self-employment programs. This could be a good research question.

Finally, there is a serious trend in marriage delay among youth in Morocco, especially among women. While this trend is well documented, we know little about its connection to economic exclusion. Explanations that are given for the increase in age at first marriage among youth are speculation—intuitive conclusions—rather than empirical facts. We argue that an unemployed youth cannot afford marriage, but this does not mean that employment ends the moratorium on marriage. The latter is not a question of financial means only but also one of changing attitudes toward family and further education. The situation simply might reflect a trend in Moroccan society that would have occurred even if the situation in the labor market did not worsen. Therefore, we think that a deeper examination of this question is necessary in order to learn the most important reasons for the trend in marriage delay.

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2. Camilleri, C. (1973), *Jeunesse, famille et développement, Essai sur le changement socio-culturel dans un pays du Tiers-Monde: la Tunisie*, CNRS, Paris.
3. This section draws extensively on the paper by Amrani-Alaoui (2005).
4. In 2005, the unemployment rate of women in rural areas was a mere 1.4 percent but 80 percent of them were in family owned enterprises without compensation.
5. For example, a minimum of sixteen years of schooling is required before obtaining a high school diploma
6. For women, the legal age of marriage was set at 15 until 2003, when a new family law was enacted. Since then, the legal age of marriage has been set at 18 for both sexes.
7. *Commission Spéciale pour l'Éducation et la Formation* (Special Commission for Education and Training).
8. GER is the number of students in a given education level as a percentage of the number of children in the corresponding age group. This quotient can be higher than one when an education level has children who belong to younger or older age groups.
9. In French: Conseil National pour la Jeunesse et l'Avenir" (CNJA)
10. The 1983 Code of Industrial Investments encourages the creation of jobs, such as providing 5,000 MAD to industrial SME for each stable job created during the first four years. However, while great in theory, this measure never was applied in practice.
11. For more details, visit the website: <http://www.moukawalati.ma/home.cfm>
12. *Office de la formation professionnelle et de la promotion du travail*
13. *Centres Régionaux de Formation et d'Assistance à la création d'Entreprise*
14. *Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi et des Compétences*
15. *Initiative Nationale de Développement Humain*

ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST YOUTH INITIATIVE

Our Mission

To develop and implement a regional action plan for promoting the economic and social inclusion of young people in the Middle East.

Creating Alliances for Maximum Progress

The Middle East Youth Initiative's objective is to accelerate the international community's ability to better understand and respond to the changing needs of young people in the Middle East. By creating an international alliance of academics, policymakers, youth leaders and leading thinkers from the private sector and civil society, we aim to develop and promote a progressive agenda of youth inclusion.

The Middle East Youth Initiative was launched in July 2006 by the Wolfensohn Center for Development at the Brookings Institution in partnership with the Dubai School of Government.

Connecting Ideas with Action

The initiative blends activities in an attempt to bridge the divide between thinkers and practitioners and utilizes robust research as a foundation for effective policy and programs. The initiative has three complementary pillars:

Research and Policy: Pathways to Inclusion

With this initiative, cutting-edge research advances the understanding of economic and social issues affecting young people. The main target group is youth 15 to 29 years old, with a special focus on young men and women who live in urban areas and have secondary or post-secondary education. In addition to addressing needs of older youth, the initiative will also focus on strategies for promoting development of youth 15 years and under in areas such as primary education, skills development and community participation.

The research framework focuses on youth making two major transitions to adulthood: i) the transition from education to employment; and ii) the transition to household formation (marriage and family). Research will concentrate on strategies to achieve inclusion in:

- Quality education
- Quality employment

- Marriage
- Housing
- Civic participation

Our goal is to examine the relationship between economic and social policies and generate new recommendations that promote inclusion.

Advocacy and Networking: Creating Vital Connections

The initiative aspires to be a hub for knowledge and ideas, open to all stakeholders who can make change happen. Strong partnerships with policymakers, government officials, representatives from the private sector and civil society organizations, donors and the media will pioneer forms of dialogue that bridge the divide between ideas and action. By bringing in the voice and new perspectives of young people, the initiative will revitalize debate on development in the Middle East.

Practical Action: Life-Changing Impact

Outcomes matter. With a focus on areas with the greatest potential for innovation and impact, the initiative will mobilize partners for practical action that can improve young people's lives. The initiative will help develop policies and program interventions which provide youth with skills, expand opportunities for employment and facilitate access to credit, housing and civic participation.

ABOUT THE WOLFENSOHN CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Wolfensohn Center for Development at the Brookings Institution was founded in July 2006 by James D. Wolfensohn, former president of the World Bank and member of the Brookings Board of Trustees.

The Wolfensohn Center for Development analyzes how resources, knowledge and implementation capabilities can be combined toward broad-based economic and social change in a four-tier world.

The following principles guide the center's work:

- A focus on **impact, scaling-up and sustainability** of development interventions
- Bridging the gap between **development theory and practice** to bring about action
- Giving **voice** to developing countries, with high-level policy engagement and
- broad networking
- A **rigorous, independent research** approach that draws from multiple disciplines
- Working in **partnership** with others

ABOUT THE DUBAI SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

The Dubai School of Government is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2004 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, the school aims to promote good governance by enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Toward this goal, the Dubai School of Government collaborates with international institutions such as Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in its research and training programs. In addition, the school organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world.

The school is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the school is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs including:

- Applied research in public policy and management
- Masters degrees in public policy and public administration
- Executive education for senior officials and executives
- Knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers



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