



Active Labor Market Policies: Good Practices and Recommendations for North Africa

I- Introduction

Employment holds a pivotal place in the development policy agenda of the countries of North Africa. The North African subregion suffers from a structurally high unemployment rate: 12.1% in 2019 (International Labor Organization, ILO), one of Africa's lowest employment rates (40.1% vs. a continental average of 58.8% in 2019), low labor market participation (45.7% compared to 60.7% for the global average), particularly among women (22.1%), and one of the world's highest youth unemployment rates. According to ILO, youth Unemployment rate was 30.2% in 2019, compared to a world average of 13.6%. Meanwhile, the gender gap in unemployment rates remains high across the subregion both for adults and youth, with the female youth unemployment rate at roughly 39.6%.

The countries of the subregion did not reach sufficient economic growth during the 2010 decade to accommodate labor market inflows. The private sector remains underdeveloped and because of budget constraints, the capacity of the public sector to meet labor demand has remained limited.

As in other subregions of the continent, a large proportion of workers have insecure jobs, predominantly in the informal sector with low incomes and a weak social protection level. North Africa is also home to the fastest rate of population aging all over the continent. The proportion of the subregion's population over 60 years of age is expected to double in just over twenty years, thus posing major challenges for pension systems financed in large part by employee contributions in a small formal labor market.

Much of the human resource base of North African countries is lost owing to the low participation of women in the economy. The female-to-male ratio in labor force participation rate (22.1% for women against 69.5% for men) reflects the low participation of women in the economy and hence their low financial autonomy. Standing at 31.8% for the subregion, this ratio is the world's lowest, compared to the 63.6% world average. Recent years development does not point to a potential improvement in the near future.

Consisting mainly of agriculture, the primary sector accounts for a large proportion of the labor force in the countries of the subregion, with a regional average of 25.1%. The sector is beset by high underemployment and low productivity. The introduction of policies aimed at transferring the surplus jobs from the agricultural sector to higher value-added sectors, such as the agri-food industry, for example, could make the primary sector more competitive and boost industrial value added and labor productivity. The agricultural sector's underemployment and low productivity may be transformed into a labor pool where value added can be leveraged through intersectoral mobility.

The economic development of the subregion is contingent on improving the skills of its labor force and ensuring they are utilized optimally. The States of the subregion should revisit their employment policies and devise new, more integrated and inclusive strategies, based on the active participation of the key stakeholders and a stronger political will, able to reform modes of governance and mobilize greater resources to meet the expectations, particularly of youth and the most vulnerable populations. The initiatives introduced recently in some of the countries of the subregion are consistent with this policy and will most likely contribute to improving the impact of the existing programs.

The main objective of active labor market policies (ALMP) is to provide more employment opportunities to job seekers, ensure a better match between job openings and the profiles of the unemployed, and stimulate the creation of new jobs. Active policies can contribute to create more jobs, reduce unemployment and dependency on benefits. They provide unemployed people with the opportunity to find a job that matches their profile within the shortest possible time, and the support needed to reenter the labor market. The ALMPs will require recipients to fulfill specific obligations and to behave in a specific way, thus creating a relationship based on exchange, as efforts paid by the unemployed person are recognized as a benefit.

The main target groups of active labor market policies are the youth, the low-skilled workers and the long-term unemployed, confronting specific barriers to access the labor market. These policies also involve supporting those in classical unemployment.

ALMPs fit into four broad categories aimed at (i) improving the employability of workers through vocational training, (ii) promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment, (iii) supporting private sector job creation through wage subsidies, and (iv) introducing job search assistance programs designed to ease impediments to matching supply to current demand for jobs.

Vocational training

Education and vocational training are both key levers for the employment of young people and prerequisites for a balanced labor market. The aim of vocational training programs is to improve job seekers' skills and match them to business needs. This capacity building process strives to achieve long-term results and employment gains. Enhanced knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors of beneficiaries as a result of training impact the quality of human capital available in the short term while driving labor market dynamics. Assessments conducted in various countries analyzing different mechanisms and contents provide evidence of the gains in employment brought about by vocational training.

Typically, these programs are used for two target groups of beneficiaries: programs aimed at the general unemployed population, usually lasting a few months and encompassing a wide range of occupations. Another approach specifically targets low-income or "at-risk" youth, through programs combining classroom training and on-the-job training in the form of internships. The rationale behind such programs is that the lack of specific technical skills lay explain some people remaining unemployed, and that these skills can be effectively taught and learned in a fairly short period of time.

Wage subsidies

In a simplified labor market model, workers are paid according to their marginal productivity. As such, if young workers are less productive at baseline, their wages would naturally be low. However, the existence of a legal minimum wage and of constraints linked to subsistence impose a lower limit on the wages companies can pay for labor, and in addition, possible friction on hiring and firing may discourage companies from hiring in case uncertainty about a worker's productivity exists. The consequence is that people willing to work may be out of work, particularly inexperienced young people who are likely to be less able to bring their productivity to bear. Wage subsidies are therefore designed to tackle these reasons for unemployment.

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A temporary wage subsidy by the public sector to a worker will make it more profitable for a firm to hire that worker, resulting in an increase in employment for the time the subsidy remains in place. Subsidies thus provided can also have a long-term impact through: i) gaining experience which can then be used as a stepping stone to long term employment, ii) on-the-job learning contributing to increased productivity above the minimum wage, and finally, iii) businesses can gain a better understanding of their workers and their productivity levels at a lesser cost, and retain those matching the desired profiles.

The main purpose is to incentivize employers to hire workers from the target group by offering incentives to overcome the constraints of depressed labor demand. In the absence of otherwise adequate labor demand, subsidized employment is intended to either directly create employment (public works) or to encourage hiring (wage subsidies). In the case of public works, initiated typically in response to economic shocks, the target audience is often low- or semi-skilled workers. Long-term unemployed and young women, likely to suffer discriminatory social norms, are also a prime target audience.

Promoting entrepreneurship

Initiatives intended to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment provide financial and logistical support to unemployed people and/or non-working population willing to engage in economic activity. Most entrepreneurship initiatives come in the form of microenterprises. Such initiatives play an important role in promoting job creation in both formal and informal sectors. A primary challenge with this type of measure, however, is the difficulty faced by governments in ensuring continuous financial support to microenterprises, particularly in the informal sector.

Four main categories of interventions can be identified for ALMPs related to promoting entrepreneurship (Kluge and al, 2017):

1. Training for entrepreneurship, including to develop business ideas, market analysis, design business plans, marketing and/or accounting.
2. Access to finance, by connecting beneficiaries to financial service providers or providing direct financing as and when needed
3. Advisory services include business support services during the phases of business plan design, start-up and post-creation.
4. Market access support links beneficiaries to local, national and international markets.

ALMPs aimed at promoting entrepreneurship are focused on addressing start-up constraints but may also directly or indirectly seek to boost business growth thus contributing to a higher labor demand. Each category of entrepreneurship support tackles a different type of barrier, ranging from inadequate skills for starting a business, to lack of access to financing, lack of social networks and access to qualified advisory services, and limited understanding of and access to potential customers and markets.

Job search assistance

Many governments offer job coaching to support job applicants in the preparation of their applications, through the organization of recruitment fairs and forums to connect companies with unemployed job seekers. The costs associated with such services are often low and the cost-benefit ratios can be quite favorable. Such programs have however proven less effective in countries with large informal sectors, where employees tend to use alternative channels to find solutions, some North African countries being a case in point (Kluge and al, 2017).

That said, frictions caused by the search and match between supply and demand can be greater in developing countries, leading to more room for improvement. For many countries, the education systems may not be very efficient in serving the needs of the labor market by delivering content that is significantly different from the skills sought by employers. Obtaining information on vacancies can prove harder if workers and companies are

not all aligned, and the quality of matches can be worse if these are informal. Further improving this process could cut unemployment directly, as existing vacancies are filled, as well as indirectly, by lowering hiring costs to get companies to create more vacancies.

Job coaching addresses the constraints of job search and the lack of information about the labor market among workers and employers alike, preventing them from matching. The main focus of employment offices is obviously labor market intermediation, i.e., connecting labor supply (workers) with labor demand (employers).

II- A selective mapping of good practices in North Africa

This section presents a selection of four good practices in relation to the implementation of ALMP in North Africa. The successful intervention examples featured provide insight into the actions taken by some countries in the subregion towards employment promotion by categorizing them according to on their type and scope. The aim is to highlight some of the good practices introduced by the countries of the subregion and to pinpoint the lessons learned in order to disseminate them as part of an experience sharing process.

Recognizing the challenge associated with the issue of employment in general and youth unemployment in particular, the countries of North Africa have introduced a substantial institutional and programmatic arsenal to facilitate the integration of young men and women into the labor market and contribute to wealth creation.

The four best practices selected are:

1. Good practice 1: Public-private partnership for the training of human resources in the automotive sector in Morocco;
2. Good practice 2: Labor-intensive investment program to cope with the impact of the economic crisis in Egypt;

3. Good practice 3: Women's access to entrepreneurship development support services in Tunisia; and

4. Good practice 4: Bringing up to date the human skills in charge of managing public employment agencies in Algeria.

The choice of good practices, among others, is based on a set of criteria including their ability to address issues common to all countries of the subregion, relating in particular to fighting youth and female unemployment. Such experiences can also lend support to countries in their efforts to devise rapid and efficient mechanisms to respond to the effects on the labor market brought about by the Covid-19 crisis. Finally, the private sector's role in the design and delivery of active labor market policies seems to have succeeded, particularly with respect to the design of the content of vocational training.

Vocational training: The successful experience of public-private partnership of the Moroccan automotive sector

Vocational training activities are among the world's most common type of ALMP. They are being increasingly implemented in combination with other measures aimed at enhancing employability. Vocational training programs implemented by various countries in the subregion can be broken down into two types: initial training, which is open to all, and continuing education, with access being restricted according to a set of criteria. Typically, three training modes are used: residential training, alternate vocational training and apprenticeship training.

As a case in point, Morocco placed vocational training at the core of its efforts against youth unemployment and drew up a new roadmap for the development of the sector in 2019. This strategy aims to improve the quality of skills of graduates and further align them with job market needs, using a training offer jointly developed with professionals and adapted to current and future specificities of the different regions of the Kingdom. The OFPPT (Vocational Training and Occupational Promotion Bureau), a public organization overseeing vocational training in the country, is

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leading the implementation of its 2020-2024 roadmap business plan.

To strengthen the links between the labor market and the training sector and ensure greater alignment between the supply of training and business skills needed, Morocco has initiated an innovative partnership with the private sector in the field of vocational training to support its sectoral strategies. Training institutes have therefore been created in the flagship sectors of the country's industrial policy, including automotive, aeronautical and renewable energy industries. Established in 2011, the training institutes for the automotive industry (IFMIA) professionals, are public institutions run by private entities. Their purpose is to meet the skills needs of automotive sector companies.

These automotive industry training institutes have evolved into full-fledged players in the automotive sector. The automotive training center of Tangier-Med is run by Renault while those of Casablanca, Kenitra and Tangier Free Zone are managed by the Moroccan Automotive Industry and Trade Association (AMICA). The training packages have been developed together with automotive industry professionals and may be adapted to meet their changing needs.

The training offered by these institutes (IFMIA) includes: (i) pre-employment training, (ii) skills training, (ii) continuing education and refresher

training for industry professionals, and (iii) laboratory testing, participation in standardization work, technical assistance and business advisory services. A degree of flexibility and adaptability to the needs of industry professionals in the sector is achieved through the readiness of the institutes to introduce any other training course in the professions related to the automotive industry benefiting operators, technicians and middle managers, including procurement, quality, logistics, engineering, management, human resources and industrial management.

The survey conducted by the Vocational Training Department in two successive phases at 9 and 36 months post-graduation assessed the degree of placement of graduates. The survey also provides insights into employment rates, the characteristics of positions held, the unemployment rate and the match between skills training and business needs. The survey covered the recruitment pathway of graduates of the class of 2016. The first phase (9 months post graduation) was conducted in March 2017, and the results of the second phase (36 months post graduation), scheduled initially for July, have not yet been released.

According to this survey, the automotive and maritime fishing sectors reported the highest integration rates, i.e. an overall average integration rate of nearly 80% of graduates, all training modes combined.

Table 1: Integration rate of vocational training graduates per sector (class of 2016)

Sectors of activity	Integration rate			Total
	Residential training	Alternate training	Apprenticeship training	
Administration, Management and Trade	66.6	72.5	63.6	67.4
Agriculture	-	55.9	54.4	54.8
Handicraft	66.6	-	63.3	64.4
Household assistance	57.7	61.9	74.0	64.9
Audio-visual, Graphic Arts and Cinema	69.3	72.3	-	70.2
Construction sector	64.6	67.9	74.6	65.3
Hairdressing - Aesthetics	71.2	-	72.8	71.3
Leather	56.3			56.3
Hospitality and Tourism	69.5	78.6	72.1	71.7
MMEE ¹	62.7	68.3	72.8	65.3
Agribusiness	62.2			62.2
Automotive trade	62.3	74.9	86.6	79.1
Paramedical and Health sector	67.9			67.9
Maritime fishing	75.1	-	84.2	80.0
Textile and Clothing	67.6	-	85.4	69.4
ICTs	60.8	70.3	-	61.3
Transport and Logistics	73.7			73.7
Aeronautics	58.0	82.0	-	64.5
Total	66.1	70.4	68.6	67.1

Source: Report of activities of the Department of Vocational Training 2019, Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2020.

¹ Metallurgical, Mechanical and Electromechanical Industries

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As shown in the above table, the automotive sector performs particularly well under the apprenticeship training method, achieving the highest placement rate, with a graduate integration rate over 86%. The alternate training method also had a very high - 75% - placement rate, the second-best performance of all sectors, second only to the Tourism and Hotel industry.

In contrast to the alternate training and apprenticeship training modes, residential training offers fewer guarantees for integration into the labor market. Incorporating the phases of apprenticeship and work experience in the training curriculum actually improves the employability of the apprentices and increases their employability scores. This applies

particularly to the automotive sector, where the shift from residential to apprenticeship-based training increases the placement rate by over twenty percentage points.

Involving private sector operators in the management of these training centers clearly enables the adaptation of the training curricula to business needs as well as their adaptability over time. This ability to adapt to the needs of businesses insures a better professional integration of graduates. This good practice should be further examined in view of its transposal to other sectors of the Moroccan economy, other than the priority sectors as part of the current industrial policy, before it is shared with other countries in the sub-region.

Box 1:

The Mauritania ALMP institutional framework

The country's main ALMP programs are coordinated by the Ministry of Employment, Information Technology and Communication and the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (ANAPEJ), operating under its supervisory authority. Activities funded under these programs involve vocational training and micro-enterprise funding. Some of the programs funded by external donors offer assistance to job seekers. The country has no employment support program through wage subsidies.

Employment services are mainly administered by ANAPEJ, which operates a number of centers, located mainly in urban areas. Unemployed graduates, young people without qualifications, retirees, women and people with disabilities are the main target beneficiaries. ANAPEJ has six main areas of focus: (i) promotion of self-employment and micro-enterprise creation, (ii) labor market intermediation, (iii) provision of training, (iv) job placement and provision of other employment-related services, (v) awareness-raising and outreach, and (vi) monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects.

Although Mauritania has no national social fund, it does have a public investment banking institution that finances a fund dedicated to this purpose: the Caisse des Dépôts et de Développement (CDD) is an autonomous public institution under the Prime Minister's office in charge of investment and microfinance. The CDD has an annual operating budget of MRO 94 million and 13 outreach offices in rural and urban areas. Under its budget, the Employment Youth Fund (ESF) finances income-generating activities for unemployed graduates, poor segments in rural areas, and SMEs eligible for public credit (with state guarantees). Over the period 2012-2016, the FAE committed close to MRO 5.3 billion, making it an important source of funding for youth employment.

Wage subsidies: Egypt's labor-intensive investment program shows encouraging results

As is the case with vocational training, a number of countries in the subregion use wage subsidies to promote professional integration, particularly for young men and women. In this respect, Egypt introduced a far-reaching subsidized employment program under the public works (labor-intensive investment program). The program is being implemented by the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA).

Following the economic slump caused by the events of 2011, the country's employment situation has worsened, prompting the authorities to introduce an economic stimulus package. The package is centered around eight main programs geared to support and improve industries and services, and to develop infrastructure and public works by increasing their efficiency and expanding their scope. Emergency projects to promote employment through public works were implemented as part of this stimulus package. The primary aim of these projects is to tackle unemployment among low-skilled workers through the provision of short-term employment in the field of infrastructure, ensuring thereby a safety net and continued livelihood to the most economically disadvantaged segment of the population.

In partnership with the World Bank and the European Union, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA), formerly the Social Development Fund, designed and introduced a labor-intensive investment scheme consisting of two programs: i) the Emergency Labor Intensive Investment Project, financed by the World Bank to the tune of 200 million US dollars, and ii) the Emergency Employment Investment Project, financed by the European Union for an amount of 70 million Euros. The projects are aimed at providing short-term employment to unskilled and semi-skilled workers on infrastructure projects and projects providing access to basic infrastructure services for the target population of poor areas in Egypt.

The program involves the provision of subsidies by governorates and local authorities to projects consisting of small-scale infrastructure works: cleaning and protection of canals, and rehabilitation of schools, housing and rural roads. The projects are sub-contracted to private contractors. The project also offers the opportunity to support community services, including early childhood education services, awareness raising for maternal and child health, nutrition, population services, solid waste collection, and youth employment in rural and urban areas.

An impact assessment study using a social accounting matrix determined that the economic stimulus package employment impact was significant: it reduced the number of unemployed by 22-25%, diminished the unemployment rate by 3-4 percentage points, and averted an increase in the unemployment rate of 0.2-0.25 percentage points (Ernst and Sarabia, 2014). Regarding the specific impact of the labor-intensive investment program, a 2018 assessment commissioned by donors along with MSMEDA for projects carried out by two NGOs found that the training and employment support was successful in improving labor market performance for participants, with markedly better results for young women. The main impacts observed include:

- employment: in Upper Egypt, employment for the treatment groups was actually four times higher than that in the comparator group (59% vs. 15%), while in Cairo, the employment rate of the treatment group was 12 percentage points above that of the comparator group (47% vs 35%). These impacts are statistically significant, and well within the range of estimates for similar programs.
- income: income in both regions (Upper Egypt and Cairo) rose significantly. In Upper Egypt, income increased by about 58%, while in Cairo, the increase averaged 36%. These impacts are both statistically significant and in the upper range of estimates for comparable programs
- women's economic empowerment: impact assessment suggested that the benefits

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of the measures were greatest for women, revealing that although there is discrimination against women in the labor market, effective ways exist to help women participate actively in the labor market.

These very encouraging findings involve a form of active labor market policy that has often been criticized for its limited medium- and long-term effects. This is due to the fact that emergency employment programs are usually focused on the magnitude of the challenge at hand and tend to reduce the magnitude of the challenge over the very short term, failing to recognize the need for the sustainability of the effects of these programs. However, the Egyptian program assessment on beneficiaries, conducted 4 to 14 months after the program, found that the program succeeded in creating continuity of ex-post effects over a short, but relatively interesting period. A reassessment of findings using the same sample confirmed these findings and gave further insight into their long-term effect.

Private sector involvement, particularly NGOs, in the implementation of the program provides a more accurate field knowledge and a better match between the measures proposed and the real situation and needs of the target population. As noted in the previous section on vocational training, this constitutes a guarantee of success. As such, MSMEDA provided the general programming guidelines (e.g., target districts, eligibility criteria for youth, etc.) while giving NGOs a great deal of flexibility to choose the type of interventions best suited to the specific target group and the local context. One important point to note is that NGOs must meet clear employment targets, further emphasized through the use of performance-based contracts as a proportion of the value of the contract is actually paid after a third-party audit of employment outcomes (Alsayed, Hempel, Osman 2018).

Entrepreneurship promotion: Tunisia emerges as a leader in gender parity in access to entrepreneurship development support services

North African countries are losing a large part of their human resources as a result of the low participation of women in the economy. As noted earlier, the participation rate of women in the labor market is only 22% compared to close to 70% for men. Inadequate work opportunities in the countries of the subregion discourage the working-age population, particularly women, from searching for work, which leads them to preferring to stay out of the job market. This situation robs countries of a significant part of their value creation potential.

In Tunisia, in spite of the fact that women account for more than two thirds of higher education graduates, women's participation rate in the labor force is merely 24%, compared to a world average of over 46% (2020). Women also suffer from a higher unemployment rate: 22.7% compared to 13.8% for their male peers.

The consequence is that female entrepreneurship is low. According to the National Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs (CNFCE), approximately 18,000 women-led enterprises exist (acc. to pre-2011 estimates), making up less than 20% of the national total number (ILO 2016). CNFCE believes that nearly 25% of individual businesses are owned by women, a fair share of which are active in the least productive sectors (farming and handicraft) and in the informal sector.

One particularly interesting fact about the country's labor market situation, however, is the widespread participation of women in entrepreneurship development support programs. It is interesting to note that Tunisian women are relatively well represented in almost all entrepreneurship development support services provided by the National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI) or other national organizations. This is indicative of the desire of Tunisian women to engage in entrepreneurship and

create their own businesses and of the national authorities' willingness to support women-led projects.

ANETI offers training in entrepreneurship as part of its support for independent work and

promotion of small businesses. Nearly half of the participants in these trainings are unemployed graduates.

Table 2: Number of projects assessed and funded by ANETI in 2018, per type of beneficiary

	Projects assessed	Projects funded
Number of projects assessed	8,679	3,811
Women-led projects	4,497	1,871
Unemployed graduates-led projects	3,755	1,516

Source: 2018 Activity Report, ANETI.

As can be seen in the table below, women accounted for nearly 52% of the projects examined by ANETI in 2018, for a total of 4,497 files. Although women-led projects funded by the Agency account for more than 49% of the total, their funding rate is still below that of men-led projects.

Women also enjoy regular support from the national agency during the implementation of their investment projects, witness the 54% of the follow-up visits made by ANETI in 2018 have involved women-led projects.

Entrepreneurship training provided by ANETI in support of entrepreneurship development is geared particularly to unemployed graduates

having qualifications and skills deemed necessary to the success of projects. A good portion of this population is made up of young women (nearly two-thirds of graduates).

Actually, the gender breakdown of the beneficiaries of the different entrepreneurship training courses and other support services provided by ANETI points out that female participation represents more than 50% for most of these courses, such as the CEFE {Competency-based Economies through Formation of Enterprises} training, the "Manage your business better" (GERME) training and the management courses. Further details are provided in the table below.

Table 3: Beneficiaries of enterprise support services broken down per nature and type in 2018.

Support services	Women		Men		Total
	Numbers of beneficiaries	Percentage	Numbers of beneficiaries	Percentage	
Assistance program	1,385	57%	1,046	43%	2431
CAFE Program	3,631	69%	1,605	31%	5236
CREE {Create Your Company} program	22	45%	27	55%	49
GERME {Run your Company Better} Program	140	48%	155	52%	295
SPE {Practical on-the-job-training} Program	161	76%	51	24%	212
Total	5,339	67%	2,644	33%	7,983

Source: 2018 Activity report, ANETI.

While women enjoy relatively better access to entrepreneurship support services in the area of project development and management training, access to other types of services, particularly incubation, is relatively limited. By way of illustration, women's participation rate in the pre-incubation phase falls to 39% and to 20% in the incubation phase (ILO 2016). Business nurseries and incubators generally fail to match the support offered to beneficiaries to the specific needs of women.

In summary, by improving young women's access to higher education, Tunisia provides them with training to facilitate their integration into the labor market by

assisting unemployed graduates to access a full range of enterprise support services. The potential for improvement lies in expanding access to incubation services in business incubators. The countries of the subregion, particularly Algeria, Egypt and Morocco, with female labor force participation rate below Tunisia's, can build on Tunisia's experience in designing and implementing the necessary mechanisms to appeal to the entrepreneurial interests of young female graduates. A first step is to facilitate their access to business creation training services. This step must be supported by a life-cycle thinking approach integrating the role of the incubation centers

Box 2:**Tunisia's² ALMP institutional framework**The National Agency for Employment and Independent Work (ANETI)

ANETI is a public institution operating under the supervisory authority of the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment. Its primary mission is the implementation of the government's policy relative to the promotion of employment, particularly for young people. The Agency further stimulates the labor market at the national, regional, local and sectoral levels through its network of (91) local employment offices. ANETI also wishes to develop the supply of information on employment and professional qualifications intended for entrepreneurs and job seekers. The Agency also caters to workers laid off on economic and technical grounds and to populations with special needs.

The National Employment Fund (FNE)

The FNE is dedicated to facilitating the integration of young people, and more generally all job seekers. The Fund is structured around three components: improving job seekers' employability through internships and training, supporting entrepreneurship, and assisting in the placement of young people in the workplace.

The Tunisian Solidarity Bank (BTS)

Established in December 1997, BTS is committed to helping all segments of society participate in and «gain from the opportunities generated by the country's economic and social development effort.» The Bank provides financing for small projects to people traditionally excluded from the formal banking system through the provision of financing services under favorable terms and conditions.

The National Employment and Skills Observatory (ONEQ)

ONEQ focuses on the support to the decision-making process in the area of employment and qualifications. Its primary mission is to produce and develop statistics related to the labor market system, conduct and disseminate labor and skills analysis using relevant indicators and periodic reports on the labor market trends. To successfully carry out this mission, ONEQ must gather information on labor market conditions at the national, regional and sectoral levels, consistent with the laws and regulations governing the national statistical system. By analyzing the collected data, ONEQ provides key insights into the future of employment and work and the steps required to promote employment in the country.

² From « the employment policy and active programs on the Tunisian labor market», European Training Foundation, 2014

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Job coaching: using international expertise to upgrade the human skills of public employment agencies in Algeria

Public employment agencies are widely present in the countries of North Africa. They are responsible for job seeker registration, job vacancy registration, and work permit issuance. But research suggests that they are generally understaffed and lack resources, information systems, and have a mere clerical role in job seeker registration. The staff of the public employment services is also not sufficiently qualified to ensure balance between labor supply and demand.

The staff of public employment services is also not adequately qualified to ensure balance between the labor supply and demand. The assessment report on this reform program highlighted that, notwithstanding equipment and facility upgrades, the project had little impact on the delivery of labor-related services and counseling. This is mainly due to the mismatch between the staff of these centers and the mission statement of these centers (Semlali and Angel-Urdinola 2012).

Recognizing the importance of training human resources in charge of managing employment agencies, Algeria has recently introduced a modernization program of the National Employment Agency (ANEM). The modernization process comes within the framework of the national policy for the promotion of employment, steered by the "Action Plan for the promotion of employment and fighting unemployment" introduced in 2008. The implementation of this plan depends on the encouraging productive investment, promoting human resources through training, managing youth unemployment and finally, modernizing public employment service.

Sustaining the gains made in improving the skills of public employment agencies staff requires close monitoring by ANEM central services, follow-up of results obtained and adaptation of expected measures. As such, the modernization project was implemented initially for the benefit of the corporate entity to acquaint managers of the different division and central departments with the methodology before the staff of the various agencies in different governorates.

To build on the international experience and particularly the expertise of countries which started the modernization process of their public employment agencies, Algeria initiated a partnership through twinning activities and knowledge and know-how transfer with France.

The objective of the twinning launched in August 2018 was to support the modernization and build the capacities of the Algerian public employment service. It focused on three relevant areas:

1. Further develop the service offer of ANEM through the introduction of remote means for the users of public employment services,
2. Optimize the use of the tools available to ANEM to ensure better evolution of its services to job seekers, and
3. Implement an engineering approach to training intended to develop the skills of the business segments of ANEM.

Twinning has involved such services as training, case studies and support for close to fifty managers and about twenty advisors.

As indicated in an information note of the implementation support program of the Association Agreement between Algeria and the European Union, the project sparked a process of harmonization of

ANEM's activities with European standards and best practices. The Agency has a documented human resources process allowing it to structure its activity, serving as a reference framework for the organization of agencies, tools for the inventory of training needs, protocols for interviews and the identification of training needs, and educational kits for the training of future organization managers.

Such tools, along with training contents and other reference systems designed to improve the performance of the staff in charge of managing public employment agencies, will help improve the quality of services provided to beneficiaries leading

to a more effective integration into the labor market. Mainstreaming international experience, particularly through a twinning program, facilitates the shift from a conventional management and service delivery mode to a new mode which is consistent with international standards.

The entire North African subregion could benefit from the relevant expertise gained by Algeria through a bilateral or triangular expertise transfer program enabling interested countries to assess the lessons learned from this program and adapt them to their national background, to provide better quality job search support services in the subregion.

Box 3 :

The ALMP institutional framework in Morocco

In the area of ALMP, Morocco has introduced three main initiatives involving the relevant ministries: the National Integrated Strategy for Youth (SNIJ), the National Employment Strategy (SNE) and the National Strategy for the Promotion of Microenterprises. While targeting the real impediments in the labor market, these strategies are quite ambitious in view of the announced objectives.

Established in 2014, SNIJ seeks to reduce by one million the pool of unemployed youth over the period 2015- 2020, and by five million by 2030. The objective is to improve the training process for young people, make them more acquainted with the business world, through internships or by matching their skills with job market expectations.

SNE (2015-2025) aims to improve the different labor market indicators in Morocco by moving the employment rate up from 43.8% in 2013 (42% in 2016) to 46.2% in 2025, lowering unemployment rate to 3.9%, whilst maintaining the activity rate at 48%, and increasing productivity gains (3,6%). To achieve this, the strategy involves promoting job creation through the introduction of macroeconomic and sectoral policies (reform of the Office of Compensation, appropriate exchange rate policy, pro-growth sectoral strategies), improving SME financing and supporting VSEs on their way to formality. Halfway to the due date, the expected results seem hardly achievable.

Role of the National Agency for Employment and Skills Promotion (ANAPEC).

Established in 2000, the Agency provides training to job seekers to achieve a better match of their skills with the job market expectations.

Over the period 2001-2014, ANAPEC helped place 540,730 job seekers in different sectors of the Moroccan economy. The Agency provides support mainly to unemployed graduates, largely due to the limited knowledge of the services offered by the Agency amongst those with lower levels of education. A mere 18% of the unemployed using the services of ANAPEC had a bachelor's degree or lower.

The "ANAPEC 2020" vision was first introduced in late 2015 with a number of aggressive goals. These include, first of all, expanding the network of agencies, expected to jump from 74 currently in service to 146 by the end of 2020. Particular emphasis will be placed on young graduates and on the long-term unemployed, as well as on the rural world and female activity, while also developing tailored services for non-graduates. Introduced by Morocco, the regionalization process should allow for a better integration of territorial initiatives. By the end of 2020, ANAPEC aims to support 554,000 beneficiaries, with 445,000 job seekers placed under general labor contracts, either exempted or subsidized. In order to consolidate the momentum of job creation, the country draws on its sectoral strategies (Industrial Acceleration Plan, Green Morocco Plan, etc.)

III- Conclusion

This paper seeks to provide lessons to help the countries in the subregion to develop and implement effective ALMPs, using successful sub-regional and international experiences. The paper addresses the knowledge gap associated with this issue and outlines action priorities to make it more effective.

Faced with the serious challenge of unemployment and the necessity of creating decent jobs for young women and men, the countries of North Africa embarked on a significant number of national and territorial initiatives. Some of these initiatives represent good practices likely to be transposed onto other economic sectors and shared on the sub-regional scale.

The paper identifies four good practices implemented by the countries of North Africa. The delegated management of training centers in the Moroccan automotive sector to private operators, through a public-private partnership, is an example worth duplicating. The creation of a considerable number of jobs in the area of public works (Emergency Labor Intensive Investment Project and Emergency Employment Investment Project) in Egypt

has helped to respond to an emergency situation and to promote the economic integration of young people. The Tunisian experience of gender parity in access to entrepreneurship support services in Tunisia and the Algerian experience in improving human skills in public employment agencies need to be shared among member countries of the subregion for an optimum dissemination and promotion of national experiences. The experience of other member countries will undoubtedly benefit the quality of common knowledge about successful employment creation policies.

The extent of the challenge is such that territorial and national experience sharing has become a necessity and an incentive for the development of more suitable and efficient programs, despite the existence of differences in the economic and productive structures of the involved countries.

The countries of North Africa must also be mindful of the lessons learned from the international experience, in a spirit of continuous learning and adaptiveness. The few examples given above surely provide useful insights for consideration by decision-makers.

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