

## A new learning agenda for the realization of SDG 4 in MENA

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



### MOROCCO

#### The Personal Project



The **Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative** has advanced at country level through national consultations and in-depth mappings undertaken in most of the MENA countries. LSCE is about reimagining what we learn and how we learn, and promoting open learning systems that put life skills at the core of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning agenda at all levels. This requires reform of learning contents, and teaching methods, curriculum, delivery and assessment systems, as well as the institutional environment in which learning takes place.

Engagement with this agenda may be approached from a different angle in different countries, depending on where the country is, and what provides a good entry point to push for the larger LSCE agenda.

In the case of Morocco, the focus has been on strengthening young people's skills in schools, and providing them with support for their personal and professional development, including life skills education, career guidance and support for their transition from school to work.

## Equipping youth with skills and opportunities for an active civic and economic life

Morocco's youth make up for 27 per cent of the country's population.<sup>1</sup> But the level of exclusion is high for young people in key domains of education and employment as well as political and civic engagement. Approximately 300,000 adolescents and youth drop out of school each year, without receiving a secondary school certificate.<sup>2</sup> Over 193,000 children aged 7 to 17 years old are engaged in child labour.<sup>3</sup> One in every five Moroccan girls is married before the age of 18. Three out of ten, or 1.7 million youth are not in employment, education or training (NEET); among them, three out of four are female.

With 9 million adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24,<sup>4</sup> there is a clear recognition of the need to address these challenges through education, and empower youth to fully engage in the economy, society and public life, and to champion their own interests.

To this end, the Ministry of Education (MOE), in collaboration with UNICEF and national partners, has been working on a number of education interventions focusing on secondary schools that support and encourage children and youth in a journey of personal empowerment by providing learning experiences that foster life skills and civic engagement. These interventions are informed by, and reflect the vision of the LSCE Initiative, and enable a constructive transition from childhood to adulthood, and from school to work.

A successful example that combines life skills development with career guidance is the **Personal Project** programme. Introduced in 2014, the programme aims to prepare children from an early stage to better understand the different professional options, and to equip them with the skills needed to pursue a future – by becoming active agents of their own personal and professional development.

### The Personal Project

The Personal Project consists of 10 activities for students at grade 6 (last grade of primary school) that take students through a journey of learning and personal development by reflecting on the different opportunities, and educational and vocational paths available to young students at community level.

These extra-curricular activities promote core life skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, self-management and decision making along with promoting responsibility and a desire to self-learn.

The Personal Project initiates a process of reflection, and adopts a step-by-step approach that links schools with surrounding communities and fosters active participation of children and parents. The methodology builds on project-based learning including dedicated sessions undertaken inside schools and is based on the use of different methods and approaches (e.g., lessons, projects, visits, etc.) including learning resources for students and training manuals for teachers.

### Life Skills and Citizenship Education interventions in Morocco

The LSCE Initiative is currently being promoted through different entry points in Morocco, including the integration of core life skills into national curriculum at secondary level as well as the development of a second-chance education model for out-of-school adolescents to support them to go back to school, or transition to work.

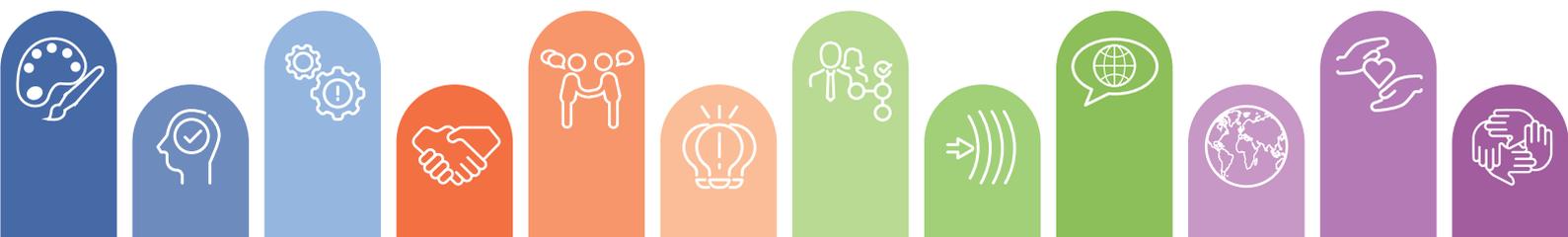
Current efforts are also informed by a promising career guidance programme launched with the overall objective of ensuring a swift transition from school to the labour market at an early stage of the curriculum.

<sup>1</sup> High Commission on Planning – General Census 2014

<sup>2</sup> Direction of Strategy, statistics and planning, Ministry of Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research

<sup>3</sup> High Commission on Planning, Employment Survey 2015

<sup>4</sup> High Commission on Planning – General Census 2014



## Learning activities of the Personal Project

<p><b>1. Key steps for developing a Personal Project</b></p> <p>Describes a set of activities to prepare children to think and structure their opportunities</p>	<p><b>6. Dream job and personality</b></p> <p>A set of activities to match personal dreams and preferences for a profession</p>
<p><b>2. My personal environment – Who am I? What will I do?</b></p> <p>Describes a set of activities to discover opportunities for education and training pathways in the school area, and group work to explore their interests</p>	<p><b>7. Learn about the trades and employment pathways</b></p> <p>Game activity to explore professions in depth including meeting employed adults</p>
<p><b>3. Utility of the school</b></p> <p>A set of activities to explore and discover relevance of what children are learning and experiencing within school</p>	<p><b>8. My strengths and weaknesses</b></p> <p>A set of activities enabling children to discover their strengths and weaknesses in relation to their preferred education and job pathway</p>
<p><b>4. School disciplines and professions</b></p> <p>A set of activities to discover ties between school-taught subjects and professions</p>	<p><b>9. Entrepreneur in my class</b></p> <p>Inviting professionals within the classroom and enabling interaction with children</p>
<p><b>5. Future learning pathways</b></p> <p>Group work activities to discover possible education pathways offered by the education system and to choose timely activities</p>	<p><b>10. Jobs forum</b></p> <p>Children workshops to discover linkages between education pathways and categories of jobs based on provided material from school counsellors</p>

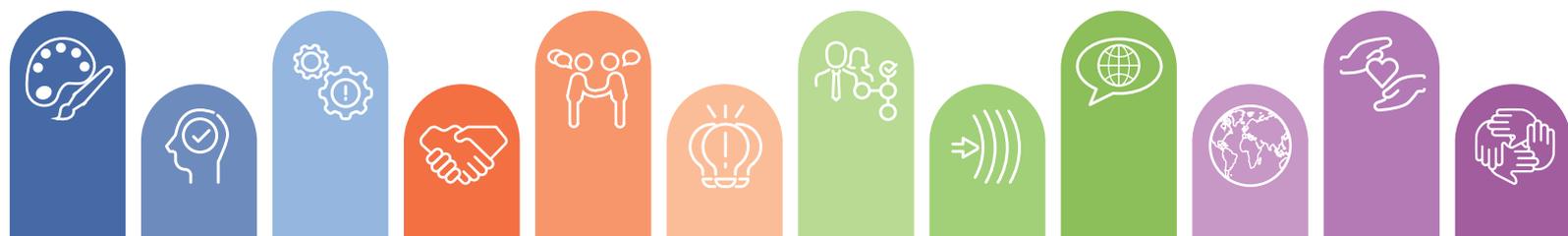
Each student's journey continues in secondary school through the adoption of a student 'Portfolio' promoting vocational disciplines by providing support in developing vocational projects based on local market needs. The goal is to create an engaging, welcoming and participatory school environment for students aged 11 to 18 to enable them to acquire core life skills.

This continuum of support, starting from grade 6 to upper secondary, empowers children and youth to develop their own professional projects based on **a structured learning journey**.

### Example of an exercise as part of the Personal Project

In school, children are introduced to the work of firefighters. They discuss in groups the nature of the profession and its environment. They engage in activities that foster a set of personal skills and competencies that resonate with the skills needed in this profession. They receive information about the path and trainings that are required to become a firefighter. They also learn specifications of the job in terms of requirements, salary, promotions and career development by exploring and discussing opportunities offered to become firefighter in their geographic area.

During the exercise, children work in groups to come up with a set of questions to ask when they visit the fire station. During the visit they reflect on their assumptions and through interactions with the station personnel, including fire fighters, they have an opportunity to verify and confirm their assumptions and learn more.



## Results, lessons learnt and next steps

The Personal Project programme has shown tangible results for children, teachers and school communities. The programme was successful, significantly changing parents' and students' attitudes toward what the school could do for children to help them pursue their dreams. This approach has strengthened the linkages between formal education and vocational training systems as it:

- Strengthened linkages between school-based and extra-curricular activities
- Reinforced existing school-based governance structure (school committees, etc.)
- Enabled students to better plan for their careers and adopt relevant vocational pathways

The programme has not only demonstrated **significant results for children** in terms of the acquisition of life skills and ability to make informed career decisions, but also an impact in terms of increasing school participation, reduction in school drop-out rates, particularly among disadvantaged children, as well as improving learning outcomes. An evaluation conducted in 2016 among 150 students who benefited from the Personal Project programme in vulnerable rural areas of Touama further highlighted how **63 per cent of targeted children were able to define future professional development** and adopt new vocational pathways.

Furthermore, the programme gave teachers a clearer idea about the areas of pedagogy needing reinforcement, particularly in relation to the promotion of active learning. It also provided them with concrete examples they would use in class to make subject matters more relevant to a student's life.

After the successful piloting of the model, the Personal Project is now being **updated and expanded to cover one earlier grade (grade 5)**. A larger-scale pilot experience has been launched in 2018, covering 300 schools across Morocco for a total of 36,000 children benefiting from the programme. The evaluation of the results will enable and inform the scaling-up of this successful life skills and career guidance programme across all schools in Morocco expected in 2019.

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