

Case Study

The Success of Introducing a Multi-Channel Life Skills Education in Public Schools in Morocco



IN MOROCCO, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FACES MANY CHALLENGES

Despite improvements in school enrollment, **dropout and repetition rates** remain high. The Government reports that in 2017-18, 269,000 children dropped out of school at the national level. According to the Moroccan High Commission of Planning (HCP), in 2016 only 8.5% of the national population aged 25+ reached the higher education level. This figure is higher among men (10.6%) than women (6.6%). Only 24% have reached a secondary level (mid or high school), while 44% has never attended school. **Illiteracy rates** also remain high: 57.9% of women and 28.2% of men are illiterate, and the illiteracy rate among children aged 10+ has reached 32%. **Delinquency and violence** inside classrooms present an ongoing challenge. In addition, **career pathways** are not clearly communicated and there's a **skills mismatch** between what students are taught and what the job market demands.

The strategies adopted so far in terms of school enrolment have tackled the problems of supply-and-demand (new school construction and recruitment) but have overlooked other equally important factors. Based on an IYF evaluation of the public school system, the following challenges were identified:

- School performance linked exclusively to grades and ranking.
- No time for extracurricular activities.

PROGRAM:

MCA Education

FOCUS:

Life Skills, Gender and Social Inclusion

LOCATION:

Fez-Meknes & Marrakesh-Safi regions, Morocco

PARTNERS:

MCA-Morocco, MCC

High dropout and repetition rates, delinquency and violence, no clear career pathways, and a skills mismatch are challenges facing the educational system in Morocco.

- Pedagogical practices lack innovation.
- No ongoing teacher training and support.
- Violence and lack of security in schools.
- Low parent engagement.
- Lack of motivation and self-confidence among students.
- Lack of career and life plan among students.

IYF STEPPED INTO THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEM TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The MCA Education project “implementation of life skills clubs and activities in targeted schools of Fez-Meknes and Marrakesh-Safi regions” was designed to address challenges facing the educational system in 56 secondary schools across these two regions.

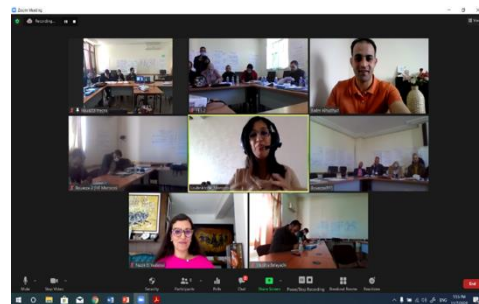
Over the one-year duration of the project, IYF worked with two Regional Authorities for Education and Training (AREF) under the Ministry of Education to improve the school performance of students, revitalize school life, and improve the relationship between the schools and other stakeholders in the environment. Teachers and Provincial District of Education representatives were equipped to help students overcome challenges and to face their futures with confidence, clarity, and excitement. This was achieved by integrating different versions of IYF’s flagship Life Skills curriculum— Passport to Success® (PTS)—for different settings.

- **PTS Education/Entrepreneurship** was used in Life Skills extracurricular clubs to : engage parents in the learning process; improve the pedagogical practices of teachers; lower illiteracy and dropout rates; provide students with life, civic, and professional/entrepreneurial skills; facilitate transition from secondary education to higher education or professional career.
- **PTS Sport (S4D)** was translated to Arabic and adapted for this project. Introduced in high school sport classes as part of the curriculum, S4D prepared students to make informed, responsible decisions regarding education and life, and to help reduce delinquency and violence at school.
- **PTS Traveler**, IYF’s online curriculum, was translated into Moroccan Arabic and adapted to the Moroccan educational context. It was accessible to all students in the 56 secondary schools to provide them with the employability skills needed in the job market. The dissemination of PTS Traveler Morocco was done after testing with a sample of students who reported full satisfaction with the App.

IYF’S MOROCCO TEAM INNOVATED DURING COVID-19

Training of Trainers (TOTs) for PTS Education & Entrepreneurship and S4D were planned to begin in March 2020. However, due to the state of emergency and

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lockdown measures mandated by the Government of Morocco, all in-person activities were put on hold. Undaunted, the IYF Morocco team quickly pivoted, creating a "hybrid" training model.

This was accomplished by grouping a limited number of teachers (12 maximum) in-person in their Provincial Districts of Education to attend remote trainings. These trainings were conducted by IYF Senior Trainers, using the Zoom platform with a "room" reserved for each TOT in parallel. The Senior Trainers were supported at the training venues by newly IYF-trained coaches and facilitators, who received a 2-day condensed PTS TOT in Rabat prior to that.

In total, six PTS TOTs and PTS Traveler orientation workshops, in addition to two S4D TOTs, were conducted using this "hybrid" training model. These took place simultaneously in the two regions (Fez-Meknes and Marrakesh-Safi) during a four-week period (October-November 2020), providing 148 teachers with training.

Despite some challenges related to internet connection and sound quality in some training venues, the four-day TOTs went well, thanks to the high level of proficiency of IYF Senior Trainers and the critical role of the in-person facilitators.

SUCCESS EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS AND BENEFICIARIES REPORTED OWNERSHIP OF THE DIFFERENT PTS PROGRAMS

As soon as the teachers received a PTS training (Education/Entrepreneurship, Sport, and Traveler), they started implementing the curriculums at their schools. IYF Morocco teams assisted them during coaching visits conducted in the 56 schools. This resulted in several positive outcomes:

- 56 PTS Education/Entrepreneurship extracurricular clubs created for 1800+ students (60% of whom were girls) across 2 regions.
- 3840 students (52% of whom were girls) provided with life skills through S4D activities in sports classes.
- 500+ students (50% of whom were girls) reached through the Online PTS Traveler adapted to the Moroccan educational context.
- 292 students (of the 6000 who benefited from one or more PTS interventions) completed ex-post online surveys and participated in focus group discussions.
- 96% reported that they embraced the life skills they learned in the PTS clubs and that their school performance, personal and civic behaviors, and vision for the future improved. They also reported increased self-confidence and feeling prepared for the transition after high school.

PTS programs also benefitted teachers. During virtual workshops for experience sharing, teachers reported that they:

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- Developed communication and listening skills to reinforce relationships with their students and parents.
- Improved ability to enhance gender and social inclusion in the school environment.
- Acquired new and innovative pedagogical skills that they applied in their own classes outside the clubs.
- Discovered the creative and artistic talents of their students, beyond school grades and rankings.
- Noticed **positive effect** on students' **academic performance** and **grades**, and a **regression of violence** and **delinquency** in schools.

Based on these positive outcomes in a short period of time (less than 3 months) the MCA-Morocco, Ministry of Education Representatives at Regional level, and the beneficiaries themselves request that the program be extended beyond its one-year duration to reach more young people in other schools and regions.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Life skills clubs and activities in the targeted schools of the Fez-Meknes and Marrakesh-Safi regions, through the various PTS curriculum versions translated and adapted into the Moroccan Educational context, has created a new dynamic within the school ecosystem.

The multi-channel implementation of PTS changed the behavior and pedagogical methods of the teachers trained and transformed the students in their classes and communities. And to sustain these outcomes and ensure continued impact, IYF has trained representatives of the Provincial Districts of Education as coaches to monitor the on-going implementation of the PTS clubs and S4D activities. This was a great example of IYF's systems change and scaling approach, which is part of our education reform model.

We are confident that sustaining and scaling the PTS programs in the Moroccan schools will equip tens of thousands more young people with the skills they need to develop their full potential, to face the challenges of school dropout and delinquency and to be prepared for an active life.

CONTACT

Nazik El Yaalaoui
Country Director - Morocco
n.elyaalaoui@iyfnet.org

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