



# **THE IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING ON THE SOCIO- ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE YOUTH IN MOROCCO**

A case study of an integrated approach taken by  
Casal dels Infants

This case study highlights the work of Oxfam's partners in Morocco within the framework of the Youth Participation, Employment and Social Enterprise project, led by Oxfam IBIS in the MENA region. Casal dels Infants presents its approach of socio-economic integration of vulnerable youth living in the region of Tangier and Casablanca. The paper explores how a collaboration between civil society, the private sector and public institutions can be fruitful in terms of increasing access to economic opportunities for vulnerable youth.

© Oxfam International March 2020

This case study was written by Pauline Gregoire and Ousama Badaoui. Oxfam acknowledges the assistance of Shekhar Anand in its production. It is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email Pauline Gregoire at [pauline.gregoire@oxfam.org](mailto:pauline.gregoire@oxfam.org).

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. Email [policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk).

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78748-580-8 in March 2020.

DOI: 10.21201/2020.5808

Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

Cover photo: Soukaina Ennaoui is 22 years old. Originally from El Jadida, she lives with her cousin and her family in Rabat while in school. She has completed the youth course at Amal Al Mansour and hopes to start her own company. Photo credit: Thomas Flensted-Jensen for Oxfam IBIS.

# CONTEXT

The national unemployment rate in Morocco is currently around 10%. Social exclusion of young people is highly visible, with higher unemployment rates among youth and limited economic opportunities. A 2016 report on Morocco by the Higher Planning Commission<sup>1</sup> estimated 1.69 million people in the 15–24 age range to be NEET (young people not in education, employment or training), representing 25% of Morocco's total youth population. This figure is close to 30% in the northern part of the country and 50% among young women.

Tangier, which serves as a gateway between Africa and Europe, attracts a very varied population. Unemployment among youth in the Tangier region is even higher than the national average, due to high inward migration from other parts of Morocco.<sup>2</sup> In the countryside, a lack of basic services is leading to rural exodus. A large percentage of the city's workforce has moved from surrounding rural areas in search of trade or employment opportunities. Much of the city's economy is based on industries such as textiles, food canning, tourism and trade, but employment is largely informal, and this leads to vulnerability, inequality and abuse of human rights. Most of Tangier's industrial output is dependent on exporting goods for big European brands, which makes it vulnerable to any global economic shocks. Public schools lack resources to provide for the children of migrant workers and most children join the labour force to supplement family incomes. Children who drop out of school in rural areas are likely to do the same if they move to a city;<sup>3</sup> rather than attend school, many prefer to work informally<sup>4</sup> in local shops, for as little as MAD 200 (Moroccan dirhams – equivalent to \$21) a week.



This is the context in which Casal dels Infants and its partners decided to work. They chose to offer opportunities to young people so that they can be integrated into the local economy, become more aware of their rights and slowly begin to break the cycle of poverty.

## ABOUT CASAL DELS INFANTS

Casal dels Infants is a social and civic association headquartered in Barcelona, Spain. Since 1983, it has been working for social change in underprivileged neighbourhoods in Catalonia. It started operating in Morocco in 2007, primarily addressing issues faced by unaccompanied migrant minors via its local network of partner organizations.

Its overall objectives are:

- social and economic inclusion of vulnerable populations and youth;
- innovation in the social and educational spheres;
- supporting the education of girls, without discrimination; and
- strengthening grassroots civil society.

Activa (previously known as Incorpora) is a project run by Casal that supports the first of these objectives – the economic inclusion of vulnerable youth by

integrating them into the formal job market. Activa's structured approach to the process is discussed in detail below. The keystone of the project is a multi-stakeholder approach in which project resources are used to leverage the strengths of the private sector and the mandate of public institutions.

## A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

The Activa project works with three sets of stakeholder groups – local civil society, the private sector and the public sector – to meet its objective of supporting youth employment.

Casal dels Infants approached **civil society organizations (CSOs)** with the aim of building a network of local organizations working on the integration of youth (defined by the project as ages 18–35) into formal work in suburban areas of Tangier. Key criteria used in the selection of partners included their awareness of the socio-economic conditions facing young people in their respective neighbourhoods, their interest in analysing and engaging with youth issues, and the alignment of their missions and expectations with Activa's approach.

**Private sector organizations** were approached with the objective of placing trained youth in private companies and building a case for integrating vulnerable youth within their businesses. In the early days, private companies were wary of the CSOs as they saw them as potentially threatening entities who might criticize their business practices at any time. They also had negative perceptions of the capacities of socio-economically vulnerable youth.

The CSOs were equally wary about the involvement in the project of private sector actors, which they saw as opaque and unwilling to communicate. There was a need for them to communicate with the company partners in a way that built trust and collaboration. At the same time, they had to be ready to train and prepare youth to meet the expectations of the private sector, and often those expectations were very high.

However, the project has now been running for a couple of years and mistrust between the two sectors and the communication gaps are diminishing. To ease the relationship, Casal has focused its efforts on promoting the work done by its civil society partners. This means talking to companies about activities carried out with young people, with the inclusion and participation of companies in those activities. It also covers how activities conducted with young people help build their professional skills and enable them to better integrate into their societies. In turn, private sector organizations now have more trust in the capacity of the CSOs to effectively provide them with a trained workforce. In fact, many companies now depend to a great extent on their civil society partners to meet their recruitment needs, in particular when they need qualified workers at short notice. CSOs, meanwhile, now see the companies as partners who contribute to their ways of working.

**The public institutions** involved in generating employment were necessary allies as they have a direct mandate to train unemployed people or place them in work. There were some challenges around collaborating with this group of organizations as their working practices, level of involvement and bureaucratic processes presented different constraints. Decision-making processes in these institutions are still very centralized, which made collaboration more difficult. Furthermore, some institutions such as ANAPEC, the national employment promotion agency, had their own priorities and could not be quite as flexible as

### Multiple sector partnerships

#### Private sector partners

- **Lear (automotive)**
- **SEBN (cabling)**
- **Red Textiles**
- **Focus Qualité (services)**
- **Hilton (hospitality)**
- **Sodexo (catering)**

#### Government partners

- **ANAPEC (national employment promotion agency)**
- **OFPPT (National Office for Vocational Training and Promotion)**

#### Civil society partners

- **UAF – Union de l'Action Féministe**
- **Aarouss Chamal**
- **AICEED – Association Initiatives : Citoyenneté, Education, Environnement et Développement**
- **Nahda**
- **ACSJ – Association Centre Service Jeunesse, in Casablanca**
- **Al Ikram**
- **Mouassat**
- **Anec – Association National de l'Education et de la Culture**
- **Atec – Association Tahadi**

Activa, which adopts a youth-centred approach. For example, ANAPEC took a collective follow-up approach with youth, whereas Activa follows up individually.

However, since 2018 ANAPEC has been reaching out to civil society partners as it now realizes the benefits, and particularly the importance, of the state's mandate to meet the needs of the growing NEET segment of the population. Collaboration with the OFPPT (the National Office for Vocational Training and Promotion) has been easier since it adopted the Activa approach (then known as Incorpora) in 2017. Partners have asked the OFPPT for condensed training modules, i.e. for a three-month period instead of a year, and the OFPPT has agreed to offer and certify such modules. For example, modules for construction painters were condensed to three months and 18 participants had been certified as of June 2017.

## APPLICATION OF THE ACTIVA APPROACH

The Activa approach was initially designed in 2009, under the name Incorpora. It was renamed Activa in 2018, with an emphasis on the depth of its professional integration methodology and on advocacy. Activa is a programme in which youth are enrolled and supported to access professional/employment opportunities through a formal, standardized process. Activa has established 'counters', physical spaces located within the offices of each partner CSO, which are responsible for welcoming, enrolling, supporting and following up with young job-seekers in an agreed and orderly way. Casal dels Infants currently has a team of 10 employed staff working with and strengthening the capacities of 16 local partner organizations in the cities of Tangier and Casablanca.

There are currently nine Activa counters, five in Tangier and four in Casablanca. They are staffed by trained specialists known as professional integration technicians (TIPs), who accompany youth in their job search. TIPs are responsible for youth outreach, assessment and profiling through interviews, and allocate training pathways/streams for each individual young person. They provide a single point of contact for youth, managing their case files, working with relevant project managers and training coordinators, and keeping in constant contact with the private sector team responsible for liaising with private companies. TIPs are also responsible for managing relationships and coordination between trainers and other people in charge of youth follow-up.

### Identification of implementing partners/local CSOs

Partners are identified based on their capacity and interest in working on employment and youth issues in their particular geographic location. Key criteria include their outreach to vulnerable young people, their awareness of unemployment issues, their access to job markets and the private sector, and their values and organizational capacities. Once selected, a partner is supported to establish an Activa counter and to train TIPs to initiate youth outreach activities. Casal is responsible for maintaining links with the organizations' leadership and reinforcing their vision and strategy (or communication capacities) with regards to professional integration. This institutional follow-up also includes identifying other means of collaborating, such as training or advocacy on certain complementary topics. CSO partners include Aarouss Chamal, a youth community organization based in a vulnerable neighbourhood of Tangier, which works on the socio-economic inclusion of youth; and AICEED, a Tangier-based NGO that works on education, inclusion and professional integration, as well as community outreach.

## Identification of youth

Young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years are eligible for support. Other criteria include residential status in the local neighbourhood, economic vulnerability and an immediate need for a job/income. Once youth are identified, two rounds of discussions are held to identify the support they require.

- **First discussion:** An introductory meeting is held with the young person to inform them about the services provided by the Activa counter, collect general information about the person and help them register with the programme.
- **Second discussion:** The second meeting involves a deeper analysis, with a TIP conducting an assessment of the person's skills and drawing up a support plan for their integration into the workforce.

The process of drawing up a career plan starts at the second meeting. The TIP establishes a technical and personal skills profile to identify relevant professional options, based on the individual's interests and how they match with the reality of the job market. The Activa counters categorize enrolled youth into two profiles:

- those looking for work immediately; and
- those who express a desire for more professional training.

## Training approach

If the young person has already graduated or has a diploma that matches a job vacancy (provided through Activa's private sector network), then they undertake soft skills training in order to strengthen their abilities to integrate into the work environment.

If the young person does not have a diploma, or their qualification does not match the labour market, then the Activa counter will propose that they undertake professional as well as soft skills training in order to integrate into a company that may offer a job. This provision of professional as well as soft skills training is called the **Passwork approach**.

Training opportunities offered by Casal dels Infants	
<i>Industry-focused skills training</i>	<i>Soft skills training</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hospitality</li><li>• Baking</li><li>• Logistics (warehouse clerk, forklift driver)</li><li>• Sales</li><li>• Quality agent</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Succeeding in your job interview</li><li>• Self-confidence</li><li>• Stress management</li><li>• Interpersonal communication</li><li>• Labour law</li><li>• How to put together a good CV</li><li>• Knowing yourself better to improve your communication skills</li><li>• Job search tools</li><li>• The corporate environment</li></ul>

Professional training is organized based on the demands of the local private sector and industry. Some of the training is in the services sector, in areas such as hospitality, banking, logistics management, warehousing, clerical services, forklift driving, sales and quality assurance.

## Private sector partnership team

The Activa approach also integrates private sector networking and influencing strategies. A dedicated team of private sector specialists is constantly exploring job opportunities with local companies, while also advocating for the integration of vulnerable youth into those companies. This team works with local businesses to help them meet their corporate social responsibility (CSR) ambitions by offering employment to vulnerable youth, thus creating a pathway for their social inclusion.

There are around 300 companies on the database, and currently the team is working with 56 that are actively engaged in employing youth or participating in professional training. Large corporates involved include Lear (the automotive sector), SEBN (cabling), Red Textiles, Focus Qualité (services), Hilton (hospitality) and Sodexo (catering).

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS

Since 2009, when Incorpora was originally designed, a total of 2,076 young men and women have been formally integrated into companies, and 301 enterprises have been engaged, out of around 800 prospected. In 2018, under the Activa approach, the partners enrolled 2,196 young people, with 511 formally integrated into the job market.

This approach has enabled private companies to become more aware of and more sensitive to employment conditions in their area of operation and has enabled them to contribute to reducing unemployment. Socio-economically vulnerable youth now have better access to private sector companies and jobs, as well as opportunities to improve their soft skills and thus participate in a more meaningful way in the societies and communities in which they live.

In addition, the Activa approach has enabled Casal to create an informal network of local CSOs working on similar thematic issues, thus reinforcing their capacities to reach young people and improving their leverage over other actors in the private sector and in government institutions. This local organizational network now has ambitions to make NEET youth more visible within society and in government programmes and to enable civil society to become a major social actor in Morocco.

The project has strengthened the capacities of civil society partners by transferring methodology and tools for the professional integration of the NEET segment of the population. The project coordinator is responsible for TIP follow-ups in the two cities, building their capacities to reach out to companies, target and identify young men and women and train them on an ongoing basis, and customize and improve training modules.

Furthermore, the project and its approach have had a demonstrable effect on the labour market at the regional level, as it is pursuing a similar mission to that of some government institutions, such as ANAPEC. ANAPEC now perceives Casal to be a far more effective player in dealing with unemployment issues and recently made approaches to learn about its methodology for targeting socio-economically vulnerable youth.

## WHAT HAS WORKED WELL AND WHAT HAS NOT

- ✓ **Strengthening youth capacities in other areas of their civic life**, such as training on labour rights using arts and other types of awareness-raising tools, has worked well. Partners have noticed that young people are increasingly aware and conscious of their rights, especially with regards to work contracts, which are still an issue for most employers and employees. Their behaviour and awareness encourage companies to also be more sensitive to their employees' rights and to better face up to their responsibilities.
- ✓ **Opportunities to provide continuous training for the social workers (TIPs)** who run the counters have enabled them to strengthen their capacities and broaden their sphere of interventions with youth. This contributes to reinforcing the role of social actors in underprivileged areas.
- × **Networking and engaging with private companies are difficult.** A full-time employee used to work as a link between the private sector and the CSOs, but she faced many difficulties. Organizing multi-sectoral platforms and engaging companies is a challenging task, and more needs to be accomplished in this area. Casal is re-evaluating its approach and human resources to better support its partners while trying to maintain a voice in the private sector space.
- × **The technical capacities of youth are not always up to expectations.** The technical capacities of young workers once placed with the private sector can sometimes be an issue, because they are not adequately prepared for the job market.
- × **Youth are affected by instability in the job market.** Companies sometimes furiously recruit workers and at other times lay them off. Working conditions are very hard for both women and men, especially in the textile and automotive sectors.
- × **Trust between youth and companies** regarding the length of their contracts and respect for contracts is also an issue.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

The role of partners and local CSOs in recruitment needs to be clear and secured with solid procedures and vision. An increasing number of companies are now asking for quick recruitment but for only short periods of time, which can put a CSO's reputation at risk. They are not part-time job agencies – they are committed to integrating youth who are ready to be integrated. Hence there is a need to create a functioning network where employment opportunities can be easily circulated to increase the response capacity of partners, without putting at risk their reputation or their vision, and especially the young people they work with.

With support from the YPE project,<sup>5</sup> Activa is planning to initiate new channels of communication and influence with companies, using different tools such as newsletters and press releases.

# NOTES

- 1 Haut-Commissariat au Plan. (2016). *Note d'information de la Direction Regionale de Tanger Tetouan Al Hoceima sur : La situation du marché du travail régional entre 2006–2016.* (French only). Royaume du Maroc. <https://www.hcp.ma/region-tanger/attachment/968864/>
- 2 Haut-Commissariat au Plan. (2014). *Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat.* Royaume du Maroc. <http://rgphentableaux.hcp.ma/>
- 3 Instance Nationale d'Évaluation auprès du Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation, de la Formation et de la Recherche Scientifique. (2019). Sous la direction de Rahma Bourqia, *Atlas Territorial de l'abandon scolaire, Analyse des parcours de la cohorte 2014-2018 et cartographie communale.* (French only). <https://www.csefrs.ma/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ATLAS-TERRITORIAL-DE-LABANDON-SCOLAIRE-18-12-web.pdf>
- 4 Haut-Commissariat au Plan (2018). Communiqué de presse à l'occasion de la Journée Mondiale contre le travail des enfants. *Le travail dangereux des enfants âgés de 7 à 17 ans au Maroc.* (French only). Royaume du Maroc. [https://www.hcp.ma/Communique-de-presse-du-Haut-commissariat-au-Plan-a-l-occasion-de-la-Journee-mondiale-contre-le-travail-des-enfants\\_a2178.html](https://www.hcp.ma/Communique-de-presse-du-Haut-commissariat-au-Plan-a-l-occasion-de-la-Journee-mondiale-contre-le-travail-des-enfants_a2178.html)
- 5 The Youth Participation, Employment, and Social Enterprise project, led by Oxfam IBIS. For more information, please contact Asmaa Fakhoury, YPE Program Coordinator at Oxfam in Morocco: [asmaa.fakhoury@oxfam.org](mailto:asmaa.fakhoury@oxfam.org). Or contact Pauline Gregoire at [pauline.gregoire@oxfam.org](mailto:pauline.gregoire@oxfam.org). Read more about Casal dels Infants at <https://www.facebook.com/casaldelsinfantsdelmarroc/> and <https://www.casaldelsinfants.org/es> (in Spanish).

# OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 20 organizations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)