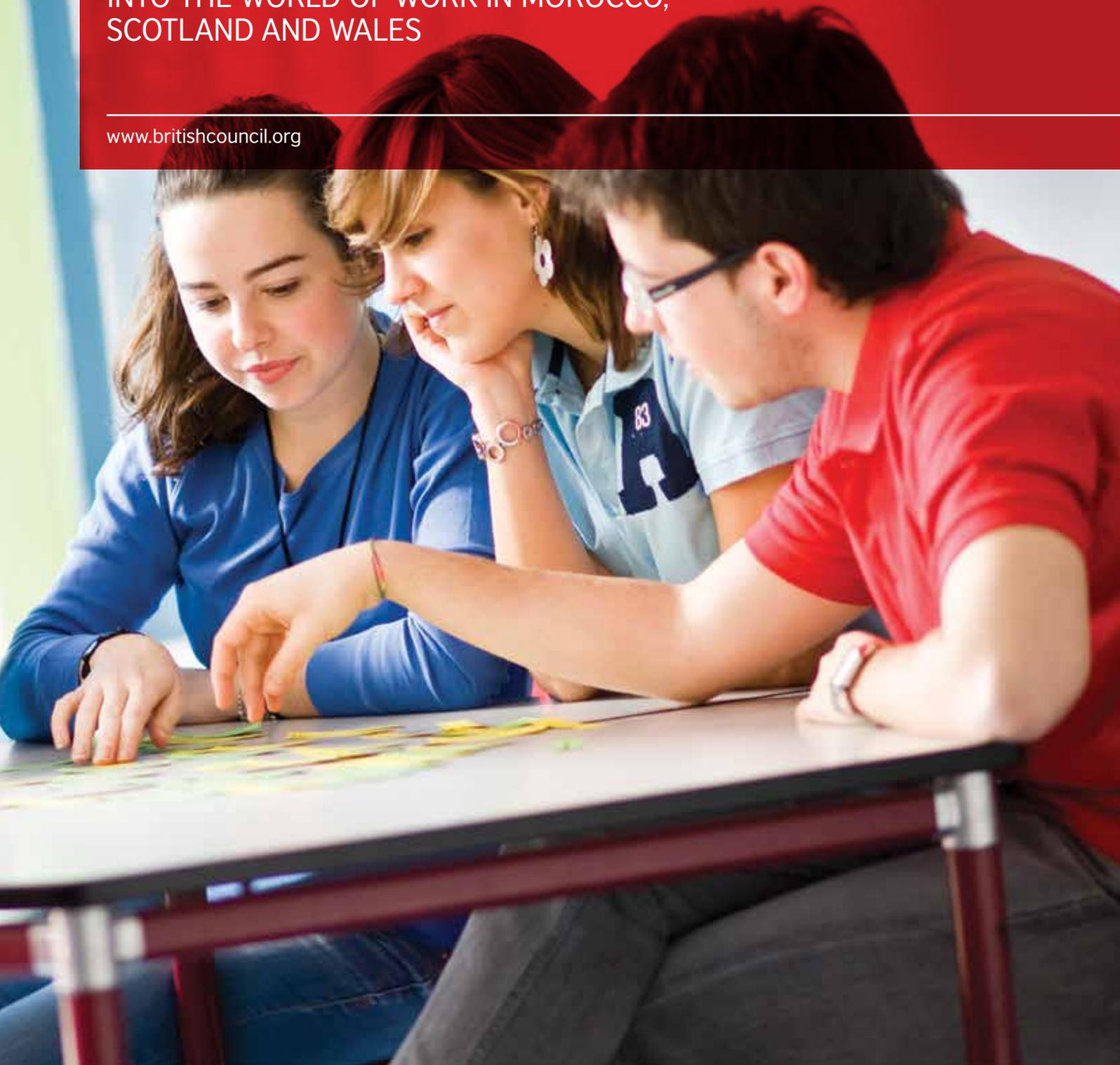


SKILLS FOR WORK SKILLS FOR LIFE

INTEGRATING MARGINALISED YOUNG PEOPLE
INTO THE WORLD OF WORK IN MOROCCO,
SCOTLAND AND WALES

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Many countries around the world are experiencing challenges with high youth unemployment and young people facing long-term joblessness, poverty and isolation from mainstream society.

IMPROVING THE LIFE CHANCES OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE

To tackle this, the British Council initiated a programme to bring together organisations in Scotland, Wales and Morocco to support vulnerable young people. As a result, 10 out the first 20 participants have entered employment and a further 200 are signed up, with the backing of the Moroccan government.

By sharing experiences and expertise with each other, the international partners were able to change lives. For example, one UK participant broke a generations-old pattern of joblessness while others said they felt valued for the first time in their lives. One participant commented that *'this job will definitely allow me to build my life and rely on myself in the future.'*

For employers too, the fact that the young people have been equipped with workplace skills has meant increased efficiency and productivity. Mustapha El Felahu Idrissi, a restaurant manager in Morocco who employed one of the participants from the pilot project, said that *'the experience is very positive for us. We really believe that every young person should be given opportunities in our Moroccan society.'*

Meanwhile, Project Manager Luz Maria Ostau De Lafont explained the programme's success by focusing on the *'young people from the project who have gone on to secure employment in hotels, restaurants and as mechanics. We have been able to ensure that their skills meet the needs of employers and the project has succeeded in changing the perception of employers about young people in vulnerable situations.'*

High youth unemployment is a challenge facing many countries around the world. For young people in some of the poorest communities, the difficulties they face in securing work can seem insurmountable.

LIMITED PROSPECTS

Youth unemployment in Morocco is currently 22 per cent for men and 38 per cent for women (compared to the global average of 13 per cent as published by the International Labour Organisation in 2015) with the Moroccan government's youth integration strategy tending to focus on unemployed graduates.

This leaves marginalised young people with limited opportunities to break the cycle of deprivation - a situation shared by Wales and Scotland where around 5 per cent of 16-18 year olds are classified as NEET (not in education, employment or training).

The British Council and its partners believe that the key to creating stable and economically resilient societies is to ensure that all young people can become economically active citizens by having access to employment opportunities.

The percentage of Not in Employment Education and training in partner countries (including Morocco) is almost double the European Union average – accounting for around 30 per cent of the youth population aged 15-29. European Training Foundation report March 2014

'A key aim of the project was to create equality between young people in difficulty and young people in general.'

Jafer from BAYTI, which means 'my house' in Arabic, is a nongovernmental organization based in Casablanca Morocco

Yassine Nahime is an apprentice in one of Casablanca's leading restaurants. After leaving school with no qualifications, he found it hard to get a job. In 2014 he benefited from the skills training at BAYTI and one day hopes to be a head chef.



IMPROVING LIFE CHANCES

Through international partnerships, the programme brought together three colleges: Coleg Gwent, Coleg y Cymoedd and West Lothian College, a Moroccan NGO working with vulnerable young people in disadvantaged regions and Aid, Exchange and Development (AIDA). Together, they aimed to tackle some of the challenges facing their communities and improve young people's life chances in Scotland, Wales and Morocco by giving them the skills for employability.

To do this, they set out to ensure that the skills delivered by training providers matched the skills that employers actually need.

Young people in Morocco make up 30 percent of the population, and one tenth of the region's total youth population. Their levels of exclusion are high: a recent, innovative World Bank survey revealed that 49 per cent of Moroccan youth are neither in school, nor the workforce.

World Bank 2012

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND SOFT SKILLS

Taking a multi-faceted approach, the partnership initially engaged with local employers around the issue of disadvantaged young people. By facilitating open discussion, employers were given an opportunity to share their expertise and insights and also explore where skills training would be most accurately targeted.

Beyond this, it also provided the chance to dispel some of the negative perceptions of vulnerable young people and their employability.

The outcome was a soft-skills based curriculum that would support young people to succeed within the workplace by enabling them to interact effectively with others which, prior to launch, had never existed in Morocco before.

From this, the partners created a pre-employment curriculum - piloted simultaneously in Morocco, Wales and Scotland – that was designed to meet the needs of both the young people and their potential employers. At the same time, participants were given advice and support to increase their self confidence and enable them to make informed career choices.

THE VALUE OF SHARING

The shared benefit to the partner organisations was captured through a Virtual Learning platform whereby they could exchange thoughts, ideas and methodologies.

As Daniel Evans, Head of Commercial and Enterprise at West Lothian College explained *'We learned a lot from our Moroccan counterparts – how they liaise with employers and how the training providers stay with the young people after the course has finished to ensure that they are properly bedded into their job. We have adopted some of these approaches and it has really made a difference to our outcomes.'*

His colleague, Diane Mitchell who is responsible for the college's employability programmes and modern apprenticeships added that *'This partnership has allowed us to add an additional 12 to 16 weeks of support to our training and that's improved our own outcomes for moving young people into employment. We also realised that our Welsh partners were using online resources much more than we were, so we are now bringing this into our programme too.'*

NEW PARTNERSHIP MODELS FOR CHANGE

The positive impact of programme delivery in West Lothian is reflected in the increased number of young people who have been able to find work and the close working relationship with its local Job Centre Plus. By recognising a wider potential partnership network, they have been able to identify mechanisms for enhanced participant support, which includes access to relevant and tailored careers advice and improved visibility within the job market.

The college responded to the specific challenges facing young people today by rethinking traditional delivery methods. To increase success among disadvantaged young people, they introduced a roll-on, roll-off programme which meant that young people were not left waiting for support and were able to join the programme straight away.

As a result, retention and engagement have risen and around three people per week are enrolling onto the programme, immediately benefitting from the learning and support. Through this responsive model, young people are showing increased self confidence and motivation which is increasing their chances of successful transition from employment to work.

Project at a Glance: An international collaboration to provide employment skills to disadvantaged young people and support economic development in vulnerable communities.

Who:

20 in the initial pilot and a further 200 the following year.

Where:

Areas of youth unemployment in Morocco, Scotland and Wales

Why:

To give vulnerable young people the opportunity to gain valuable employment skills and life skills. To support them to gain jobs and become economically active citizens.

Impact of the project:

Prior to the project, an average of 5 per cent of disadvantaged young people from all these areas were able to secure jobs or go into apprenticeships or further education. Following the project, an average of 70 per cent of the young people involved got jobs or went into apprenticeships or further education. 75 per cent said they felt more confident about the future.

Partners in the project:

- BAYTI: a Moroccan NGO working with vulnerable young people
- AIDA: a Spanish NGO
- Coleg y Cymoedd in Wales
- Coleg Gwent in Wales
- West Lothian College in Scotland

Benefits to the partners:

- Nurturing innovative approaches to skills development, including in the area of curriculum development and employer engagement for disadvantaged young People.
- Building relationships with other organisations from Morocco and the UK
- Helping participating organisations build a presence and exchange of expertise.
- Development of national skills strategies in ways that impact positively on the skills and employability of young people.

What made the biggest difference:

- Consulting with employers to find out what they need
- Supporting young people to gain skills for employment as well as soft skills
- Providing high quality advice and guidance to young people
- Sharing best practice between partners and building staff capacity

DANNI: GAINS MODERN APPRENTICESHIP

Danni left school in 2013 feeling that she didn't want to continue in the class-room environment. During the year that followed Danni applied for many jobs and apprenticeships without success. In 2014, while working as a part-time cleaner, Danni applied for a place on West Lothian College's Travel and Tourism Course but she was unsuccessful.

However, this was just the start of new journey for Danni. West Lothian College recognised that Danni needed support with her endeavours and contacted her to ask whether she would consider joining the Certificate for Work Readiness – Ways to Work programme. Initially Danni was unsure about how the programme could benefit her, but she realised that it was a way to gain the confidence and experience she lacked to find work and so decided to 'give it a try'. Returning to a learning environment was daunting for Danni, however, once back in the learning environment she started to relax and enjoy the experience, completing her work placement within the college's Workforce Development Department. Since successfully completing the programme Danni has secured a Modern Apprenticeship with West Lothian College in Business Administration and she is now studying for an Scottish Vocational Qualification in Business Administration.

Danni, who is now 18, said: *'I was unsure at first but now I would encourage anyone to give it a try too. The programme is beneficial. It can boost your confidence and put you on the right track for the skills that employers are looking for.'*

BUILDING ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Building on the pilot project's success, the partners have looked to the British Council to help invest in scaling up the project, aiming to reach over 200 disadvantaged young people in the next year.

Based on the impressive success rate so far, the programme is being rolled out to the national network of Centres run by the Ministry of Youth and Sport in Morocco. In Wales, the programme is being aligned with the government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. The partners will also set up a database of employers willing to work with vulnerable young people and target a number of key vocational sectors, including agriculture, retail and security.

Demonstrating the project's impact in Morocco, Wales and Scotland is key to securing longer-term commitment from governments and employers, meaning that it can be broadened out to larger numbers of young people. Though communicating the highest level pilot project outcomes, and with the support of the Moroccan government, this is getting closer to reality.

More widely, the vision is to share this model of success beyond the existing partnership network in order to influence the participating country's skills strategies.



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