

Youth and Women's Employment in Algeria: Barriers and Opportunities

Ashley Barry, Dina Dandachli



The contents and views expressed in this report are the sole responsibility of Education For Employment and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Middle East Partnership Initiative or the US Department of State.

© Education For Employment, 2020

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Middle East Partnership Initiative for its support of the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project. The authors would also like to thank Rita Álvarez Martínez, Abbey Walsh, Lauren Johnson, Angelica Giangreco Biancheri, Salvatore Nigro, and Aniss Benyoucef for their contributions to this study.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	7
Introduction	19
Methodology	25
The Algerian Labor Market: An Overview	29
Study Findings	41
Case Studies	83
Conclusions & Recommendations	103

Abbreviations

- ADS** – Agence de Développement Social (Social Development Agency)
- IAIG** – Indemnité pour les activités d'intérêt général (Allowance for Community Service Activities)
- AMC** – Arab Mediterranean Countries
- ANEM** – l'Agence Nationale de l'Emploi (National Employment Agency)
- ANGEM** – l'Agence Nationale de Gestion du Micro Crédit (National Agency for Management of Microcredit)
- ANSEJ** – l'Agence Nationale de Soutien à l'Emploi des Jeunes (National Agency for Supporting Youth Employment)
- APC** – Assemblée populaire communale (Communal People's Assembly)
- BAYF** – Building Algerian Youth's Future Project
- CDD** – Contrat à durée déterminée (Fixed-Term Contract)
- CDI** – Contrat à durée indéterminée (Permanent Contract)
- CNAC** – Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Chômage (National Unemployment Insurance Fund)
- CNAS** – Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Sociale des Travailleurs Saliés (National Social Insurance Fund for Salaried Employees)
- CNEPD** – Centre National de la Formation et de l'Enseignement Professionnels à Distance (National Center for Distance Learning)
- CTA** – Contrats de travail aidé (Subsidized Work Contracts)
- DAIP** – Dispositif d'Aide à l'insertion Professionnelle (Vocational Integration Assistance Mechanism)
- DAIS** – Dispositif d'Activités d'Insertion Sociale (Social Inclusion Activity Mechanism)
- EADN** – l'Entreprise d'Appui au Développement du Numérique (Support Organization for Digital Development)
- EFE** – Education For Employment
- ENP** – Ecole Nationale Polytechnique (National Polytechnic School)
- ENSM** – Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Management (National School of Management)
- ISO** – International Organization for Standardization
- MENA** – Middle East and North Africa
- MEPI** – Middle East Partnership Initiative
- MESRS** – Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research)
- MFEP** – Ministère de la Formation et de l'Enseignement Professionnels (Ministry of Vocational Education and Training)
- MPTTN** – Ministère de la Poste, des Télécommunications, des Technologies et du Numérique (Ministry of Post, Telecommunications, Technology, and Digital).
- MSNFCF** – Ministère de la Solidarité Nationale, de la Famille et de la Condition de la Femme (Ministry of National Solidarity, the Family and the Status of Women)
- MTESS** – Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Sécurité Sociale (Ministry of Employment, Labor, and Social Security)
- NEET** – Not in employment, education, or training
- OECD** – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- PID** – Programme d'Insertion Sociale des Jeunes Diplômés (Social Insertion Program for Young Graduates)
- STEM** – Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- TVET** – Technical and vocational education and training
- USTHB** – Université des Sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumediene (University of Science and Technology Houari Boumediene)

Executive Summary



Much like the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region as a whole, Algeria is home to a large youth population. Totalling 22.7 million people, youth under 30 make up 53% of the Algerian population.¹ The size of Algeria's youth population is a strength the country can leverage for economic growth if working-age youth are able to pursue job opportunities and contribute to their nation's economy. However, with unemployment rates of 28% for young men and 48% for young women,² today's Algerian youth face challenges in joining and remaining in the workforce. If Algeria effectively addresses the underlying challenges driving youth and women's unemployment, the Algerian economy and society will reap significant gains.

COVID-19 and associated recovery efforts are likely to affect the employment landscape in Algeria and across the globe. As of the writing of this report, Algeria is undertaking gradual reopening efforts. The longer term effects of the pandemic on youth employment in the country are not yet clear, but efforts to promote job creation in the

private sector as part of the recovery are likely to benefit youth employment.

A key contributor to youth unemployment in Algeria is the skills gap: youth completing higher education do not leave the university equipped with the skills to succeed in the private sector, especially soft skills. While young university graduates lament a lack of suitable job opportunities, employers face challenges in filling open positions. This mismatch is driven by the divergence between the orientation of the Algerian educational system and the private sector.

In order to help address the challenges youth face in entering and succeeding in the job market, Education For Employment (EFE), with the support of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), launched the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project. The pilot project provided soft skills training to 616 youth under the Job Training and Placement (JTP) component, of whom 567 secured jobs following training



completion. In addition, employability and job search training was provided to 100 public university students who had not previously had access to this type of job market-oriented training. The project was heavily focused on engaging the private sector to design tailored training content and secure job opportunities for youth following training completion.

The purpose of this study is to document results and key learnings from the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project and to advance knowledge of youth and women's employment in Algeria, told through the perspectives of youth and private sector employers. EFE asked project graduates to share their perspectives on youth and women's employment in Algeria via interviews and focus groups, and project employer partners to share their perspectives through interviews. This approach provided candid opinions from real people, giving life to the reality behind the statistics. A total of 118 youth participated in interviews, 43 youth participated in focus groups, and 12 employers participated in interviews. Topics addressed in the study include barriers and supportive factors for youth and women's employment, the role of family in young people's professional decisions, youth opinions regarding employment potential in the digital economy, youth plans for the future, and youth attitudes regarding the potential to build careers for themselves in Algeria.

The Algerian Labor Market

The Algerian labor market is characterized by high levels of public sector employment, regulation, low private sector job creation, and informality. The market is also characterized by high levels of youth and women's unemployment and low levels of female labor force participation. As of 2019, youth and women's unemployment reached 31% and 21%, respectively. Although women's labor

force participation has increased slightly over the past 20 years, it remains low at just 15% for women aged 15 and older, and only 8% for female youth – less than a quarter of the participation rates for men in each age group.³

Algeria experienced a period of uncertainty following the resignation of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 2019. The election of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in December 2019 is likely to moderate this uncertainty, which could create an environment in which private sector companies are confident in accelerating hiring activities. According to the World Bank, current growth sectors in Algeria include commercial services, industrial construction, and public works,⁴ which aligns with EFE's analysis of the Algerian labor market in 2019. These growth sectors may change depending on the ways in which COVID-19 affects different industries.

Active labor market programming in Algeria has taken many forms over the years, including wage subsidies, trainings, apprenticeships, and job matching. The Algerian government, international NGOs, local Algerian organizations, and multilateral institutions have implemented a variety of programming models in the country. The Algerian government has made significant efforts to reduce unemployment through initiatives that aim to integrate individuals into the labor force and provide support for entrepreneurship projects. Evaluations can be used to determine the effectiveness of current programs and to inform future programming.

Youth Employment: Barriers and Supportive Factors

Youth face barriers when attempting to enter the Algerian workforce for the first time. These barriers include low availability of jobs where youth live, especially for youth living outside of Algiers

and other large cities, the mismatch between skills taught in Algerian educational institutions and those that the private sector demands, insufficient soft skills and work experience to secure a job and succeed in the workforce, and a lack of understanding of job search approaches. In addition, the mismatch between youth expectations and workplace realities forms a significant barrier to youth retention.

A key theme that emerged from interviews with employers was the difficulty they experience in finding entry-level hires who match the desired profiles and also have a sense of shared values with the company. However, even when employers find youth who match the desired profiles, they sometimes lack needed soft skills and professionalism, creating challenges for retention. Interviewed employers pointed to the theoretical and academic nature of university training as a key driver of this challenge, explaining that it is not oriented toward preparing youth to meet the needs of the private sector.

In addition to the skills gap, several employers also pointed to young people's lack of work experience as a key barrier for them securing employment opportunities. Youth interview results indicate that youth also believe insufficient professional experience is a top reason why they have not been able to secure jobs. Overall, study results indicate that a continued focus on orienting youth toward effective job search methods and preparing them to succeed in interviews remains an important component of any youth workforce development programming in Algeria. In addition, study results suggest that professional practicum and internships may provide valuable opportunities for young people to gain needed professional experience that will help them secure jobs following graduation.

Study results reveal a mismatch between youth expectations and what employers offer. In particular, discrepancies exist in the level of responsibility youth expect to have in their positions and the speed of advancement post-hire, as well as the salary offered. Employers feel at a loss about how to approach this challenge, as they believe youth lack perspective and overemphasize the importance of salary without considering their larger career vision.

While it is clear that youth likely could use more information regarding the realities of the workplace, it is also true that at least some youth are facing challenges in securing a living wage and stable employment conditions. The recent increase in the monthly minimum wage from 18,000 to 20,000 DA (approximately 155 USD) and the removal of income tax requirements for income under 30,000 DA will likely help ease these pressures.⁵

In addition to salaries, employment contract types affect the extent to which youth feel stable in their employment arrangements. Some employers who lamented low youth retention rates are using fixed-term contracts (CDD) as their primary hiring mechanism, which are associated with higher turnover and lower wages.⁶ Employers who are interested in lengthening employee tenure should consider offering youth permanent contracts (CDI). In addition, employers should actively engage youth to understand the conditions that would make them feel supported within the workplace. Youth, for their part, should enter into employment relationships with an eye toward longer-term career growth.

Study results reveal that youth project graduates generally feel supported in their workplaces, but that there is potential to increase the extent to which they feel supported in their professional

success and development. Although salary is given significant focus in discussions with both employers and youth, it appears that workplace quality and culture may warrant an elevated position within the discussion of youth retention. In addition, results indicate that youth demand for training in management and day-to-day tasks is not being fully met in their current workplaces.

Approaches for Increasing Youth Employment

Employers generally felt that the private sector can play a large role in increasing youth participation in the workforce, primarily because private sector companies are driving a significant amount of the hiring activities in the country. They also noted that the private sector offers youth opportunities to develop themselves professionally, and multiple employers cited internships in the private sector as an opportunity for youth. Youth also agreed that the private sector had a role to play in increasing youth employment.

Many employers noted that the Algerian government has been looking for solutions to the youth employment challenge. The role of the National Employment Agency (ANEM) was mentioned in a number of employer interviews. Youth focus group participants felt that ANEM and the National Agency for Supporting Youth Employment (ANSEJ), as well as Emploitic, a private agency that provides labor market intermediation, should be responsible for increasing youth participation in the workforce. Employers felt universities could do more to help integrate youth into the workforce, mentioning that they could include internship components to help youth orient their studies toward their desired career, increase the connection of the educational system to the private sector generally, update curricula so that it is in line with market needs, and prepare youth to

conduct effective job searches.

A key theme that emerged from employer and youth interviews as well as youth focus groups was the strong interest youth have in exploring entrepreneurship as their preferred pathway to employment. If youth are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in entrepreneurship, and private sector regulations enable business creation and development, this could constitute a promising pathway to employment for youth.

Women's Employment: Barriers and Supportive Factors

Women's employment is critical to sustainable and equitable economic growth. The MENA region as a whole is missing out on significant GDP gains due to low levels of female labor force participation. McKinsey & Company estimates that if gender parity in the labor force were reached in the MENA region, GDP could increase as much as 47% by 2025 over 2014 levels, constituting a total value of \$2.7 trillion.⁷ At just under 15%, Algeria's female labor force participation rate is among the lowest in the MENA region,⁸ which indicates that the Algerian economy stands to gain significantly if efforts to increase women's workforce participation are successful.

The discussion surrounding barriers to women's employment revealed a wide range of opinions among employers and youth. The variety of opinions, and in some cases the strength of underlying emotion, suggests that there is a debate occurring within Algerian society about the role of women in the workforce and the degree to which they currently do and should exercise autonomy in making professional decisions.

Most employers – both men and women – generally expressed the belief that women do not face

any specific barriers or discrimination in joining or remaining in the workforce. However, as each of the employer interviews progressed and the topic was discussed in more depth, several types of barriers emerged, including cultural expectations of appropriate jobs and industries for females, transportation challenges, low self-confidence, and family responsibilities. This suggests that although barriers do exist and many employers are able to identify them, they do not necessarily recognize them explicitly as barriers, but may view them as simply the nature of how males and females operate within Algerian society.

Results from employer interviews and the youth interviews and focus groups all indicated that there is a tendency among many in Algeria to view some job types as more appropriate for women than others, which can translate into restrictions on the types of opportunities that women pursue. Expectations can be imposed by employers, women's families, women's coworkers, as well as

women themselves. There are also legal restrictions governing the types of work considered appropriate for women, most significantly the prohibition against women working at night or in jobs that are considered arduous.⁹ Employers have the option to request government approval for female employees to work during night shifts, and one employer interviewed under this study had done so.

Study results suggest that when women go against the aforementioned expectations, they are sometimes met with disapproval or resistance from those invested in maintaining the existing system. Study results also indicate that women may face challenges in rising to leadership positions due to beliefs that the demanding nature of the job is not suitable for women. If employers maintain rigid expectations regarding the gender appropriateness of certain opportunities, women are likely to be passed up for professional opportunities, including leadership positions. The willingness of



employers to consider women for non-traditional roles will likely be key to changing expectations around what roles and industries are deemed appropriate for women.

The study revealed that not all employers subscribed to generalizations regarding the appropriateness of certain professional opportunities for women. In addition, some employers emphasized the efforts their companies make to be supportive of women, including those with families. These efforts include providing flexible maternity leave policies, daycare, transportation, and women's professional development opportunities within their companies in some cases.

Youth Views on Women's Employment

In order to gauge youth views on women's employment, youth interview and focus group participants were asked to share opinions on the impact of women's employment on the Algerian society and economy. Interview participants were also asked to assess women's ability to access employment opportunities and succeed within the workplace. Although male and female Interview participants expressed high overall levels of agreement that women's employment is beneficial for the Algerian society and economy, some male interview and focus group participants expressed generally negative views toward women's employment. Male focus group participants posited that women's employment causes unemployment for men, that women work only as an excuse to leave the house, and that employers select female candidates because of their appearance, among other opinions.

Male youth interview participants were more likely than female participants to indicate that women do not have equal opportunities to secure employment in Algeria and succeed in the workplace.

An analysis of the interview results suggests that a large share of young men recognize that women face barriers in entering and succeeding within the workforce. However, results also suggest that some young men believe women do not have an equal opportunity because they either do not support women's employment or they believe that women are not as competent as men. Young women, on the other hand, appear to have responded based on how they perceive their abilities rather than considering external barriers to their professional success.

Some employers and youth, both men and women, feel that women are actually favored within the private sector job market and have some advantages in their job searches. In interviews with both male and female employers, many expressed opinions that women present several strengths over their male peers that make them more appealing employees. Among the positive attributes employers ascribed to women were that they are ambitious, integrate well into the business, and are more patient, adaptable, and loyal to the company. A theme that appeared in both the employer interviews and youth focus groups was that women are less demanding than men in terms of salary. While this may help women secure entry-level positions, it may not be to the economic benefit of women in the long term, as it has the possibility of trapping women into low-paid opportunities.

Youth focus group and interview results revealed significant differences in the attitudes young women and men typically hold regarding the importance of family in making professional decisions. Young women typically place a high level of importance on parental opinion, and many will not take a job without their parents' approval. Young men, on the other hand, were more likely to view their professional decisions as their own, with parents providing advice but not making

decisions for them. In addition, young women were more likely to indicate that they would not pursue a career path if their families did not support it. However, there remains a large share of women who would pursue their desired career path, regardless of parental opinion. This diversity in young women's perspectives underscores the importance of employers avoiding generalizations regarding what women are or are not willing to pursue professionally.

Study results reveal that young women are eager to participate in the workforce, and that they believe in their ability to do so. Despite the existence of detractors, results indicate that young women have the support of many of their male peers, as well as employers. Positive developments are underway that suggest more young women may begin entering the workforce, especially in urban areas. The support of company leadership and managers will be critical to ensuring that women's employment continues to develop in Algeria.

Approaches for Increasing Women's Employment

Employers felt the private sector could play a role in increasing women's employment, primarily because it is currently driving a significant amount of hiring activities in the country and because it is advancing in the area of human resource management. Employers also felt that universities, professional training institutes, and ANEM had roles to play in increasing women's employment.

A small number of interviewed employers are actively working to address the gender gap. They have focused on efforts to recruit female directors and managers, including in less traditional areas such as factory management; adopted policies that require final candidate lists to include at least one female; and provided programming that builds women's skills and leadership capacity within the company. These employers are working to reach gender parity within their companies,



including top leadership. The companies placing greatest focus on this aspect of the business are multinationals, but some local companies are also making efforts in this area.

Youth focus group participants felt it would be possible to increase women's employment through social media announcements and other advertising, incentives in job offers, prioritizing employment types that are most suited for women within the Algerian context, providing training specifically for women prior to recruiting them, adapting work hours to suit women, and not requiring experience as a condition for hiring. They noted that all public sector employers contribute to the effort to increase women's employment since they have hired large numbers of women.

The Digital Economy

EFE explored the digital economy in Algeria under this study given its key role in the 21st century labor market and potential to create attractive jobs for young people. In addition to increasing job creation for youth, expanding the digital economy could contribute to economic growth and help Algeria diversify its revenues away from hydrocarbons. This study sought to assess the level of engagement of youth in the digital economy, their level of interest in working within it, and whether they foresaw any challenges to its expansion in Algeria.

Two in three youth interview participants indicated that they were unable to name an Algerian company operating in the digital economy, and 72% of those who felt they could cited the online marketplace Jumia, which is a Nigerian company. These results indicate that there is significant potential to increase awareness of the digital economy among Algerian youth. Youth interview participants showed a high level of interest in working in the digital economy, with two in three

indicating that they were interested. Youth focus group participants showed somewhat less enthusiasm toward work in the digital economy. Among youth interview participants who expressed interest in working in the sector, two in three felt they faced obstacles in finding a job in the field.

The digital economy is beginning to bud in Algeria and is receiving government support through initiatives such as the recent creation of the Support Organization for Digital Development (EADN). The sector's growth can be accelerated and employment opportunities generated if digital payment systems are expanded, the cost of internet access is reduced, and broadband quality is increased. Young people's ability to take advantage of employment opportunities in the sector can improve with increased awareness about the sector and through trainings to prepare them for success in digital careers.

Case Studies

This report highlights two case studies, one of the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project, which was implemented by EFE and funded by MEPI, and another of World Learning programming in Algeria, much of which has been funded by MEPI. The EFE project case study examines project results and explores youth plans for the future and their attitudes regarding the potential to build careers for themselves in Algeria.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Despite the challenges Algeria faces in reducing youth and women's unemployment, the country has significant resources at its disposal to build a future in which youth and women participate fully in the economy. In order to increase youth employment, young people must gain an improved understanding of the skills needed to secure jobs and succeed in the workplace, and private sector

employers must provide supportive environments to help youth ease the education-to-work transition. The Algerian government and universities also have key roles to play.

Regarding women's employment, if the private sector and women themselves continue to build upon the positive trends documented in this study, women's labor force participation stands to increase, as does the share of women in leadership positions. Thoughtful and deliberate actions from company management to support women in building self-confidence and taking on non-traditional roles will be key to supporting continued progress.

The study has generated the following recommendations for the Algerian government, the Algerian private sector, implementers, and funders.

Recommendations to the Algerian Government:

Recommendation 1.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider incorporating job search and soft skills modules within standard educational curricula at both secondary and tertiary levels, possibly managed by career centers.

Recommendation 2.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider incorporating professional practicums within tertiary education systems, and continue to provide apprenticeships within the TVET system.

Recommendation 3.A: Impact evaluations of government-funded active labor market programming can be conducted to determine effectiveness.

Recommendation 4.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider convening working groups that bring together private sector companies, youth, university representatives, and key

decision makers from ANEM, ANSEJ and ANGEM as well as employment agencies at the regional level, in order to increase coordination among main system actors for the benefit of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Recommendation 5.A: The Algerian government may wish to continue relaxing regulations on the private sector, including simplifying business registration processes, in order to stimulate private sector job growth and enable youth entrepreneurship.

Recommendation 6.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider continuing modernization efforts for ANEM to improve the services it offers to youth and employers.

Recommendation 7.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider convening a public dialog on the topic of the legal restriction on women working at night.

Recommendations to the Algerian Private Sector:

Recommendation 1.P: Algerian private sector employers should put in place transparent hiring mechanisms to ensure they are recruiting the best talent and are reducing their reliance on personal networks for hiring.

Recommendation 2.P: As part of the onboarding process for new employees, companies should outline the career trajectory that young entry-level employees can expect to take if they remain with the company.

Recommendation 3.P: Consider approaching engagement with young employees with a focus on creating a sense of stability and career growth potential.

Recommendation 4.P: Prioritize efforts to increase the share of female employees at different levels within companies, including leadership.

Recommendations to Implementers:

In addition to the key learnings and recommendations highlighted within the Case Study section, the following recommendations present high-level areas where implementers may wish to focus.

Recommendation 1.I: Consider including women's families in active labor force programming aimed at increasing the participation of young women.

Recommendation 2.I: Emphasize to youth the importance of remaining in their first job for as long as possible in order to demonstrate steady work experience to future employers, and consider providing mentoring and occasional short refresher trainings during the first year of employment.

Recommendation 3.I: Encourage youth to pursue online or distance learning to develop technical skills and foreign language abilities through platforms that provide certificates upon course completion.

Recommendation 4.I: Orient youth toward professional opportunities in the digital economy by connecting them with existing start-ups and incubators, and by providing trainings to familiarize youth with digital competencies.

Recommendations to Funders, including the US Government:

Recommendation 1.F: Funders should consider directing resources toward efforts to integrate a private sector orientation into higher education institutions in Algeria.

Recommendation 2.F: Funders should consider directing resources toward promoting women's economic engagement and leadership by supporting rising female leaders in Algeria.

Recommendation 3.F: Funders should consider supporting the budding start-up ecosystem in Algeria through exchange programs with technology companies in global tech hubs, such as Silicon Valley, and support for needed regulatory reform.

Notes

- 1 Population data for Algeria are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (database), New York (accessed January 17, 2020), <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/index.asp>.
- 2 World Bank Development Indicators are from the World Bank Databank (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 6, 2020), <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- 3 World Bank Development Indicators are from the World Bank Databank (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 6, 2020), <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- 4 Information on growth sectors in Algeria are from the World Bank's Algeria overview. (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/algeria/overview>).
- 5 Algérie Presse Service. "PLFC 2020: Réduction de 50% du budget de fonctionnement et revalorisation du salaire minimum garanti à compter du 1er juin" May 3, 2020. <http://www.aps.dz/economie/104675-avant-projet-de-la-lfc-2020-augmentation-de-50-la-reduction-du-budget-de-fonctionnement-et-revalorisation-du-salaire-minimum-garanti-a-compter-du-1er-juin-prochain>.
- 6 Angel-Urdinola and Kuddo (2010).
- 7 McKinsey & Company (2015).
- 8 Labor force participation data are from the World Bank Databank (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 26, 2020), <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- 9 Information on labor restrictions is from the World Bank Women, Business, and the Law 2020 (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 18, 2020), <http://wbl.worldbank.org>.

References

- Angel-Urdinola, Diego F., and Arvo Kuddo. 2010. "Key characteristics of employment regulation in the Middle East and North Africa." Working Paper, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- McKinsey & Company. 2015. "The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth." New York: McKinsey & Company.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2016. Arab Human Development Report 2016: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality. Arab Human Development Report, New York: UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS). <http://arab-hdr.org>.
- World Bank. 2019. "Macro Poverty Outlook: Country-by-country Analysis and Projections for the Developing World." Semi-Annual Report, Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Introduction

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is home to one of the largest concentrations of youth in the world, totaling 90 million.



The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is home to one of the largest concentrations of youth in the world, totaling 80 million young people,¹ yet one in four working-aged youth are unemployed.² Much like the MENA region as a whole, Algeria has a youthful population. Totaling 22.7 million people, youth under 30 make up 53% of the Algerian population.³ The size of Algeria's youth population is a strength that the country can leverage for economic growth if working-age youth are able to pursue job opportunities and contribute to their nation's economy. If Algeria effectively addresses the underlying challenges driving youth and women's unemployment, the Algerian economy and society will reap significant gains.

COVID-19 and associated recovery efforts are likely to affect the employment landscape in Algeria and across the globe. As of the writing of this report, Algeria is undertaking gradual reopening efforts. The longer term effects of the pandemic on youth employment in the country are not yet clear, but efforts to promote job creation in the private sector as part of the recovery are likely to benefit youth employment.

In 2019, unemployment for young men in Algeria reached nearly 28%, and for young women it reached a staggering 48%.⁴ A troubling share of youth are NEETs – not in employment, education, or training. As of 2017, 31.7% of young women and 10.9% of young men were NEETs, representing more than 1.4 million youth.⁵ The high rates of youth unemployment and inactivity represent substantial losses to the Algerian economy and society.

High levels of youth unemployment are associated with a myriad of related challenges, including economic migration, low levels of social integration, and negative health impacts. Among participants in the 2015 SAHWA youth study that gathered responses from 10,000 youth in

Study Topics

- **Barriers and supportive factors for youth and women's employment**
- **Role of family in young people's professional decisions**
- **Youth perspectives on the digital economy**
- **Youth levels of optimism on the potential to build careers for themselves in Algeria**
- **Youth plans for the future**

Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, 86% pointed to a lack of professional opportunities, poor living conditions, and low income as reasons to emigrate. SAHWA study participants indicated that availability of job opportunities in the target country were a top consideration in determining their chosen destination.⁶

A key contributor to youth unemployment in Algeria is the skills gap: youth completing higher education do not leave the university equipped with the skills to succeed in the private sector. While young university graduates lament a lack of suitable job opportunities, employers face challenges in filling open positions. This mismatch is driven by the divergence between the orientation of the Algerian educational system and the private sector. Current higher education programs in Algeria have changed little over the past several decades, and are focused toward public sector skills rather

than those that the private sector demands.⁷ Increasing trust among key actors in the labor market system including the private sector, state employment institutions, universities, and youth can support the enhanced coordination needed to address the youth employment challenge.⁸

In order to help address the challenges that youth face in entering and succeeding in the job market, Education For Employment (EFE), with the support of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), launched the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project. The pilot project provided soft skills training to 616 youth under the Job Training and Placement (JTP) component, of whom 567 secured jobs following training completion. In addition, employability and job search training was provided to 100 public university students who had not previously had access to this type of job market-oriented training. The project was heavily focused on engaging the private sector to design tailored training content and secure

job opportunities for youth following training completion.

Study Purpose and Structure

The purpose of this study is to document results and key learnings from the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project and to advance knowledge of youth and women's employment in Algeria, told through the perspectives of youth and private sector employers. EFE asked project graduates to share their perspectives on youth and women's employment in Algeria via interviews and focus groups, and project employer partners to share their perspectives through interviews.

The approach provided candid opinions from real people, giving life to the reality behind the statistics. A total of 118 youth participated in the interviews and 43 participated in focus groups. As for employers, 12 participated in interviews.



Topics addressed in the study include barriers and supportive factors for youth and women's employment, the role of family in young people's professional decisions, youth opinions regarding employment potential in the digital economy, youth plans for the future, and youth attitudes regarding the potential to build careers for themselves in Algeria.

The study is organized into five sections: Methodology, Overview of the Algerian Labor Market, Study Findings, Project Case Studies, and Conclusions & Recommendations. The case studies section includes a study of the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project, as well as a study of World Learning programming in Algeria, much of which has been supported by MEPI. We have also reflected upon the findings from the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project within the Study Findings section when they prove complementary to the discussion. The study closes with conclusions and recommendations for key stakeholders, including funders, implementers, the Algerian private sector, and the Algerian government.

Notes

- 1 UNICEF (2019).
- 2 Unemployment data for Algeria are from the World Bank Data-bank (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 6, 2020), <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- 3 Population data for Algeria are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (database), New York (accessed January 17, 2020), <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/index.asp>.
- 4 Unemployment data for Algeria are from the World Bank Data-bank (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 6, 2020), <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- 5 Education and NEET data for Algeria are from the ILO (International Labour Organization) STAT (database), Geneva (accessed January 15, 2020), <http://ilostat.ilo.org>.
- 6 Martiningui and Nigro (2016).
- 7 Benhabib (2014).
- 8 Fundación Educación para el Empleo (EFE-Europe) (2019).

References

- Benhabib, Lamia. 2014. Le chômage des jeunes en Algérie: l'enjeu des inégalités de diplôme et de genre. XXXèmes Journées du développement ATM 2014. Université Cadi Ayyad, Marrakech.
- Fundación Educación para el Empleo (EFE-Europe). 2019. "Building Algerian Youth's Future (BAYF), Analysis for a Meaningful Approach." Labour Market Report, Madrid: EFE-Europe with support from the UK Government. <http://bayf.info>.
- Martiningui, Ana, and Salvatore Nigro. 2016. "Getting more bang for the EU's buck in the Arab Mediterranean countries." Policy Paper, Barcelona: Fundación Educación para el Empleo (EFE-Europe).
- UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). 2019. "MENA Generation 2030: Investing in children and youth today to secure a prosperous region tomorrow." Amman: UNICEF. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MENA-Gen2030.pdf>.



Methodology



In order to provide a rich understanding of youth and employer perspectives on program services and on the broader topics of youth and women's workforce participation in Algeria, the study utilized a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data was collected through youth interviews and through program monitoring data, whereas qualitative data was collected through employer interviews and youth focus groups. A literature review was also conducted to place the findings within the broader context of the Algerian labor market.

Youth Interviews

In November 2019, EFE supervised the completion of the youth interviews. EFE decided to contract a firm to conduct the interviews rather than using local EFE consultants in order to increase the chances that youth would respond honestly to interview questions. The youth who completed EFE programming are acquainted with the local EFE consultants due to program activities, which may have biased their responses.

The interviews explored a diverse range of topics including young people's current employment activities and work environments, opinions on EFE programming, optimism surrounding young people's ability to build a career in Algeria, plans for the next five years, youth and women's employment, the role of family in employment decisions, and employment in the digital economy.

Interviews were completed with a stratified sample of youth who completed the Job Training and Placement (JTP) training under the project. JTP training graduates were selected for interviews for a number of reasons:

- The majority of project graduates were participants of the JTP program (86%);

- JTP graduates have a stronger connection to EFE than the Employability graduates because the JTP training was more in-depth and significantly longer in duration, thereby making them more likely to have an interest in participating in the study;
- The nature of the JTP and Employability program types was significantly different in ways that would be likely to affect youth perspectives on some topics addressed in the interviews, yet there was an insufficient number of Employability graduates to allow valid comparison between graduates of the two training types.

A discussion of both program types is included in the project case study within the report, ensuring that both program types are addressed.

A total of 118 youth participated in the interviews. Youth interviewees generally reflected the total project graduate population in terms of gender, residence, and to a lesser extent, age and education level.

Of the total interview participants, 63% were male and 37% were female. In terms of residence, 88% lived in Algiers, 6% lived in Oran, 3.4% lived in Bordj Bou Arréridj, and 2.6% lived in other *wilayas*.ⁱ Participants were between the ages of 20 and 35, with 25% of youth falling between the ages of 20-24, 63% between 25-29, and 12% between the ages of 30-35. Age distribution varied somewhat from the age distribution of project participants. However, some variation is expected given that recording of participant ages began in early 2017 and the youth interviews occurred at the close of 2019, making it possible that some youth moved into different age brackets as time went on. Regarding educational attainment, 49% of participants held an advanced university degree, 23% held a

i *Wilaya* is the term used to refer to provinces in Algeria.

university degree, 14% had a vocational diploma, 3% a secondary diploma, 3% had obtained less than a secondary diploma, and 7% held another type of diploma. The share of participants in the youth interviews who held an advanced university degree was slightly higher than the share of youth who held advanced university degrees within the project population. However, as with the variation in age ranges, it is to be expected that following project participation, some additional youth may have earned advanced university degrees.

Youth Focus Groups

In order to gather rich qualitative data from program participants, EFE contracted a firm in Algiers to conduct focus groups that explored youth opinions regarding the EFE program, workplace environments, the role of family in career decisions, work in the digital economy, as well as broader topics regarding youth and women's employment. As with the youth interviews, EFE felt that youth

would be more likely to provide honest opinions if an independent firm was conducting the interviews rather than EFE staff or consultants. In November and December 2019, eight focus groups were conducted with a total of 43 project graduates, of whom 21 were female: six groups in Algiers, one in Oran, and one in Bordj Bou Arréridj. All focus groups were separated by gender except in Oran, because there were an insufficient number of project graduates there to allow for gender segregated focus groups. Focus groups were segregated by gender when possible in order to increase the likelihood that participants would share honest opinions, especially with regards to women's employment. The locations and number of focus groups conducted in each location were designed to reflect the makeup of the project's participant population.

Focus group participants included graduates who were employed, some who were looking for work, and others who were studying. Those who were



employed were working in a variety of job types, ranging from technical positions, sales, store management, banking, and others. Two-thirds of participants were employed. Many of them had found jobs with project employer partners immediately after completing the training, and some had been recruited via ANEM.ⁱⁱ Some participants had moved on from their initial job placement following graduation and had begun a second, and in some cases, third job. Two participants were self-employed.

In addition to these focus groups, EFE conducted one youth focus group in March 2018 and two in April 2019 and has reflected on the results of those focus groups in completing the case study.

Program Monitoring Data

In order to gather key learnings from the project, monitoring data was analyzed in-depth and the results outlined in the Case Study section of this report. Monitoring data included training information for both JTP and Employability graduates, industries of employment, job types, legal status of graduate employment, the effect that working with other EFE graduates has on retention, job search behaviors, perceived barriers to finding a job, and motivations for why youth leave their jobs.

Employer Interviews

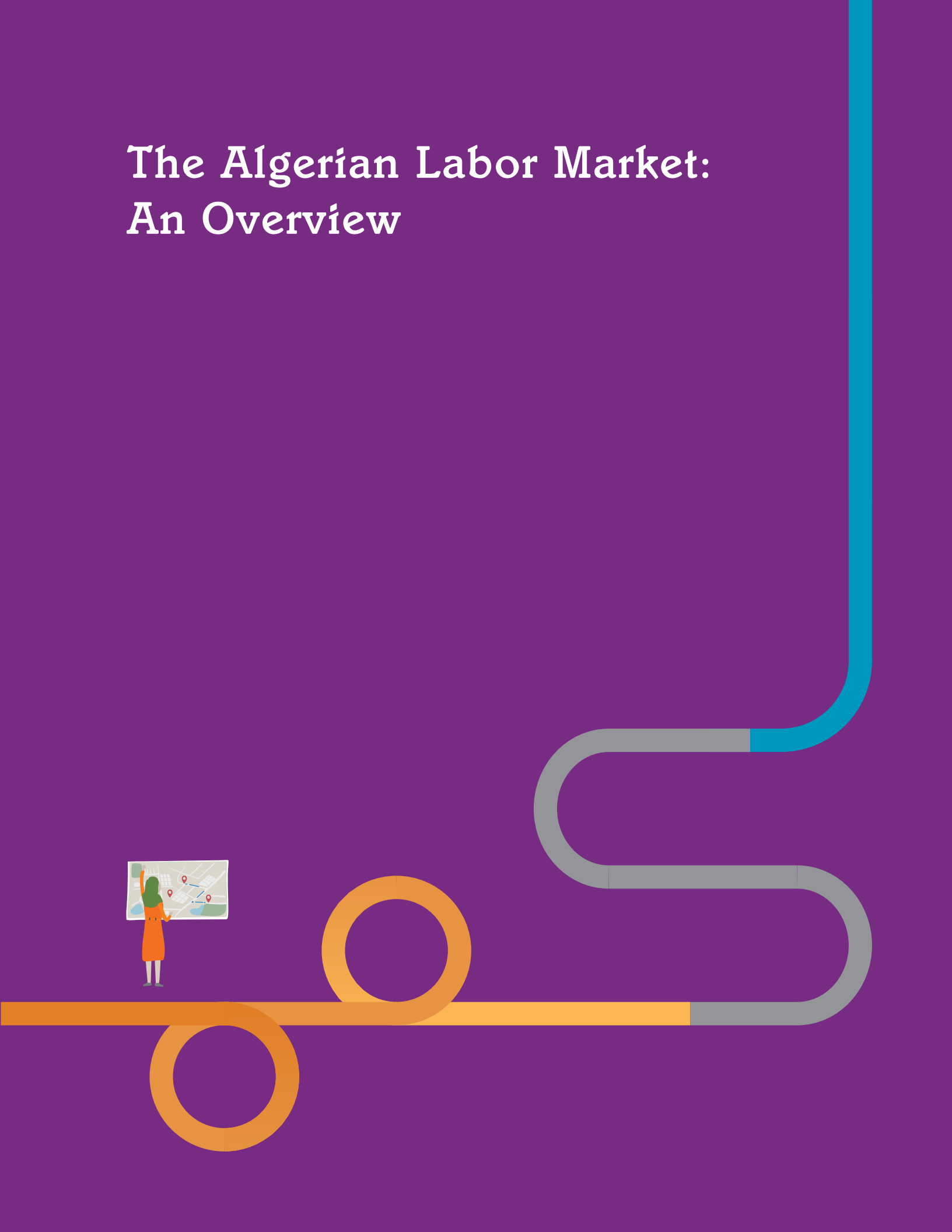
During a visit to Algeria in October 2019, EFE conducted interviews with twelve project employer partners in order to explore their opinions regarding key themes on youth and women's employment, as well as to gather their feedback on programming implemented under the project. A team including Washington-based and Madrid-based EFE staff as well as local EFE consultants

conducted the interviews. Although EFE would have preferred to use an independent firm to carry out the interviews, it was determined that employer partners were likely to be unwilling to meet with a third party, therefore making it necessary for EFE to conduct the interviews. The possibility for positive bias in employer responses has been accounted for in the analysis.

Themes explored in the interviews included barriers to hiring and retaining youth and women in Algeria, promising ways to increase youth and women's employment, company hiring practices, recruitment plans for the next 1-2 years, benefits offered to employees, and feedback on the project. Detailed employer feedback on the project is outlined in the Case Study section. Employers interviewed operate in the sectors of retail, agro-foods, industry, banking, and leasing. Companies ranged in size between 100 employees to more than 1,000, with a median size of approximately 530 employees. All were well-established companies, among them some local Algerian firms and some multinationals. EFE had previously conducted two rounds of interviews with employer partners in Algiers in March 2018 and April 2019, the results of which have also been incorporated into the case study.

ii ANEM is a state agency that serves as a labor market intermediary between job seekers and employers seeking to fill open vacancies.

The Algerian Labor Market: An Overview



The Algerian labor market is characterized by high levels of public sector employment, regulation, low private sector job creation, and informality. It is also characterized by low levels of female labor force participation and high levels of youth and women's unemployment. As of 2019, youth and women's unemployment reached 31% and 21%, respectively (Figure 1). Although women's labor force participation has increased slightly over the past 20 years, it remains low at just 15% for women aged 15 and older, and only 8% for female youth – less than a quarter of the participation rates for men in each age group (Figure 2).

Unemployment

Following Algeria's structural adjustment efforts in the 1990s, unemployment for the overall population clustered around 30% for both men and women, and between 45-48% for youth. In the ensuing two decades, unemployment rates went down dramatically for men and male youth, but not for women and female youth. Men and male youth unemployment rates dropped from 28% and 49% in 1999 to 10% and 28% in 2019, respectively. On the other hand, women and female youth suffered from unemployment rates of 29% and 45% in 1999, and unemployment rates of 21% and 48% in 2019, respectively (Figure 1). In other words, unemployment among men decreased three-fold and unemployment among young men was nearly halved, but women saw little to no improvements.

The Algerian government provided noteworthy educational investments during the past three decades that expanded access to education significantly. Today, young women are now more likely than young men to pursue tertiary education. As

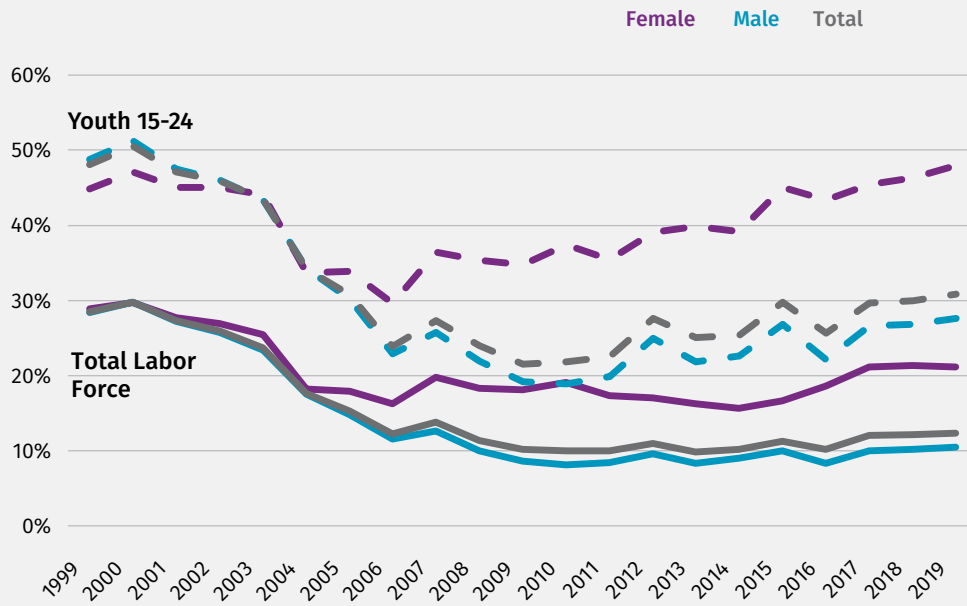
of 2018, 64% of university-aged women were enrolled in tertiary education, compared to 39% of university-aged men.¹ These increases in women's educational attainment can translate into increased workforce participation if barriers to women's economic participation are removed.

Unemployment for both young men and women increases with education. The disproportionate levels of unemployment for young people, coupled with higher levels of unemployment for more educated populations, indicates that the crux of the challenges lies in the school-to-work transition.² This transition is stymied by the mismatch between the skills that the educational system teaches and those that the private sector demands. At the heart of the skills mismatch are soft skills, such as young people's ability to work on a team, communicate effectively, problem solve, and resolve conflicts. As evidenced by two market studies that EFE conducted in Algeria between 2016-2019,ⁱ as well as ongoing conversations with employers, the demand for soft skills among private sector employers is a recurring theme. Although employers have explained that other key skills are sometimes missing among young job seekers, such as basic technology skills, soft skills form a key component of the gap. Unlike basic technology skills, however, soft skills are also difficult to pursue through self-study, and therefore can benefit from training interventions.

The market study that EFE conducted in 2016-2017, with support from MEPI, found that the top skills that Algerian employers seek in employees include teamwork, communication, conflict resolution, leadership, project and people management, working toward objectives, and language skills.

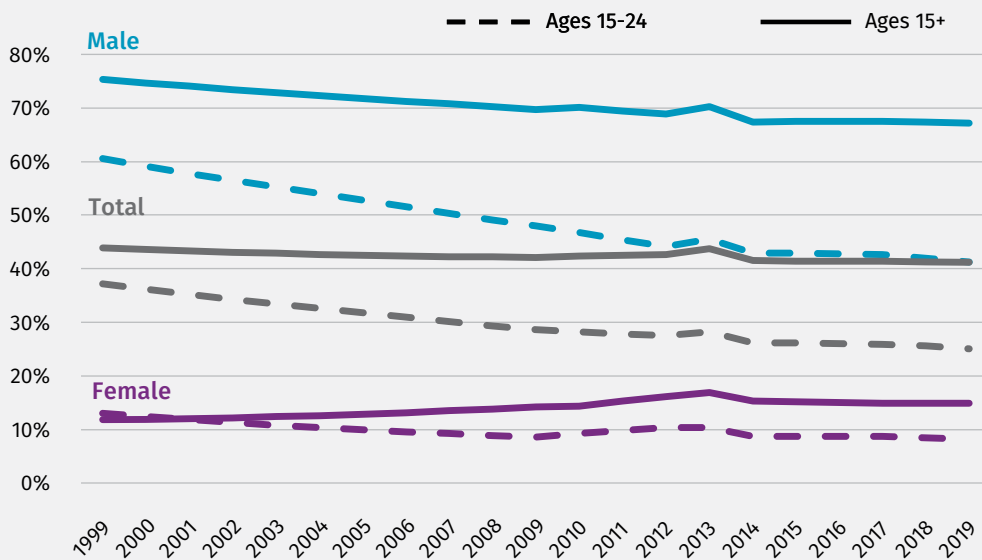
ⁱ The study that EFE conducted during the 2016-2017 period with the support of MEPI focused on the north of Algeria and profiled 212 companies that had a high potential to hire in a wide variety of industries. It also included two workshops gathering 27 companies, 17 meetings with employment and training experts, 57 meetings with HR representatives, and 15 meetings with organization and institution representatives, both public and private. The second study, financed by the UK Government and conducted in 2019, "Building Algerian Youth's Future: Analysis for a meaningful approach," focused on *wilayas* outside of Algiers including Béchar, Bordj Bou Arréridj, Ghardaia, Illizi, Oran, Ouargla, and Tamanrasset. The study engaged more than 2,160 individuals and included interviews with 1,475 job seekers, 8 focus groups with job seekers, 8 focus groups with key stakeholders, 73 interviews with key stakeholders other than job seekers, and 6 key stakeholder convenings.

Figure 1: Algeria Unemployment Rates (Modeled ILO Estimates)



Source: World Bank World Development Indicators Database

Figure 2: Algeria Labor Force Participation (Modeled ILO Estimates)



Source: World Bank World Development Indicators Database

Communication-related competencies were the highest in demand. The significant focus on soft skills, rather than technical skills, led EFE to focus on helping youth build these skills in order to facilitate their entry into the job market. A recent study conducted by Bayt.com and YouGov also found high demand for soft skills and language abilities. Participating Algerian employers indicated that the skills they most seek in candidates are that they are team players/cooperative (47%), have a good overall personality/demeanor (45%), and have good communication skills in French, English, and Arabic (42%).³

Further developing the Algerian private sector can help ensure that job creation keeps pace with the number of youth entrants to the labor market. In addition, a move by employers away from using unofficial or personal networks for hiring can help increase access to jobs for youth who lack strong social networks.⁴

Women's Unemployment

Women's employment in Algeria is characterized by high levels of vulnerability and often low wages, mirroring the reality of women's employment across the broader MENA region.⁵ Young women who have completed higher education are three times more likely to be unemployed than the general population.⁶ Unemployment for educated women has been partially driven by the reduction in the availability of public sector employment, coupled with insufficient growth in opportunities in the private sector.⁷ In Algeria, 57% of employed women work in the public sector.⁸

In addition to these challenges, young women face further barriers to employment, which include family expectations, beliefs that young women will have children and become unavailable for work, societal beliefs regarding the appropriateness of certain industries for women's

employment, restrictions on travel, and legal limitations. These barriers will be discussed in detail in the Study Findings section.

Informality

Informal employment increased in Algeria following structural adjustment policies in the 1990s and has further increased due to high levels of unemployment, centralized economic administration, and the demographic transition that has brought large numbers of young people into the workforce.⁹ Research has shown that strict requirements around hiring and firing employees can also contribute to higher levels of informality,¹⁰ which may explain part of the trend of informality in Algeria. The World Bank estimates that nearly 36% of Algeria's GDP is made up of undeclared output and that 63% of the Algerian labor force is not contributing to social security, a proxy for informal employment.¹¹

Informal employment not only affects workers, it also reduces the tax base that is available to support diversification in government revenues away from hydrocarbons.¹² As such, in order to grow Algeria's available tax base and promote the social protections that are associated with formal employment, a focus on increasing the rate of business registrations in the country may be beneficial.

Private Sector Development

There lies significant potential in increasing private sector growth in Algeria as an engine for economic growth and job creation.

Public sector employment continues to be a preferred form of employment across the MENA region, including in Algeria, due to its reputation for providing stability and good salaries. In Algeria, it continues to provide a disproportionate share of

employment for the population by regional standards and when compared to other middle-income countries.¹³ In 2017, public employment made up 40% of total formal employment in Algeria, of which half was comprised of central government employees.¹⁴

Algeria is currently pursuing its New Economic Growth Model 2016-2030 to advance structural transformations focusing on moving away from subsidies toward more targeted social protections, as well as improving the business climate.¹⁵ If these reforms are successful in unleashing a dynamic private sector, they have the potential to stimulate much needed job creation that will benefit youth, women, and the larger population.

Current Economic Climate and Employment Trends

Economic growth and stability directly impact the willingness of private sector employers to hire new employees, which, in turn, impacts employment prospects for youth and the general population.

Algeria experienced a period of uncertainty following the resignation of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 2019. The election of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in December 2019 is likely to moderate this uncertainty, which could create an environment in which private sector companies are confident in accelerating hiring activities.

Current Employment Trends

In order to understand the current employment landscape in Algeria, EFE conducted an analysis of job opportunities that were publicly posted in 2019. Using an innovative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool, EFE pulled nearly 170,000 job vacancies that were posted in Algeria from January to October 2019. This process allowed in-depth learning

about the national labor market in Algeria. It is possible that the trends discovered during this analysis will be affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19.

The largest concentration of job postings was in Algiers, totaling 62,344 opportunities (Figure 3). Among job search websites, Neuvoo had the largest number of postings, totaling almost 69,000 job vacancies during this ten-month period, followed by ANEM, with more than 50,000 postings, and Ouedkniss, with more than 18,000.

The results showed that shop sales assistants, followed by cleaners/helpers and business services agents, were the most advertised job vacancies nationally. In addition, 22.5% of vacancies fell under the 'professionals' category, 20.5% fell under the 'technicians and associate professionals' category, and 17% fell under the 'service and sales workers' category.

In terms of educational requirements, 60.2% of job opportunities required a tertiary degree. As for experience, just over a third of vacancies did not specify required experience levels (37.3%), but 28% of employers required up to 1 year of work experience, 11.7% required 1-2 years of experience, and the remainder required more than two years of experience.

The most commonly mentioned desired knowledge areas in the job descriptions were sales and marketing, mentioned in approximately 14,000 job opportunities; communication, mentioned in nearly 12,500 postings; and economics and accounting, mentioned in nearly 9,500 postings. Regarding personal attributes, adaptability was the most frequently mentioned, included in more than 25,500 postings; followed by responsibility, mentioned in nearly 12,600 postings; and proactivity, mentioned in approximately 6,700 postings. Basic computer skills and language skills were

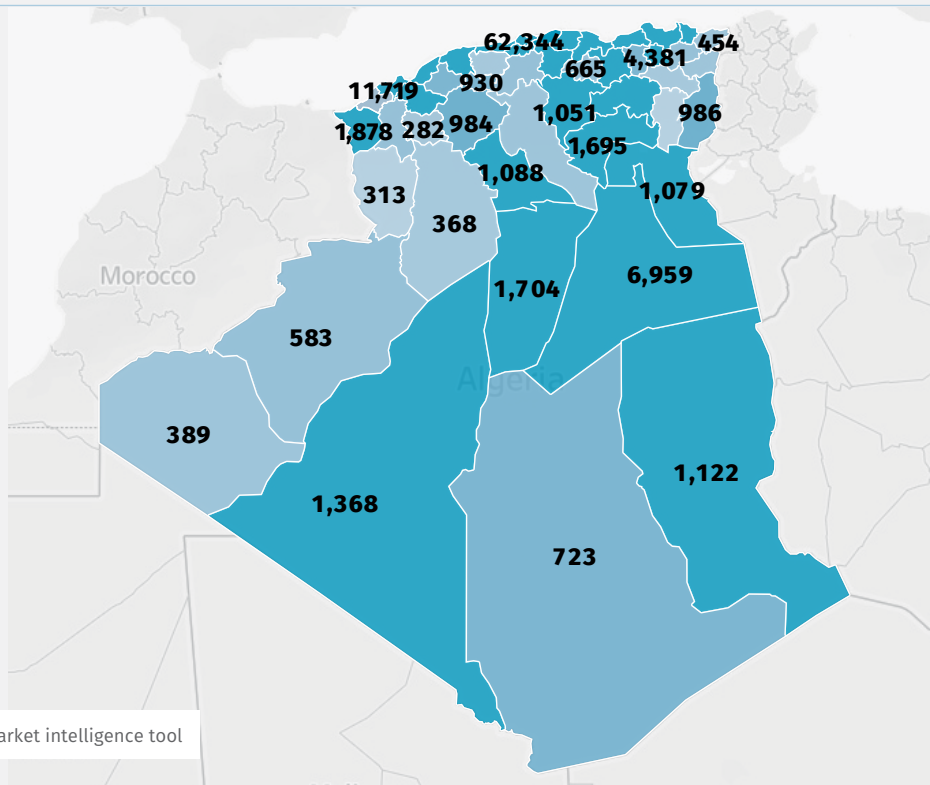
mentioned in more than 23,000 and 20,000 postings, respectively.

The results also showed that manufacturing, followed by security/investigation activities, and transportation and storage were the industries responsible for the largest share of job postings. Manufacturing accounted for nearly 16,900 postings, security and investigation activities accounted for approximately 8,800, and transportation and storage accounted for nearly 8,500. The analysis revealed that the National Center for Construction Engineering had the largest amount of recruitment activities nationally with 1,069 job vacancies during this time period, followed by Marriott with 604 job vacancies and Sheraton with 357.

According to the World Bank, current growth sectors in Algeria include commercial services, industrial construction, and public works,¹⁶ which aligns with the analysis findings for companies posting the largest number of vacancies in 2019. The demand for shop sales assistants and business services agents also aligns with growth in commercial services.

Implementers working to connect youth with employment opportunities, as well as educational institutes working to prepare youth for the labor force should therefore prioritize skills relevant to commercial services and construction in order to orient youth toward high-demand sectors. Given the findings of EFE's market studies in Algeria in 2016 and 2019 that point to employer demand for

Figure 3: The highest concentration of online job postings was in Algiers, totaling more than 62,000 open positions between January – October 2019



Source: Labor market intelligence tool

soft skills, coupled with the high frequency of job postings in which they are mentioned, soft skills training is relevant across industries. Foreign language skills, including English and French, are also relevant training areas.

Active Labor Market Programs in Algeria

Active labor market programming in Algeria has taken many forms over the years, including wage subsidies, trainings, apprenticeships, and job matching. The Algerian government, international NGOs, local Algerian organizations, and multilateral institutions have implemented a variety of programming models. This section will provide an overview of the active labor market programs that are either currently being implemented in Algeria or have been implemented in recent years.

The Algerian government has made significant efforts to reduce unemployment through initiatives that aim to integrate individuals into the labor force and provide support for entrepreneurship projects. Some initiatives focus specifically on youth. The government began to implement policies to promote employment in 1989.¹⁷ More recently, employment-focused initiatives have occurred under the framework of the National Employment Policy (2010-2014) and the Government Plan for Employment (2015).¹⁸ The agencies working to promote youth and women's employment fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment, Labor, and Social Security (MTESS) and the Ministry of National Solidarity, the Family and the Status of Women (MSNFCF). The agencies that function under each ministry include:

- **MTESS:** The National Employment Agency (ANEM), the National Agency for Supporting Youth Employment (ANSEJ), and the National Unemployment Insurance Fund (CNAC)

- **MSNFCF:** The Social Development Agency (ADS) and the National Agency for Management of Microcredit (ANGEM)

A brief description of the services provided under each initiative is included in the following sections.

ANEM

ANEM's main function is to serve as a labor market intermediary, but it also manages youth employment programming under the vocational integration assistance mechanism (DAIP). The DAIP program uses wage and benefits subsidy mechanisms to support young job seekers in joining the workforce. There are three types of DAIP contracts, which are targeted to youth who have varying levels of educational qualifications:

- **Graduate Integration Contract (CID)**, for youth who have completed university or advanced technical training;
- **Professional Integration Contract (CIP)**, for youth who have completed secondary education or vocational training;
- **Training Insertion Contract (CFI)**, for youth who lack educational qualifications.

In addition, the Subsidized Work Contracts (CTA) program provides wage subsidies to employers for up to three years when the benefits period for CID, CIP, or CFI contracts have ended for youth whom they have hired. CID, CIP, or CFI have contract periods ranging from between 1-1.5 years, varying by contract type and whether the employment is through the private or public sectors. Some contract types are renewable prior to CTA utilization. In total, the initial CID, CIP, and CFI contracts, combined with the CTA contract allow employers to

receive subsidies for a minimum of four years in exchange for hiring youth.¹⁹ However, youth can work for protracted periods under these “pre-employment” contracts, sometimes for periods of eight years or more. The Algerian government is in the process of implementing recently approved plans to normalize employment situations for youth who have been working under pre-employment contracts for extended periods. The government has put in place plans to normalize the employment contracts of 160,000 youth who are currently working under DAIP and Social Insertion Program for Young Graduates (PID) contracts in the short term, with the intention to normalize a total of 400,000 contracts in total.²⁰

Algerian Agencies Supporting Entrepreneurship: CNAC, ANSEJ, and ANGEM

Although they fall under the purview of different ministries, CNAC, ANSEJ, and ANGEM all work to support entrepreneurship and provide credit to entrepreneurs. CNAC was created in 1994 with the intended purpose of supporting unemployed individuals who lost their jobs in the public sector due to structural adjustment programs. Since 2013, CNAC’s new mandate is to support unemployed individuals between the ages of 30-50 in creating microenterprises. ANSEJ, established in 1996, works to support youth aged 19-35 in creating microenterprises through the provision of training, support, and financing of entrepreneurship projects. ANGEM, created in 2004, has a mandate to provide microcredit services to individuals living in poverty. Its services are typically used to purchase raw materials for microenterprises.²¹

ADS

ADS administers programs addressing unemployment and poverty. Relevant programs to youth employment efforts include the Social Inclusion

Activity Mechanism (DAIS) program, which focuses on integrating individuals lacking educational qualifications into temporary employment activities. It also administers the Allowance for Community Service Activities (IAIG) focused on social inclusion for disadvantaged individuals, and the PID, which benefits young people who hold university diplomas or technical degrees and who have disabilities or are disadvantaged in some way.²²

Other Active Labor Market Initiatives

In addition to the initiatives implemented by these agencies, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Education has been working to promote technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programming, including apprenticeships. In 2017, 60.7% of TVET students – totaling 352,392 individuals – completed apprenticeships. As part of these efforts, the Algerian government has worked to improve training quality and the extent to which it is linked with the labor market. There are currently 798 TVET centers and 129 institutes in Algeria, and the majority of TVET training is provided free of charge through state support.²³

Effectiveness of Active Labor Market Initiatives

Rigorous evaluations can provide valuable information regarding the effectiveness of Algeria’s current active labor market initiatives.²⁴ In order to be most useful, these evaluations should go beyond recordkeeping of the number of program beneficiaries to gauge impact of the programs on their life trajectories. On the operational side, it has also been noted that improvements in technology infrastructure and marketing could be made to increase utilization of ANEM and ANSEJ services in particular. EFE’s BAYF study found that ANEM’s ability to conduct effective job matching has been limited by its information system, which has not continued to develop as the nature of the

job market has changed. For example, the system does not account for candidates' soft skills, which employers have indicated are critical for success at their companies.

Both ANEM and ANSEJ have smartphone applications, but their websites are not optimized to be viewed on mobile phones. In addition, the BAYF study noted a relatively low number of downloads of the applications: the ANEM application had been downloaded only 15,000 times on Google PlayStore, whereas the taxi service application Yassir had been downloaded 500,000 times. The study also noted discrepancies in the number of job postings listed on the ANEM website versus the smartphone application. As of the writing of this report, the ANEM application had been downloaded more than 100,000 times, indicating that despite a slow start, the application may be beginning to gain traction.

Among unemployed youth participants in the present study's youth interviews, 69% were not familiar with the ANEM website, indicating that there is potential to increase utilization of ANEM's online services. Given that smartphones are one of the main ways that Algerian youth access the internet, mobile-friendly sites and increased promotion and updates may help increase youth use of ANEM and ANSEJ services.

Multilateral and Non-Governmental Initiatives

In addition to EFE, there are a small number of other organizations and entities implementing active labor market programming for youth in Algeria. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the European Union (EU), World Learning, Injaz el Djazair, and the Algerian Center for Social Entrepreneurship.



The ILO implemented the “TAWDIF”ⁱⁱ project from September 2016 through June 2019. The project engaged youth, government stakeholders, and the private sector. Youth engagement focused on strengthening student job search and entrepreneurship skills through training and student clubs. Engagement of government agencies focused on capacity building efforts to improve their ability to support youth employment initiatives. The project partnered with ANEM, ANSEJ, the MTESS, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS).²⁵ A second phase of the TAWDIF project began in the second quarter of 2019.

The European Union’s AFEQⁱⁱⁱ (Adequation Formation-Emploi-Qualification) project began in September 2017 and will run through September 2020. AFEQ works to adapt student qualifications to market needs through direct engagement with the MTESS, ANEM, and higher education authorities including the MESRS, the Ministry of Vocational Education and Training (MFEP), and the Ministry of National Education. The project focuses on closing the gap between the needs of the private sector and the skills that youth possess upon completing their educational journeys.²⁶

World Learning began working in Algeria in 2005 and has worked on a range of areas related to education and youth workforce development. Programming has focused on engaging existing educational institutions on building and improving career centers, as well as working on STEM education, mentorship, and English for the workplace. Injaz el Djazair has worked in Algeria since 2010 and provides programming focused on financial literacy, job preparation including shadowing and soft skills trainings, and entrepreneurship trainings.²⁷ The Algerian Center for Social

Entrepreneurship, established in 2013, provides trainings and support for youth looking to solve local problems through innovative solutions. The Center partners with both local and international NGOs. Other local associations and foundations are also involved in youth employment initiatives.

ii “Tawdif” means “recruitment” in Arabic.

iii “Afeq” means “horizons” in Arabic.

Notes

- 1 Education data for Algeria are from the World Bank Databank (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 19, 2020), <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- 2 Kpodar (2011).
- 3 Bayt.com and YouGov (2018).
- 4 Benhabib and Adair, *Hiring Discrimination on the Algerian Labour Market: an Assessment with Testing* (2017).
- 5 Gherbi (2014) ; UNDP (2016).
- 6 Benhabib (2014).
- 7 Assaad, R. et al. (2018).
- 8 ETF (2019).
- 9 Gherbi (2014).
- 10 Angel-Urdinola and Kuddo (2010).
- 11 Angel-Urdinola, Bodor, et al. (2014).
- 12 Jewell, Lahreche and Pierre (2014).
- 13 Assaad and Barsoum (2019).
- 14 International Monetary Fund, Middle East and Central Asia Department (2018).
- 15 African Development Bank (2019).
- 16 Information on growth sectors in Algeria are from the World Bank's Algeria overview. (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/algeria/overview>).
- 17 Benhabib (2014).
- 18 ETF (2019).
- 19 Benhabib and Adair, *Une retrospective des dispositifs de la politique de l'emploi en Algérie (1997-2015): L'évaluation macroéconomique et l'inégalité d'insertion selon le genre et l'âge*. (2017).
- 20 Algérie Presse Service. "Contrats pré-emploi: intégration prochaine de 160.000 bénéficiaires" March 3, 2020. <http://www.aps.dz/economie/102496-contrats-pre-emploi-integration-prochaine-de-160-000-beneficiaires>
- 21 Musette (2014).
- 22 Musette (2014).
- 23 ETF (2019).
- 24 Musette (2014); Benhabib and Adair, *Une rétrospective des dispositifs de la politique de l'emploi en Algérie (1997-2015): L'évaluation macroéconomique et l'inégalité d'insertion selon le genre et l'âge*. (2017).
- 25 ILO (2019).
- 26 Information about the AFEQ program is from the project's website (<https://www.programme-afeq.org/afeq/index.php/programme/presentation>).
- 27 Information about Injaz El Djazair is from the organization's website (<https://www.injaz-eldjazair.org/>).

Angel-Urdinola, Diego F., Andras Bodor, Robert V. Gatti, and Joana C.G. Silva. 2014. "Striving for better jobs: the challenge of informality in the Middle East and North Africa." Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Assaad, Ragui, and Ghada Barsoum. 2019. "Public employment in the Middle East and North Africa." Bonn: IZA (Institute of Labor Economics).

Assaad, Ragui, Rana Hendy, Moundir Lassassi, and Shaimaa Yassin. 2018. "Explaining the MENA Paradox: Rising Educational Attainment, Yet Stagnant Female Labor Force Participation." Discussion Paper, Bonn: IZA (Institute of Labor Economics).

Bayt.com and YouGov. 2018. "The Bayt.com Middle East Job Index Survey." Dubai: Bayt.com.

Benhabib, Lamia. 2014. "Le chômage des jeunes en Algérie: l'enjeu des inégalités de diplôme et de genre." XXXèmes Journées du développement ATM 2014. Université Cadi Ayyad, Marrakech.

Benhabib, Lamia, and Philippe Adair. 2017. "Hiring Discrimination on the Algerian Labour Market: an Assessment with Testing." Alger.

—. 2017. *Une retrospective des dispositifs de la politique de l'emploi en Algérie (1997-2015): L'évaluation macroéconomique et l'inégalité d'insertion selon le genre et l'âge*.

ETF (European Training Foundation). 2019. "Algeria: Education, training and employment developments 2018." Turin: European Training Foundation.

Gherbi, Hassiba. 2014. "Caractéristiques et déterminants de l'emploi informel féminin en Algérie. Le cas de la wilaya de Bejaia." *Mondes en développement* 166 (2): 45-58.

ILO. 2019. "Tawdif: De l'université au monde du travail." Tawdif Project Results, ILO with support from the UK Government and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-addis_ababa/---ilo-algiers/documents/genericdocument/wcms_728738.pdf

International Monetary Fund, Middle East and Central Asia Department. 2018. "Algeria: Selected Issues." Country Report No. 18/169, Washington, DC: IMF.

Jewell, Andrew, Amina Lahreche, and Gaelle Pierre. 2014. "Algeria: Selected Issues." Country Report No. 14/342, Washington, DC: IMF.

Kpodar, Kangni. 2011. "Why Has Unemployment in Algeria Been Higher than in MENA and Transition Countries?" Working Paper No. 07/210, Washington, DC: IMF.

Musette, Mohamed Saib. 2014. *Employment Policies and Active Labour Market Programmes in Algeria*. Turin: European Training Foundation.

References

African Development Bank. 2019. "African Economic Outlook 2019." Abidjan: African Development Bank.

Angel-Urdinola, Diego F., and Arvo Kuddo. 2010. "Key characteristics of employment regulation in the Middle East and North Africa." Working Paper, Washington, DC: World Bank.



Study Findings



In addition to documenting key learnings and results from the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project, the present study on barriers and opportunities to youth and women’s employment in Algeria explored a range of topics with youth graduates of the project and with employer partners. The topics explored included key barriers and supportive factors for youth and women’s employment in Algeria, youth preferences compared to realities of workplace environments, the role of family in youth employment decisions, and youth perspectives on job opportunities in the digital economy. In total, 118 youth participated in the youth interviews (44 females), 43 youth participated in focus groups (21 females), and 12 employer partners participated in interviews. The following sections outline the key findings from the study.

Youth Employment: Barriers and Supportive Factors

Youth in Algeria face barriers when attempting to enter the workforce for the first time. These barriers include low availability of jobs where youth live, especially for youth living outside of Algiers or other large cities, the mismatch between skills taught in Algerian educational institutions and those that the private sector demands, insufficient soft skills and work experience to secure a job and succeed in the workforce, and a lack of understanding of job search approaches. In

Employers believe that soft skills are a key requirement to enable youth success in the workplace

addition, the mismatch between youth expectations and workplace realities forms a significant barrier to youth retention.

Job Availability

Availability of employment opportunities is a challenge for youth in Algeria because public sector hiring has slowed significantly and the rate of job creation in the private sector has not kept pace with the large number of youth entering the labor market each year. When employer interviews were conducted under this study in late 2019, employer hiring plans appeared to vary based on how businesses had fared during the year’s uncertainty. The election of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in December 2019 is likely to moderate this uncertainty, which could create an environment in which private sector companies are confident in accelerating hiring activities. The effects of COVID-19 on regular business activities may have an impact on private sector hiring in the short term, however. Current measures to reopen businesses and restart public transportation may attenuate the impacts of the pandemic on hiring.

The Skills and Experience Gap: Mismatches in Supply and Demand

A key theme that emerged from interviews with employers was the difficulty they experience in finding entry-level hires who match the desired profiles and also have a sense of shared values with the company.ⁱ However, even when employers find youth who match the desired profiles, they sometimes lack needed soft skills and professionalism, creating challenges for retention. This, in turn, translates into increased turnover and costs for employers. Interviewed employers pointed to the theoretical and academic nature of

ⁱ Employers did not explain whether they screen for shared values during the interview process, or whether values simply surface as a challenge post-hire.

university training as a key driver of this challenge, explaining that it is not oriented toward preparing youth to meet the needs of the private sector.

Interviewed employers believe that soft skills are a key requirement to enable youth success in the workplace. Specific soft skills mentioned included communication, teamwork and collaboration, ability to integrate into company culture and hierarchy, ability to learn quickly, communication skills, and self-knowledge. One employer felt that communication is a principle obstacle for youth in the workplace, adding that communication difficulties with managers can be a key challenge. Another explained that even if youth have good technical skills it is important for them to have strong communication skills in order to succeed. Yet another employer explained that at his company there are three generations of employees working together, and they all have different ways of approaching their work. He explained that soft skills support integration and minimize conflict within this diverse environment.

Employers also felt that the education system could improve the extent to which it builds youth competencies in French language and basic computer skills. For example, one employer explained that he has seen cases in which candidates with master's degrees in data-related fields have theoretical knowledge but do not know how to use Excel.

Online Learning

Although soft skills are best developed within a classroom setting, youth have the ability to build other types of market-relevant skills through online courses. In this way, youth could ensure that they are proficient in using standard business applications, such as Microsoft Office, even if they are not taught in universities or secondary schools.

Despite the potential for youth to increase their employability through self-directed online study, youth interview results indicate that many of them are not taking advantage of this opportunity. Among interview participants, youth spend an average of 4.52 hours browsing the internet per day, but only one in four has taken an online course (Figure 4).

The BAYF study similarly found that online learning is an underutilized resource among youth. The study noted that the National Center for Distance Learning (CNEPD) launched an e-learning platform, but that it has not yet gained significant traction. In addition, 60% of participants in the BAYF study indicated that they use YouTube as a source of informal learning. A very small share of participants indicate that they use more recognized learning platforms such as Khan Academy and Coursera, but adoption remained in the single digits.

Given the role that ongoing learning will play in helping individuals remain competitive as the workplace continues to change and become more digital, it would be beneficial for Algerian youth to increase their usage of online learning, and to do so on recognized platforms that provide certificates. Youth can then use these certificates to market themselves to employers.

Youth Work Experience

In addition to the skills gap, several employers also pointed to young people's lack of work experience as a key barrier for them securing employment opportunities. One elaborated and explained that youth do not receive any professional training opportunities, such as internships, during their university education because of its focus on theory. Another noted that youth do not typically hold seasonal jobs that would better

Youth spend an average of 4.5 hours browsing the internet per day, but only one in four has taken an online course

acquaint them with professional life prior to entering the workforce. This points to the need to increase the extent to which youth experience the workforce prior to graduating, whether it be through summer jobs or internships.

Youth interview results indicate that similarly, youth believe that insufficient professional experience is a top reason why they have not been able to secure a job. This was the most frequently cited reason by both youth who were searching for their first job following the project training (52%) as well as those who were searching for a new job after leaving their initial job (42%) (Figure 5). The fact that this was cited as a barrier by both groups underscores the importance of youth

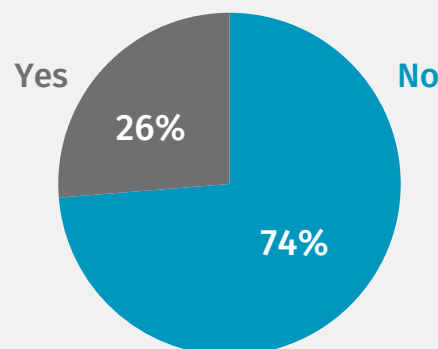
leveraging their first job in order to gain experience before expanding outward to other jobs.

Employer Approaches to the Skills Gap

Employers expressed varying levels of tolerance with regard to how much they are willing to invest in upskilling young hires to address the skills gap. One employer explained that his company is open to training new employees, whereas another explained that he does not feel that it is the job of the company to train youth on their basic job responsibilities. He explained, “We recruit people for them to tell us what to do; we do not recruit them for us to tell them what to do.”

Some employers are working to overcome the skills gap through the creation of private training academies or direct engagement with universities. Multiple employer partners have considered creating private training academies, and at least one has done so. Multiple employer partners have either partnered with universities or are considering partnering in order to prepare youth to succeed in their companies. Two of the employers interviewed had worked together with a technical

Figure 4: Only one in four youth has taken a course online



Source: Project youth interview.

university to train youth on specific modules to prepare them to work in their companies. However, the employers did not provide any commentary on the extent to which they felt this collaboration was successful.

Youth Understanding of Job Search Approaches

Employers interviewed explained that many youth lack mastery of job search approaches, citing past experiences with candidates who were unprepared. For example, one employer explained that he has gotten the impression that many youth are not prepared for the workforce because some have appeared for interviews ungroomed and casually dressed. He acknowledged that youth do not know how to approach interviews because no one has prepared them. Others explained that in their experience, youth do not know how to highlight their competencies to employers.

Employers also noted the lack of targeted behavior that some youth employ during their job searches, as well as the poor quality of materials submitted. For example, one employer explained that youth often submit their CVs for jobs regardless of whether or not their professional profiles are relevant. Another employer explained that youth often cannot effectively prepare a CV in French and that the CVs they receive sometimes do not accurately reflect the candidates' backgrounds. One employer mentioned that he participated in an open recruitment day at a university and that many youth did not have CVs or cover letters prepared.

EFE's previous research on job search behaviors in Algeria, conducted under the BAYF study, supports the supposition that youth are unsure of how to approach their job searches. EFE found that 51% of youth study participants in Béchar, Bordj Bou Arréridj, Ghardaia, Illizi, Oran, Ouargla,

and Tamanrasset felt that the primary reason that they had not found jobs was a lack of employment opportunities in their local markets. However, EFE confirmed that there were nearly 5,000 online job postings in those regions, averaging at least 100 per city. The study also found that only one in two youth in the target *wilayas* use the internet to conduct job searches.

It is likely that youth beliefs that there are a lack of employment opportunities in the market leads to passive behavior in job searches. The BAYF study results support this proposition. Among the unemployed youth interview participants, 72% had secured only one or no interviews during their job search, and 67% of those individuals indicated that the reason they had not secured interviews was because they had not applied to any positions. In addition, nearly 60% of unemployed young men and nearly 70% of unemployed young women indicated that they spend only three hours or less a week searching for employment. By contrast, 38% of interview participants spend between 1-3 hours a day on the internet, and 55% spend more than 3 hours a day. Given this, youth appear to have the connectivity needed to support online job searches but are not necessarily harnessing it. Furthermore, registering with ANEM, not necessarily online, was the most common job search method that youth participants in the BAYF study utilize, which is a passive job search method.

Youth participants in the Increasing Youth Employment in the MENA – Algeria Project who were looking for work were not as likely as the BAYF study participants to cite lack of availability of jobs as the reason why they had not found employment. Rather, they attributed it to insufficient professional experience and access to job search resources (Figure 5). This difference is not surprising, as the BAYF study was conducted in regions outside of Algiers, whereas the present study

Youth appear to have the connectivity needed to support online job searches but are not necessarily harnessing it

primarily focused on Algiers and surrounding areas, where job availability is less of a challenge.

Unfortunately, the present study did not investigate what job search resources youth feel they lack. Future studies may wish to investigate this topic in order to provide more targeted job search services to youth.

Although EFE project graduates who were not currently working spent more time on average than the BAYF study participants in their job searches, there remains room to increase the amount of time that they spend on job search activities. Unemployed EFE project graduates spend an average of 7.48 hours per week actively looking for a job, but 41% spend only 3 hours or less per week.

The Role of Personal Networks

As referenced above, some Algerian youth may face challenges in securing employment because they are not proactively engaged in job searches. This behavior may be driven in some cases by a belief that without strong personal networks that can help youth gain direct access to individuals with decision-making power, youth will not be offered employment opportunities. An employer interviewed under the present study explained that many people do not want to apply to posted jobs because they often believe the company already has someone in mind for the position, and it is therefore already filled.

Reliance on personal networks in filling employment positions in Algeria is borne out by the experience of project graduates and has been documented in the literature.¹ According to project monitoring data, among youth who left their initial job placements following the project training and began working in new positions, 76% indicated that personal contacts were one of the most beneficial job search methods they had used to secure their new position, followed by 29% who found internet job applications to be one of the most useful. Youth who had left their initial job placements and were searching for a new job were most likely to use personal networks as a job search method (Figure 6).

There is some variation in the extent to which EFE project graduates rely on personal contacts for job searches, however. Program monitoring data and data from the project youth interviews identified two cases in which youth relied on internet job applications to a greater extent than personal contacts. Among youth who did not secure employment immediately upon graduation from the EFE training, 82% indicated that they had used internet job applications, making it the top job search method for that group, compared to only 64% who had utilized personal contacts. This emphasis on internet job applications may be a result of the focus within the JTP programming on using proactive job search methods, including internet job applications.

Unemployed youth who participated in interviews were also more likely to use internet applications than personal contacts: only 21% of this group indicated that they had used personal contacts as a job search method over the past three months, compared to 55% who had used internet job applications. Some unemployed youth interview participants may have been looking for jobs for extended periods given the timing of the interviews compared to the project trainings. As such,

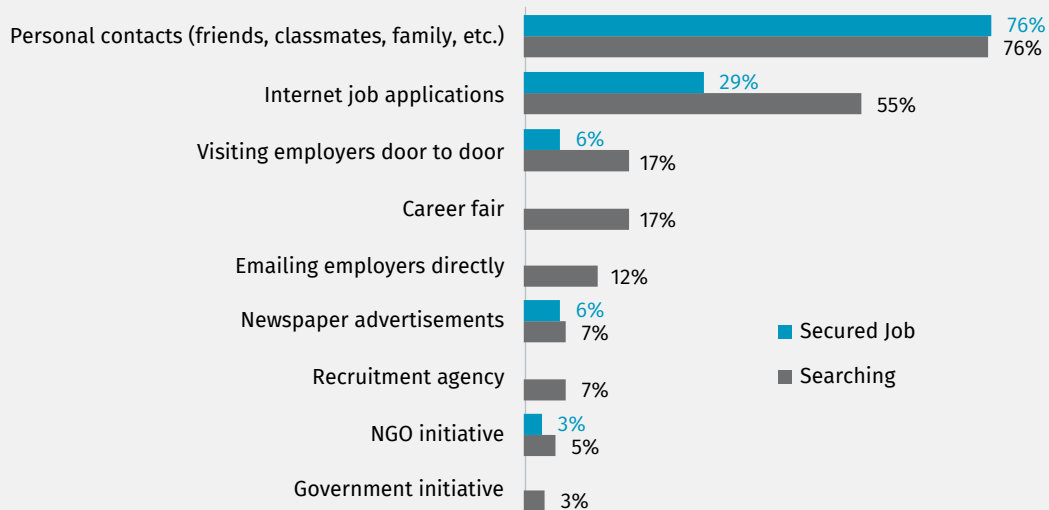
Figure 5: Youth engaged in their first job search following training completion and those seeking work following an initial job placement most frequently cited insufficient professional experience and job search resources as reasons why they had not found a job



Note: Youth who were seeking their first job following completion of the project training and those who were seeking a subsequent job following their initial placement after training completion were asked to indicate the reasons why they believed they had not found a job.

Source: Project monitoring data.

Figure 6: Personal contacts was the most useful job search method for youth who secured a new job following their initial job placement after the training. It was also the most common method used by youth still searching for a job after leaving their initial job placement.



Note: Graph presents a comparison between the methods that youth who secured a job following their initial job placement found to be most useful in securing the new job vs. the methods that youth who left their initial placements and were still searching for work indicated that they were using. Youth were able to select more than one method.

Source: Project monitoring data.

Reliance on personal networks in filling employment positions in Algeria is borne out by the experience of project graduates and has been documented in the literature

the results may indicate that personal contacts are an initial “go-to” method for many youth but that once networks are exhausted, youth place comparatively more emphasis on internet job applications. However, the data is not conclusive, so this point warrants further investigation in future studies.

Overall, study results indicate that a continued focus on orienting youth toward effective job search methods and preparing them to succeed in interviews remains an important component of any youth workforce development programming in Algeria. The study also surfaced the significant role that personal networks continue to play in determining which candidates are selected for open opportunities. This is problematic because it penalizes youth who do not have strong personal networks and can therefore deepen entrenched inequalities. It also may contribute to passive behaviors among young job seekers, which is detrimental to both youth themselves and employers who are struggling to fill vacancies. As such, a move toward transparent and consistent hiring practices could support overall efficiencies in recruitment while also creating social benefits.

Youth Attitudes and Expectations for the Workplace

Study results reveal a mismatch between youth expectations and what employers offer. In particular, discrepancies exist in the level of responsibility that youth expect to have in their positions and the speed of advancement post-hire, as well as the salary offered.

Job Responsibilities and Advancement

Youth focus group results indicate that youth expectations for the level of responsibility they will have in their first jobs and the extent to which they will be related to their educational background are not aligned with job market realities. Some youth explained that in the job market they only find opportunities that they see as “petites postes” – small or insignificant jobs – that are unlikely to lead to career evolution. Meanwhile, employers feel that youth expect to begin their professional life within positions of responsibility without working their way up.

Several employers expressed frustration over what they perceived to be a sense of entitlement by youth, manifested through a lack of focus on developing a stable career, coupled with impatience about advancing quickly without putting in the required effort. Multiple employers used the phrase “bruler les étapes” – skipping steps – in describing youth approaches to work at their companies. One employer explained that especially in the center of Algiers, youth focus heavily on gaining high-level positions from the start of their careers, whereas outside of the capital there is more of a focus on stability given the lower job availability. Employers explained that some youth believe that by simply graduating from the university they are ready to work, contributing to an overinflated sense of their abilities when they complete university training.

Some employers interviewed feel that Algerian youth do not understand the concept of work and are not loyal to companies, but are instead always looking for a better opportunity. One employer noted that youth at his company frequently negotiate their tasks to reflect their individual interests rather than the interests of the employer. Another employer provided an example of a youth who was earning 45,000 DZD per month, more than twice the minimum wage, but left the company after one year because he had not been promoted to management within that time. Another explained that youth want to change positions as soon as they learn the job. Multiple employers attributed these behaviors to the generational values of youth and their tendency to seek change.

In discussing barriers to youth employment, employers felt that youth played a significant role in limiting the opportunities available to them due to their attitudes around employment, not bringing sufficient motivation to the workplace, and by taking a shortsighted approach. Some employers felt that rather than youth being the ones who face obstacles in remaining in the workforce, it is employers who face challenges in convincing youth to remain in their jobs.

However, it is notable that some employers seemed to believe that retention of between two and four years was unacceptably short for entry-level hires. Within markets such as the US, this the norm for younger workers. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average tenure of workers aged 25 to 34 is just 2.8 years.² If we consider youth perspectives that they only find “petites postes” in the job market, it is possible that employers could do more to help youth understand what their career trajectories would look like if they decide to remain with the company longer term.

Salary Expectations

Study results indicate that salary is a leading factor that drives youth to leave their jobs. Several employers interviewed believe that aspirations for higher salaries are the primary reason why youth leave their jobs, even in cases in which the company believes it has offered a reasonable salary that reflects market rates. Some indicated that this drives rapid turnover as youth continuously search for higher-paying opportunities, believing that changing jobs is the way to easily increase their salary.

Multiple employers mentioned that this is especially a challenge in the capital, whereas outside of Algiers youth are more likely to accept the salary offered and remain in their jobs given that there are fewer opportunities available. One employer noted that in Algiers they sometimes have difficulty finding individuals with the needed competencies who will accept the salary the company is offering.

Youth dissatisfaction with the salaries offered to them is evidenced by the behavior of EFE project graduates who decided to leave their initial job placements following graduation. Salary was cited by 57% of youth as the motivation for leaving, followed by inadequate benefits, which was cited by only 19% of youth (Figure 7). The significant drop between the two motivations underlines the strong role that salary plays in motivating youth to leave their jobs. The share of young women and men who cited salary as a motivation to leave their job was similar. Youth focus group participants, both male and female, also indicated that they would like to earn higher salaries. Male participants placed a greater emphasis on this point than female participants.

In addition, among currently employed participants in the youth interviews, 60% indicated that

they are dissatisfied with their current salaries (Figure 8).

The monthly minimum wage in Algeria was previously 18,000 DA (approximately 140 USD), but has been increased to 20,000 DA (approximately 155 USD) as of June 2020. In addition to the increase in minimum wage, income taxes are no longer assessed for income lower than 30,000 DA.³ Employers interviewed offer a wide range of entry-level salaries at their companies, ranging from the minimum wage to 57,000 DA (approximately 476 USD). Among employed project graduates who participated in the youth interviews, the median salary reported was 37,000 DA per month (approximately 310 USD), nearly twice the minimum wage. It is likely that the median for this population is higher than that of the overall youth population in Algeria because the sample was comprised of project participants, the majority of whom have tertiary degrees. In addition, it is possible that the median salary for currently employed graduates is higher than the salary that unemployed project graduates were earning at the time that they decided to leave their employment.

When we look beyond the median salary to consider the full range of salaries employed youth are earning, it is clear that young people's economic circumstances vary greatly. Reported salaries ranged from 3,000 DA less than the previous monthly minimum wage of 18,000 DA to more than triple the minimum wage (15,000-70,000 DA). There was no statistically significant difference in average salary between genders, with females reporting an average salary of just over 38,000 DA per month (approximately 320 USD) and males reporting an average of just over 36,000 DA per month (approximately 300 USD).

These figures suggest that while some youth are able to secure entry-level jobs that provide decent salaries, there are youth who are earning

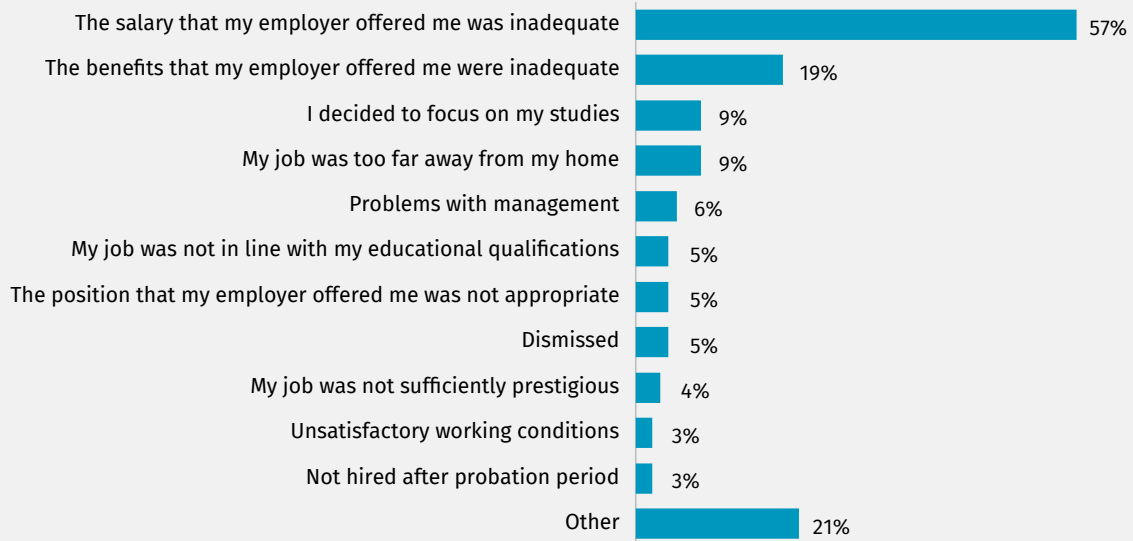
Youth tendencies to frequently switch employers in search of higher salaries may reduce the extent to which employers are willing to invest in the professional development of youth in general

either below or just above the minimum wage. When transportation costs are factored in, some youth are not likely to have much left over. Coupled with the fact that public sector salaries create unrealistic expectations for private sector employment, it is not surprising that a large share of youth are dissatisfied with their salaries.

Employers feel at a loss about how to approach this challenge. One employer summarized the overall sentiment among employers well in saying that youth overemphasize the importance of salary without considering their larger career vision and the value they can gain from secure and respectful work environments, which they may give up in exchange for a higher salary. He added that in leaving their jobs for other companies, the youth may become “mieux payé, mal accompagné” – better paid, poorly accompanied.

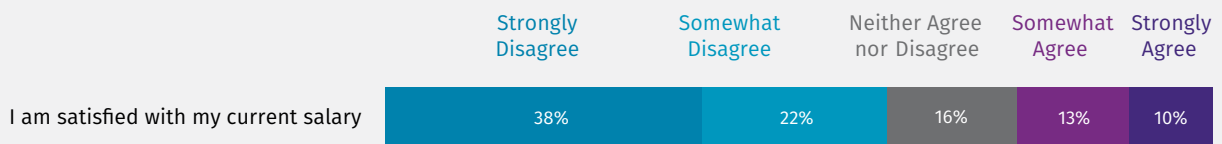
Some employers noted that competitor companies sometimes incentivize youth to leave their current jobs by offering them a higher salary. One employer noted that in his opinion, multinational firms lead to salary inflation in Algeria due to the high level of competition among them for top talent. He noted that his company has a salary policy that keeps them from increasing salaries when other companies offer their current employees more. He also remarked that he feels other

Figure 7: Salary was the main motivation for youth deciding to leave their initial jobs following the project training



Source: Project monitoring data.

Figure 8: 60% of employed youth are dissatisfied with their current salaries



Source: Project youth interviews.

While it is clear that youth likely could use more information regarding the realities of the workplace, it is also true that at least some youth are facing challenges in securing a living wage and stable employment conditions

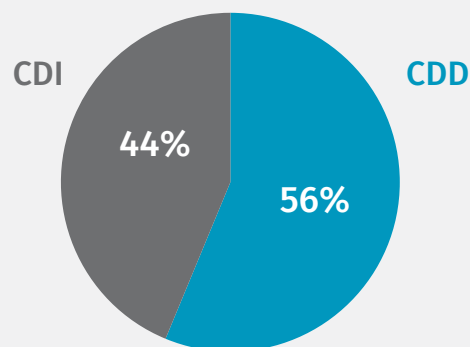
companies are essentially purchasing the investment his company has made in the youth. This is an important observation, as it suggests that youth tendencies to frequently switch employers in search of higher salaries may reduce the extent to which employers are willing to invest in the professional development of youth in general.

Employment Contracts

Focus group results revealed that some youth have feelings of insecurity and instability regarding their employment situations. These feelings were underscored by the youth interview data, which revealed that just over half of interview participants who were currently employed are working under CDD contracts, though nearly all are working in formal positions (Figure 9).

As such, it is not surprising that focus group results also revealed that youth find it difficult to secure CDI contracts, which would lend a sense of stability to their employment situations. Some youth feel caught between two undesirable choices: unemployment while waiting for a suitable opportunity, or precarious employment. Some employers interviewed for the present study offer CDI contracts to entry-level employees, but many use CDD contracts. Probationary periods of between three and six months, regardless of contract type, were common among interviewed employers. One company noted that when hiring young men

Figure 9: Graduates were most likely to hold CDD contracts



Source: Project youth interviews.

who have not completed their required military service they use CDD contracts, likely an effort to prevent complications if the youth is called upon for military service during his employment tenure.

When considering employer feedback and frustration surrounding low youth retention rates, coupled with the mismatched expectations some youth bring to the workplace, it is tempting to conclude that it is youth who need to adjust their expectations. While it is clear that youth likely could use more information regarding the realities of the workplace, it is also true that at least some youth are facing challenges in securing a living wage and stable employment conditions.

It is important to note that some employers who lamented low youth retention rates are using CDD contracts as their primary hiring mechanism for entry-level employees. It has been noted in the literature that individuals working under fixed-term contracts tend to have higher turnover and receive lower wages than other workers, and that employers tend to use fixed term contracts for individuals who do not have significant bargaining power, such as youth.⁴ As such, employers interested in lengthening employee tenure should consider whether CDI contracts might be a more suitable option.

Maintaining an employment arrangement over time requires investment to be made by both the employer and the employee. Youth are not likely to increase the extent to which they remain in entry-level positions without having an increased sense of stability within the employment relationship. Therefore, employers should actively engage youth to understand the conditions that would make them feel supported within the workplace, including desired contract types. Youth, for their part, should enter into employment relationships with an eye toward longer-term career growth.

Support in the Workplace

Workplace environments and benefits constitute another area with potential for mismatches in youth expectations versus workplace realities. In order to explore this topic, the study examined youth perspectives on the topics of professional development support and resources they receive in their workplaces.

Professional Development Support

In order to understand the extent to which youth feel supported in the workplace, youth interview participants were asked to rate their feelings on the support they receive for their professional success and development, as well as in the case of conflicts in the workplace (Figure 10).

The majority of interview participants felt that if they have a challenge in the workplace, they can ask for help from their supervisor or another senior staff member, with 85% of both men and women indicating that they somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with this point. Women were 80% more likely than men to strongly agree, however (72% for women vs. 40% for men). This suggests that both genders are at least somewhat comfortable in approaching senior staff for help, but that young women may have a higher level of comfort.

Youth were split on whether they have the resources they need in their workplace to support their professional development, with 47% indicating that they agreed they did and 29% indicating that they did not. Nearly a quarter of interview participants indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed, which suggests youth may not be sure what they need in order to support their professional development. There was no statistically significant differences between the responses of male and female participants.

Lastly, more than 60% of youth indicated that they feel their supervisor provides the support they need to enable their professional success. This is in alignment with the high share of youth who indicated that they could go to their supervisor or senior staff if they experience a challenge at work.

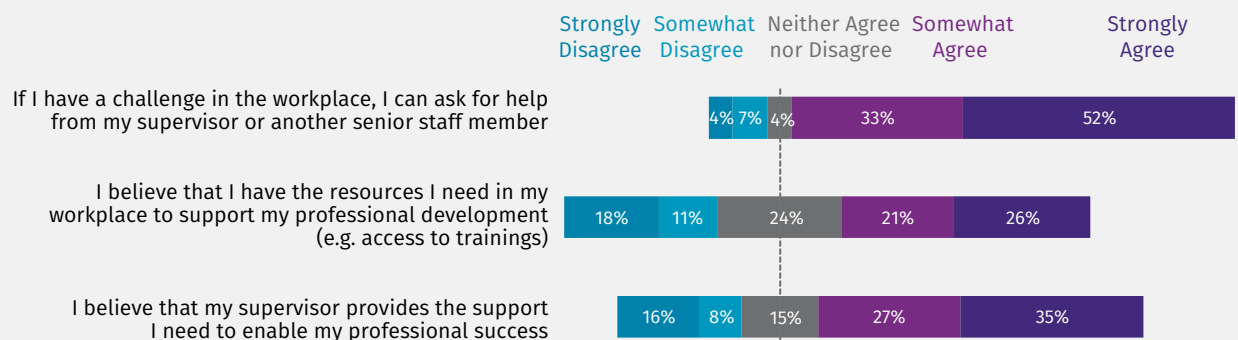
Among focus group participants, some young men indicated that they had received needed support from their supervisors and had been well trained and supported in completing their work. Others, however, felt their supervisors worked in authoritarian ways. For example, one male participant explained, “Algerian managers like to be authoritarian and that impacts us negatively.”

Female focus group participants appeared generally less satisfied with their work experiences than male focus group participants and female youth interview participants. Many female focus group participants reported not having received support or advice in the workplace when they faced challenges. This differed from the perspective of

young women who participated in the youth interviews, a large share of whom indicated that they felt they could ask for help when they needed it.

Youth interview participants were asked to provide any comments that they had regarding the support they receive from their supervisor. As with the quantitative responses, youth had varying opinions. Although overall it appears that many youth feel generally supported by their supervisors and senior staff at their organizations, youth feedback reveals that the relationships that the youth have with their supervisors varies. In some cases, youth explained that their supervisors are helpful. For example, one participant explained, “[I am] very satisfied with my supervisor. He helps me and he takes my ideas into consideration. He supports me” and another, “I receive unconditional support from my supervisor.” On the other hand, not all youth are pleased with their supervisors. For example, one said of his supervisor, “he doesn’t give me the chance to do my job. He is not professional.” Another explained

Figure 10: Youth generally feel supported in their workplaces, but there is potential to increase the extent to which they feel supported in their professional success and development



Note: Figures are not disaggregated by gender because there was only one case of statistical differences between genders. Women were more likely to strongly agree that if they have a challenge in the workplace they can ask for help (72% for women vs. 40% for men).

Source: Project youth interviews.

that employees at small companies are not well-treated, and others felt that their supervisors took them for granted.

Some female focus group participants had negative experiences in the workplace. For example, some had suffered deductions in salary or bonuses in cases in which they made errors or due to delays or absences. Others had not received bonuses or promotions they had been promised, which led some to leave their jobs. Female focus group participants also reported that they had not received training in the workplace. Overall, female focus group participants indicated that they would like to experience an increased sense of respect and trust with their supervisors and that they would like to advance in their careers, points with which male focus group participants agreed.

As evidenced by the findings, the extent to which youth feel supported in the workplace varies across workplaces significantly, and it affects their levels of satisfaction on-the-job. Although salary is given significant focus in discussions with both employers and youth, it appears that workplace quality and culture may warrant an elevated position within the discussion of youth retention.

Resources in the Workplace

In addition to general forms of support, the study aimed to understand what types of tangible resources youth could access in their workplaces. Youth interview participants were asked to indicate the resources to which they had access in their workplaces and those which they would like to access (Figure 11). The largest share (44%) indicated that they had access to trainings focused on improving their day-to-day performance, though it is possible they were referring to the EFE training rather than any additional company-led training offerings. More than a quarter of youth indicated that they did not have access to any

resources (27%). A small share had access to mentoring from more senior employees (16%), opportunities to shadow colleagues working in other job types (13%), and management trainings (12%). Regarding resources youth would like to access, 64% indicated that they are interested in training focused on improving performance in their day-to-day tasks and 25% indicated that they would like management training.

Several employers interviewed currently offer internal training for their employees on topics including technical aspects of the job, company policies, and leadership. Some companies also offer mentoring and coaching to employees, sometimes offered during the onboarding process. In cases in which the company operates within an area subject to international standards such as International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards, training specific to those standards is provided to employees.

As such, the findings suggest that employers wishing to increase youth satisfaction in the workplace should consider providing training on both daily tasks and management.

Benefits

Currently employed participants in the youth interviews were split regarding their level of satisfaction with benefits that they receive in their workplaces (Figure 12). In addition, project monitoring data from the Increasing Youth Employment in the MENA – Algeria Project confirmed that 19% of youth who left their jobs following placement were motivated by concerns over benefits. This suggests that youth are divided on the extent to which they are satisfied with the benefits offered in their workplaces. The study did not go in-depth on specific benefits offered versus those that youth would like to receive. Future studies should investigate this point further.

In interviews, employers cited a range of benefits that they offer to employees, with no particular trends appearing except that employers all provide those that are legally prescribed for officially declared employees. Employers explained that the legally required benefits include social security, medical coverage, and paid maternity leave. A few employers also mentioned offering their employees life insurance and mutual insurance, which covers the remaining 20% of costs that the standard medical insurance does not cover. Employers explained that the latter benefits are not legally required.

Monetary benefits that employers mentioned included competitive salaries and yearly salary increases, and bonuses for meeting objectives, as well as for holidays, marriages, and at the end of the year. Some companies cited supportive aspects of the work environment as a benefit, including comfortable and professional working environments, strong company values, and stability. Talent development was mentioned by some employers and included internal mobility and access to internal promotions, career plans for employees, skills development opportunities, recognition for high-performing employees, and policies to promote hiring of youth who do not have experience. Benefits supportive of women's employment included flexible maternity leave policies, transportation for female employees, and daycare. Other benefits mentioned included vacation, employee discounts, and the provision of company vehicles for employment activities that entail a significant amount of driving.

Approaches for Increasing Youth Employment

Youth and employers were asked to share their opinions on how actors within the Algerian labor market could work to increase youth employment. Both youth and employers felt that the private

sector, the Algerian government, and the educational system had roles to play.

In addition to this discussion, the topic of young people's high level of interest in entrepreneurship emerged through the youth focus groups and interviews, as well as through employer interviews. This topic will be addressed below because youth entrepreneurship is often considered an alternative pathway to youth economic participation in the absence of sufficient employment opportunities.

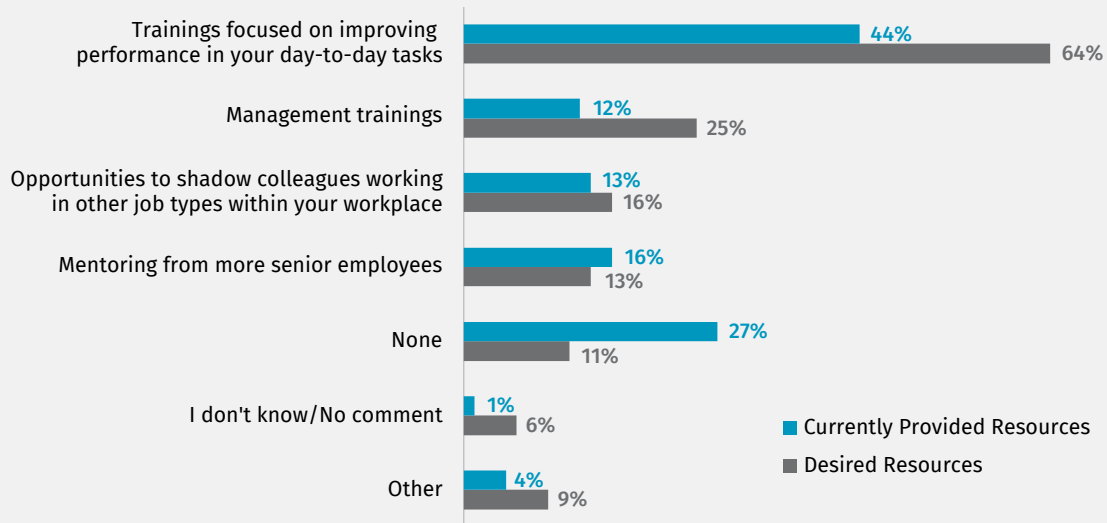
Role of the Private Sector

Employers generally felt that the private sector could play a large role in increasing youth participation in the workforce, primarily because private sector companies are hiring, whereas public sector hiring has slowed significantly. Regarding the role of the private sector, employers generally felt that it offers opportunities for youth to develop themselves, and that this constituted a key form of support. Youth focus group participants agreed that the private sector has a role to play in increasing youth employment.

Multiple employers also cited internships in the private sector as an approach for increasing youth employment. One employer explained that internships are a win-win for youth and the company. He noted that one challenge for youth in pursuing internships is that they are typically unpaid, and suggested that internships should at least include a stipend for food and transportation.

At least one employer who was interviewed has offered internships in the past. The interviews did not actively address employer willingness to hire interns. However, none of the employers interviewed indicated on their own accord that they had plans to develop an internship program or that they were willing to hire interns. Rather,

Figure 11: Although training on day-to-day tasks is the most common resource to which youth currently have access, their desire for training is not being fully met within their workplaces



Note: Results are not disaggregated by gender because there was no statistically significant difference between young men and women. Youth were asked to select all resources to which they had access in their workplace, and some youth selected more than one.

Source: Project youth interviews.

Figure 12: Employed youth were divided regarding their level of satisfaction with their benefits



Note: Results are not disaggregated by gender because there was no statistically significant difference between young men and women.

Source: Project youth interviews.

discussions around this topic remained in general terms. This suggests that any programming aimed at developing internships as an employment pathway for youth in Algeria would need to first assess employer willingness to hire interns and provide the needed support to help them succeed.

Role of the Algerian Government

Many employers noted that the Algerian government has been looking for solutions to the youth employment challenge. The role of ANEM was mentioned in a number of employer interviews, with employers expressing varying opinions regarding its effectiveness. Some feel that its services are satisfactory whereas others suggested that they should be improved and that ANEM should play a more active role in connecting youth with the labor market. Others felt that ANEM could expand its offerings to consider providing professional training and using psychometric exams to guide youth toward career paths for which they would be well suited. It was noted that this type of service could be especially helpful for SMEs since they do not have large HR departments to manage recruitment. It was also suggested that updates to the ANEM website may be helpful, though no specific suggestions were provided. Lastly, some employers noted that it can be a challenge for them to pass all of their open jobs through ANEM, though they did not explain what aspects of the process created challenges. Employers are required to register all open positions with ANEM and those who do not face the possibility of penalties.⁵

Employer suggestions for the Algerian government also included the provision of support through the Ministry of Professional Education's Professional Training Centers. Employers also suggested that the Ministry of Education integrate modules on communication and personal development into standard educational curricula.

Lastly, it was also noted during employer interviews that the government could consider ways to spur economic growth by loosening restrictions on imports.

Youth focus group participants felt that ANEM and ANSEJ, as well as Emploitic, a private agency that provides labor market intermediation, should be responsible for increasing youth participation in the workforce. They also cited events organized by public institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, as playing a role in increasing youth workforce participation. They felt that these organizations and institutions could help youth through training, ensuring adherence to labor regulations, supporting young people's professional projects, and growing businesses as a way to increase the availability of jobs.

Youth recommended that in order to support their professional engagements, recruitment procedures should be simplified in regards to ANEM as well as for the public service and state agencies more broadly. They also felt that banks should support youth entrepreneurship projects, although as previously noted, ANSEJ plays an active role in facilitating access to credit for youth entrepreneurs. Youth also felt that labor laws should be applied to reduce the role of personal connections in recruitment and to ensure that worker rights are protected. They felt that these measures would support employee motivation and employment stability.

Role of the Educational System

Employers felt universities could do more to help integrate youth into the workforce. In particular, employers mentioned that universities could include internship components to help youth orient their studies toward their desired careers. In addition, employers mentioned the need to increase the connection of the educational system

to the private sector generally and to update curricula so that it is in line with market needs. It was also mentioned that universities should prepare youth to conduct effective job searches. As one employer explained, currently, youth figure things out on their own once they leave the university, and they are often not using the most effective job search methods.

Youth indicated that trainings aimed at aligning youth profiles with the needs of the market would be helpful. They also felt that having job search trainings at higher education institutes would be beneficial, as well as information campaigns around careers and employers. Lastly, youth felt that it would be useful to have linkages between higher education institutes and the private sector more generally so that youth understand the market and employers understand youth aspirations.

Role of Other Organizations and Entities

In addition to the private sector, the government, and educational institutions, employers also suggested that charitable organizations, associations, and foundations could play a greater role in incorporating youth into the labor market, though they did not provide specific guidelines on what their engagement should entail.

Entrepreneurship as an Alternative Pathway to Employment

A key theme that emerged from employer interviews and both youth interviews and focus groups was the strong interest youth have in exploring entrepreneurship as their preferred pathway to employment. If youth are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in entrepreneurship, and private sector regulations enable business creation and development, this could constitute a promising pathway to employment for youth.

As referenced in the Active Labor Market Programs section of this report, the Algerian government has created a number of agencies tasked with supporting entrepreneurship and has advanced initiatives to provide microcredit, training, and support for entrepreneurs, including youth and women. While these activities represent positive steps toward advancing entrepreneurship efforts, it has been noted that it is difficult for youth-led startups to gain traction in the MENA region given the restrictive private sector environment.⁶ As such, in conjunction with the support that the Algerian government provides for youth and women's entrepreneurship, the government may wish to consider advancing private sector regulatory reforms in order to create an environment within which businesses – including those of youth and women – can thrive.

Three of the employers interviewed referenced youth entrepreneurship. Some employers referenced it as a rather unrealistic venture that has caused some youth to orient themselves away from regular employment activities, which they see as more realistic. One employer pointed out that some youth want to take this path despite having just completed their university studies and, in his opinion, lacking needed preparation and professional experience.

Youth focus group and interview participants expressed significant interest in starting their own businesses. It is relevant to note that youth focused on entrepreneurship in their responses despite the fact that the focus group and interview questionnaires did not explicitly inquire about the topic. Focus group participants noted that their interest in starting a business was sparked following the EFE training, which is surprising considering that the training did not include a module on entrepreneurship. Among youth interview participants, 23% of young women and 26% of young men indicated in their open responses that

they would like to start their own business during the next five years. For men, it was the most commonly cited plan for the coming five years.

The BAYF study, which was conducted in *wilayas* outside of Algiers, found that young women had a higher level of interest in starting their own businesses compared to young men. Among youth interview participants, 24% of young men indicated that they would like to start their own businesses or become self-employed, compared to 37% of young women. It is possible that the share of young women expressing interest in entrepreneurship or self-employment was higher outside of Algiers because home-based businesses constitute one form of socially accepted employment for women in more conservative areas. Home-based business activities are generally accepted because they provide subsistence incomes, allow women to care for children while working, and do not elicit family opposition since the work is not occurring outside of the home.⁷

It should be noted that entrepreneurship or self-employment activities can be associated with the informal sector for women in Algeria, which would limit their positive impact for young women. Among self-employed women in Algeria, 91.7% are not covered within the social security system, that is, they operate informally.⁸ As such, efforts to promote women's entrepreneurship should put an emphasis on the benefits of official registration, and provide women with the information and tools needed to complete the necessary procedures.

Future studies should explore in more depth the key drivers behind young people's heightened interest in becoming entrepreneurs and how this interest can be harnessed to maximize the positive outcomes for young people and the Algerian economy.

Women's Employment: Barriers and Supportive Factors

Women's employment is critical to sustainable and equitable economic growth. Multiple estimates make it clear that the MENA region as a whole is missing out on significant GDP gains due to low levels of female labor force participation. McKinsey & Company estimates that if gender parity in the labor force were reached in the MENA region, GDP could increase as much as 47% by 2025 over 2014 levels, constituting a total value of \$2.7 trillion.⁹ Another estimate shows that the MENA region is suffering more income loss due to the gender gap than any other region in the world, reaching as much as 38%.¹⁰

At just under 15%, Algeria's female labor force participation rate is among the lowest in the MENA region,¹¹ which indicates that the Algerian economy stands to gain significantly if efforts to increase women's workforce participation are successful. Given the importance of women's employment, the present study gathered perspectives of youth and employers on the topic in order to understand barriers that prevent women from joining and remaining in the workforce, as well as supportive factors that increase their chances of success.

The discussion surrounding barriers to women's employment revealed a wide range of opinions among employers and youth. The variety of opinions, and in some cases the strength of emotion that appeared to underlie them, suggests that there is a debate occurring within Algerian society about the role of women in the workforce and the degree to which they currently do and should exercise autonomy in making professional decisions. This observation is supported by statements of some of the employers interviewed, as well as opinions of youth. Specifically, some employers explained that in their opinion, the

Women face multiple forms of restrictions on their labor force participation: whether or not they work at all, where, at what time, and in what job type

mentality around women's workforce participation has changed in Algeria in a way that is more supportive to women. Some youth also felt that women's workforce participation has evolved. However, some young men expressed unreceptive views toward women's employment, and some young women felt that women could participate in the workforce, but not in all industries.

Do Women Face Barriers in Participating in the Workforce?

The first topic of debate that emerged from the study was whether or not women face barriers in joining and remaining in the workforce. Most employers – both men and women – generally expressed the belief that women do not face any specific barriers or discrimination in joining or remaining in the workforce. Multiple employers shared the opinion that women are becoming freer to make their own decisions and have become interested in building careers for themselves, with some stating that women had been emancipated. Some employers specified that they do not believe it to be a problem at their individual companies, whereas others explained that they feel it is not an issue at all, regardless of industry. Some of the employers interviewed

appeared to find the questions around women's employment somewhat ridiculous, because they felt that barriers to women's employment were not a real issue requiring remedy. A significant number of employers also expressed the belief that women are now favored in the job market.

This finding was surprising given the result of past research on women's employment that EFE has conducted. In EFE's study on women's employment in the MENA region, *First Jobs for Young Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Expectations and Reality*, conducted in partnership with Bayt.com and YouGovⁱⁱ, EFE found that among participants based in Algeria, 95% of employers and 97% of young women indicated that there were challenges to women joining their fields. Interestingly, the most common challenge women cited was poor work ethic (63%), followed by transportation/commute difficulties (56%), need for flexible working hours to care for family (54%), male-dominated working environments being intimidating to young women (40%), and employer's expectation that women will stop working when they start a family (40%).¹²

As each of the employer interviews progressed and the topic was discussed in more depth, several types of barriers emerged, including cultural expectations of appropriate jobs and industries for females, transportation challenges, low self-confidence, and family responsibilities. This suggests that although barriers do exist and many employers are able to identify them, they do not necessarily recognize them explicitly as barriers, but may view them as simply the nature of how males and females operate within Algerian society.

In some employer interviews, female employees

ii Algeria-specific analysis of the *First Jobs for Young Women: Expectations and Reality* data was completed for this report. The study included responses from 1,079 young women and 1,240 individuals involved in making hiring decisions across the MENA region. Among participants of the MENA-wide study were 101 Algerian young women and 61 Algerian employers.

If employers maintain rigid expectations regarding the gender appropriateness of certain opportunities, women are likely to be passed up for professional opportunities, including leadership positions

participating in the interviews were used as examples to support the argument that women do not face barriers in workforce participation. For example, one female interviewee explained that she is married and has children but still has a career. She added that women, as with men, are motivated to work. In another interview, a male interviewee explained that one of the females who was present has children and is still working. While it is worthwhile to identify examples of women who have been successful in building careers, the existence of these examples does not in itself prove that women do not face barriers to joining and remaining in the workforce.

In addition, some employers referenced other examples of women they have hired to work at their companies. However, when asked to describe the extent to which women are represented amongst managers and senior leadership, or what share of the company is made up of female employees, it became clear that although women are working at each of the companies, they are often not represented in high numbers, especially not in leadership positions.

Although some employers did not recognize the existence of barriers to women's employment, others expressed a more nuanced understanding

of the challenges that women face. For example, some explained that women are tasked with balancing employment with family priorities, and that many will not pursue work travel without approval from their families, which can create barriers in accepting positions that require travel. Some employers also noted that challenges may vary by sector or job type. Harassment was mentioned as a challenge for women to remain in the workforce, but only one employer cited this challenge.

In addition, multiple employers cited the government regulation that prohibits women from working at night, and some explained that this was one factor that limited their ability to hire women. Employers have the option to request government approval for female employees to work during night shifts, and one employer interviewed under this study had done so.

Although there is potential to increase awareness around barriers women face in participating in the workforce and ways that employers can help address them, employers appear to be generally supportive of women's workforce participation in principle. Many of the employers interviewed indicated that they make efforts to encourage and support female employees, and some even offer programming aimed at developing women's leadership skills. Some also explained that they are supportive of the idea of having fifty percent female representation at their companies.

It is important to note that there are regional differences in attitudes toward women's employment in Algeria. The present study focused primarily on the larger coastal cities of Algiers and the surrounding areas, as well as Oran, which tend to have more liberal attitudes than other regions of the country. Under the BAYF study that EFE conducted in *wilayas* outside of Algiers, attitudes toward women's workforce participation

appeared more conservative. Among male interview participants, only 57% felt women should work, compared to 89% of women. Furthermore, among participants – both male and female – who felt that women should work, 52% indicated that it was out of economic necessity, compared to 33% who supported it because they believe in gender equality.

Some employers referenced this regional difference during interviews, explaining that in their opinion, women do not face barriers in joining the workforce in Algiers but women in other regions of Algeria may face barriers depending on local culture. One interviewee noted that the job type that women pursue may also vary by region, and another noted that in some regions the company does not hire women as sales representatives due to local cultural norms. Findings suggest that women face multiple forms of restrictions on their labor force participation: whether or not they work at all, where, at what time, and in what job type.

Despite the significant number of barriers that emerged through discussion with employers, many of them – both men and women – emphasized that meritocracy is at play: in deciding who gets hired, promoted, or receives salary increases, employers focus on competencies rather than gender. However, when asked about gender balance of their companies, it was frequently less than 50% women. For example, one representative explained that the company is made up of 23% women, but it occurred naturally based on the competencies of candidates. Multiple employers also specified that salary is not determined based on gender, but is determined by factors such as performance and a predetermined salary grid. One employer explained that the entry-level salary is the same for everyone, but that differences may emerge at more senior positions, depending on skills.

The supposition that meritocracy is the key factor underlying hiring and salary decisions is problematic because it fails to recognize the existence of biases, both conscious and unconscious, that affect decisions made in the workplace. This, in turn, reduces the possibility of addressing them. Research has shown that when organizations promote themselves as valuing meritocracy, managers – both male and female – tend to favor male employees over females in decisions regarding bonuses, promotions, hiring, and firing. Dubbed the “paradox of meritocracy,” the theory holds that organizational cultures emphasizing meritocracy increase the chance of their managers making biased decisions because they have branded themselves as meritocratic, and therefore being beyond reproach.¹³ As such, employers that are committed to increasing the representation of women in their companies may wish to consider taking a more proactive approach to supporting women in joining and advancing within their companies.

Attitudes Surrounding Appropriate Job Types for Women

Results of employer interviews and the youth focus groups and interviews all indicated that there is a tendency among many in Algeria to view some job types as more appropriate for women than others. These beliefs can translate into restrictions on the types of jobs that women pursue. Expectations can be imposed by employers, women's families, women's coworkers, as well as women themselves. There are also legal restrictions governing the types of work considered appropriate for women, most significantly the prohibition against women working at night or in jobs that are considered arduous. There is also a lack of existing legislation prohibiting gender discrimination in hiring.¹⁴ Study results suggest that when women go against the aforementioned expectations, they are sometimes met with disapproval

The willingness of employers to consider women for non-traditional roles will likely be key to changing expectations around what roles and industries are appropriate for women

or resistance from those invested in maintaining the existing system.

The biases of company clients and customers also play a role in restricting women's access to certain job types. As referenced previously, one employer noted that in some regions the company does not hire women as sales representatives due to local cultures that are not supportive of women holding those positions. Another employer explained that in retail stores focused on sports, there generally is a larger share of male employees because customers trust males to a higher degree in their ability to provide quality sport product recommendations. On the other hand, within stores focused on other types of products that appeal more to females, there tends to be a higher share of female employees.

Employer interviews revealed that women may face challenges in rising to leadership positions due to beliefs that the demanding nature of the job is not suitable for women. For example, one employer explained that he believes women do not face any barriers in the workforce, but then went on to explain that he believes a particular leadership position at his company would be more suitable for a man because it requires long hours and travel. In another case, none of

the company's area managers are female, and the representatives explained that this is because the position requires travelling to other *wilayas* and working long hours.

Although there are no legal restrictions regarding industries in which women are permitted to work in Algeria,¹⁵ women may sometimes find themselves excluded from certain industries due to employer beliefs around their appropriateness for females. For example, one employer explained that he feels banking is a good sector for women because in his opinion, they are good at customer service, but that factory management can be problematic if the factory workforce is mostly male. The BAYF study also found that employers have a preference for hiring women in job types relating to care for women and children, as well as services. If employers maintain rigid expectations regarding the gender appropriateness of certain opportunities, women are likely to be passed up for professional opportunities, including leadership positions.

However, not all employers subscribed to generalizations regarding the appropriateness of certain sectors or job types for women. For example, one employer explained that his company has a large number of female engineers as well as a high ratio of female managers, including in the area of logistics, indicating that there are exceptions to the trend. Another employer shared an anecdote about a female employee who their company hired as a salesperson in a region that is unaccustomed to having females in that role. He explained that the company had been initially apprehensive about the decision given the context, but found that the results the employee attained were remarkable.

The willingness of employers to consider women for non-traditional roles will likely be key to changing expectations around what roles and

industries are deemed appropriate for women. One of the employers interviewed explained that it is typical in Algeria for women to work in offices and laboratories, and that expanding their participation to other job types would require leadership and support from managers, adding that he supports such efforts. The important role of management support in changing attitudes is clear from an anecdote that another employer shared. He explained that his company had tried to hire a female employee in a factory but male factory employees did not accept it. Without strong support from management, integration of women into traditionally male sectors and roles is likely to face significant challenges.

In other cases, women may self-select for certain industries or job types, limiting their own professional opportunities. Employers, both male and female, pointed to self-selection and mental barriers as playing a role in limiting women's participation in certain job types, or in the workplace more broadly. For example, one employer explained that women do not typically apply for sales positions at their company due to cultural attitudes, mentioning that this type of issue may be even more of a challenge in rural areas.

The results of the youth focus groups support the supposition that some young women likely play a role in restricting their participation in certain fields or job types. Some female focus group participants made reference to women's ability to succeed in certain career paths, while also explaining that in their opinion, women face some limitations in the types of jobs in which they can succeed.

Specifically, participants mentioned the perceived appropriateness for females of careers in medicine, teaching, beauty, and retail. They also referenced women's perceived ability to succeed in marketing and commerce because, in their

opinion, they have a strong ability to relate to others and present themselves. Female participants also mentioned that women face limitations regarding hours of work, travel, family obligations, as well as physical strength that prevent them from pursuing professions such as becoming police officers, firefighters, or mechanics. However, not all female participants agreed with these limitations. For example, one female participant explained, "For me, women can access all areas like men. She must have a strong character."

The BAYF study also found that some job types are considered more appropriate than others for women in Algeria. Only 15% of study participants felt that all job types were acceptable for women. An additional 10% felt that all sectors were appropriate if the employer manages mixing between genders, and an additional 8% felt that all job types were acceptable so long as women returned home before dark. The remaining participants felt that appropriate sectors for women were medical and pharmaceutical serving women only (28% of participants), teaching and education (25%), and art, seamstress work, and cooking (13%).

Family Responsibilities

Some employers recognized that women often have family responsibilities that may pose challenges for them in joining and remaining in the workplace. Among these employers, some emphasized the efforts their companies make to be supportive of women, including those with families. These efforts include providing flexible maternity leave policies, daycare, and transportation in some cases.

Maternity leave policies varied among employers. Interviewees explained that companies are legally required to provide three months of paid maternity leave to female employees. Two companies interviewed offer female employees the option to

take paid leave during their last month of pregnancy. Another employer offers flexible work schedules following maternity leave, and the option to work from home. Two employers mentioned providing female employees the option of leaving work early for a period following maternity leave. Another company explained that if the pregnancy had complications they offer a fourth month of paid maternity leave following the government-mandated three months, and also offer the possibility of taking additional unpaid time off with the guarantee of returning to their job following leave. In Algeria, maternity leave regulations require women to begin leave one week prior to child birth and for 14 weeks thereafter.¹⁶

One employer explained that his company works to ensure that women do not feel that by having a child they are at risk of losing their jobs, adding that in addition to the government mandated maternity leave, women have the option of working from home or working part time once returning to work, and even before giving birth in some cases.

In EFE's *First Jobs For Young Women* study, young women in Algeria felt that the provision of buses or other transport for women (47%), the ability to work from home (43%), availability of part-time positions (37%), and flexible working hours (30%) were policies that would most encourage young women to enter the workforce. Given these preferences, it appears that the interviewed employers are responding to multiple needs of young women and thus are providing important forms of support for women's employment.

However, the willingness of the interviewed employers to provide supportive environments for young women only tells part of the story, since women must first be hired in order to access these benefits. Employers recognized that some companies prefer to hire men because of concerns over how marriage and children will affect female

employees, though none of the employers interviewed indicated that their company practiced this approach. Employers explained that some companies may fear that married female recruits will take maternity leave early on in their tenure at the company. One employer referenced this concern, but noted that male employees can also face instability due to required military service.

Youth Attitudes Towards Women's Employment

The topic of women's employment was also explored in the youth interviews and focus groups. Youth interview participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding women's employment, including whether having women in the workforce is beneficial to the Algerian society and economy, and whether men and women have equal opportunity to secure employment and succeed in the workplace. Following the rating exercise, they were prompted to provide any comments they had regarding women's employment in order to offer additional context to their ratings. Youth focus group participants were asked to explore a similar set of topics.

Female focus group participants generally expressed positive views regarding women's employment in Algeria. Participants frequently compared themselves to males, explaining that in their opinion, females work more than males, are more competent, patient, ambitious, and less focused on salary. Female participants believe that women work for reasons other than money, such as a desire to support the objectives of the businesses where they work, and to be successful. Youth focus group results support the supposition that males are more likely to refuse or to leave jobs they view as poorly remunerated or insufficiently prestigious.

Male participants in the youth focus groups expressed rather negative beliefs regarding women's employment. For example, one mentioned that in his opinion, women's employment is a driver of male unemployment. Another explained that he feels women's employment is detrimental to the family: "Women's employment creates problems, it is detrimental to the husband and children." Some participants also felt that women cannot succeed in both work and family domains. Others shared opinions that working is merely an excuse for women to leave the house and that employers only select female candidates due to their physical appearance.

It is important to note that administration of both the interviews and focus groups was conducted by Algerian women. Focus groups were separated by gender in all groups except oneⁱⁱⁱ in order to increase the likelihood of youth sharing honest opinions. The rather negative feedback from male participants in the focus groups suggests that young men were honest about their opinions despite the fact that the individual collecting the data was female.

Male interview participants were more receptive to women's employment than male focus group participants. Among interview participants, both men and women had a high overall rate of agreement that having women in the workforce is beneficial to Algerian society, but women were 80% more likely than men to strongly agree. In addition, 15% of men either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed that having women in the workforce is beneficial to Algerian society (Figure 13). This suggests that young women have a feeling of enthusiasm regarding their potential to contribute to society through workforce participation, and that they have support from a significant

share of their male peers, but that there exists a small share of detractors.

A similar trend was observed in youth opinions regarding whether women joining the workforce is beneficial for the Algerian economy. The share of women who were in agreement reached 93%, and the share for men reached 73%. However, women were 68% more likely than men to strongly agree (Figure 14). It is notable that the share of women who strongly agree that women have a positive impact on the Algerian economy, while still high, is lower than the share who believe that women working have a positive impact on society.

Female participants of the youth focus groups felt that women working supports the Algerian economy, spurring the creation of jobs and businesses. The share of young women and young men who understand the economic value of women's labor force participation is encouraging. However, there is potential to increase understanding around this point, especially among young men.

EFE's previous research on women's employment found that across the MENA there is potential to increase understanding of women's economic contributions. In the *First Jobs for Young Women* study, only 4% of employers and 3% of employed young women cited benefits to the economy as a key impact of increasing women's workforce participation. The study also found that male employers were significantly less likely than female employers to believe that increasing the amount of women in the workforce has a positive impact on companies' bottom lines (69% of females vs. 50% of males).

Regarding the topic of equal opportunity, young men were nearly 75% more likely than young

iii It was not possible to segregate focus group participants in Oran by gender because there is an insufficient number of project graduates who reside in the city.

women to indicate that they do not believe women have equal opportunity to secure employment as men (Figure 15).

Young women's open comments from the interviews suggest that they may have responded based on how they perceive their abilities, without considering external barriers to their success. For example, one participant explained that in her opinion, "Since she [women] can manage a family, she will also succeed on the professional side. They [women] are capable of doing everything in all domains; in addition, they are serious and dynamic." Other female participants added that in their opinion, "The participation of women is important today; women have the same chance as men" and "Women are more competent than men." The results of the female focus groups support the supposition that young women are likely focusing on their abilities rather than the barriers they face in participating in the workforce.

All female participants who disagreed that women have equal opportunity were in agreement that women's employment is beneficial to the Algerian society and economy. This suggests that their feeling that women do not have equal opportunity is not motivated by a negative view of women's employment. One participant explained that she feels employers prefer to recruit males over females, but there were no other comments that provided additional context for the cases in which women disagreed that they had equal opportunity to secure employment.

Among young men who disagreed that women have equal opportunity to secure employment, nearly 70% had agreed that having women in the workforce is beneficial for Algerian society. In addition, many of their open comments from the interviews were supportive of women, which may indicate that a large share of young men recognize the barriers that women face. For example,

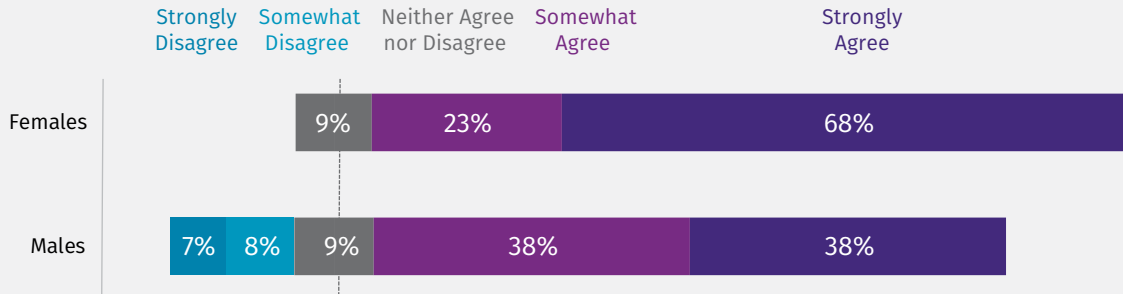
one male participant explained that in his opinion, "It [women's employment] is a good thing; it is a start to help Algeria grow its economy and market." Another added, "She [women] has the capacity to manage her personal and professional situation."

However, 26% of young men who do not believe that women have equal opportunity to secure employment disagreed that having women in the workforce is beneficial for Algerian society. In addition, some provided negative comments regarding women's workforce participation, or indicated that women can participate, but only in certain sectors. For example, two male interview participants who disagreed that women had an equal opportunity explained, "Women have no place in the labor market" and "I am in agreement with women participating in the labor market, but not in all domains." When paired with the negative views that male focus group participants expressed regarding women's employment – such as the supposition that women are hired only for their appearance – it appears that some young men believe women do not have an equal opportunity because they either do not support women's employment or they believe that women are not as competent as men.

Regarding women's opportunities to succeed in the workplace once they secure a job, women continued to provide ratings that suggest higher levels of optimism than men toward women's employment. Women were 55% more likely to strongly agree that women have an equal opportunity to succeed in the workplace. Although nearly 60% of young men either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed, nearly 30% indicated that they strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed (Figure 16).

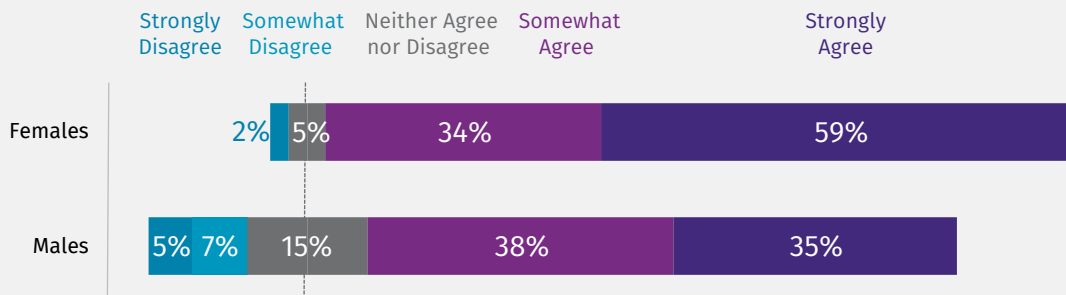
Among men who disagreed that women have equal opportunity to succeed in the workplace,

Figure 13: Young women and men were relatively open to the idea that women's workforce participation is beneficial to Algerian society, but women were 80% more likely than men to strongly agree



Note: Youth were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement "Having women in the workforce is beneficial to Algerian society."
 Source: Project youth interviews.

Figure 14: Both young women and men recognized that women's labor force participation is beneficial to the Algerian economy, but women were nearly 70% more likely to strongly agree



Note: Youth were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "Having women join the workforce is beneficial for the Algerian economy."
 Source: Project youth interviews.

two-thirds had agreed that women's employment is beneficial for Algerian society. One participant explicitly acknowledged the challenges women face, saying that he finds women "equivalent to men, yet they advance less than men given the difficulties that they face." However, some male participants provided comments that were critical of women's economic participation or supportive of it only under certain conditions. For example, one male participant said of women's employment, "I am not in agreement," and another said, "Women should look for respectful employment." As such, some young men who believe that women do not have an equal opportunity to succeed in the workplace appear to recognize the barriers that women face. Others, however, appear to be motivated by negative perceptions regarding women's employment.

Young women who indicated that they disagreed that women have equal opportunity to succeed in the workplace largely did not provide comments to contextualize their opinions on this point. As with female participants who agreed that women have an equal opportunity to secure employment, those who agreed that women have equal opportunities to succeed appear to have responded according to how they perceive their abilities, without considering external barriers to their employment. For example, female interview participants explained that in their opinion, women have "a very important role in the labor market in Algeria" and that "Algerian women are remarkable in the market." While it is a positive sign that young women are confident in their abilities, they are less likely to be able to actively participate in removing the barriers that women face if they do not recognize that they exist.

The range of opinions expressed on the topic of women's employment supports the conclusion that there is an ongoing debate around the shape that women's workforce participation is beginning

to take within the Algerian economy and how it will develop in the future. Young women appear confident in their ability to contribute to the Algerian society and economy through their work. Among young men, many are supportive of women's workforce participation, but there remains a share of young men who are not.

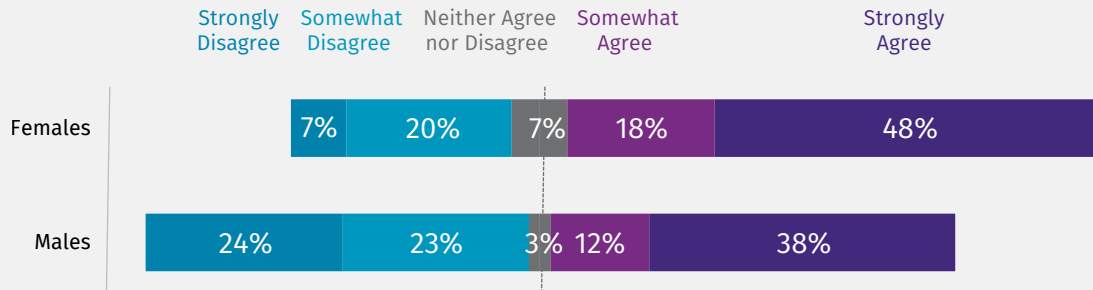
Perceptions of Female Preference in Hiring

Some employers, both men and women, feel that women are actually favored within the private sector job market and have some advantages in their job searches. Factors that employers mentioned as an advantage are the fact that more women than men graduate from universities in Algeria each year, which can lead to a larger number of female applicants than males, and women do not face military service requirements. One employer explained that it is common to have five female candidates to one male candidate in their recruiting pools.

Some male participants in the youth focus groups also felt that women are favored in the job market, both by public and private employers, and that it is a driver of unemployment for men. For example, one participant said that "females occupy almost all of the jobs," explaining, "it is because women accept work even at a low salary." Multiple participants expressed the belief that women are hired and retained not based on competencies, but rather due to their appearance or simply for being female. One participant explained, "My friend, who is very competent and has experience was not retained...they preferred a female over him who is not at all competent, just because she is a woman."

Similar attitudes were recorded in the BAYF study. The study found that 50% of men view women as competitors in the job market, with 38% indicating

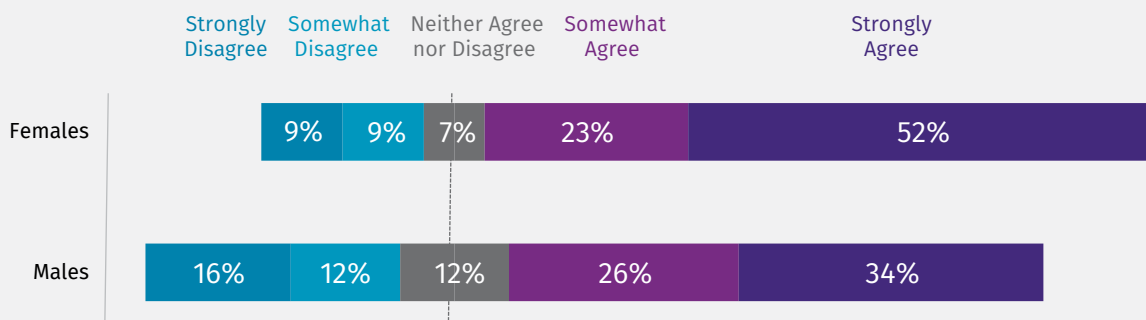
Figure 15: Young men were nearly 75% more likely than young women to feel that in Algeria, women do not have equal opportunity to secure employment as men



Note: Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "In Algeria, women have equal opportunity to secure employment as men."

Source: Project youth interviews.

Figure 16: Young women were significantly more likely than men to feel that women have an equal opportunity to succeed in the workplace



Note: Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "In Algeria, women have equal opportunity to succeed in the workplace as men."

Source: Project youth interviews.

Young women were nearly 60% more likely than men to report that it is very important to them that their family agree with their career decisions

that the reason is that recruiters prefer to hire women, 25% indicating that women accept low salaries, and 20% indicating that women are not required to complete military service.

In interviews with both male and female employers, many expressed their opinions that women present several strengths over their male peers that make them more appealing employees. Attributes that employers ascribed to women are that they are ambitious, integrate well into the business, and are more patient, adaptable, loyal to the company, reasonable, qualified, and assiduous in their jobs. Some employers also feel that women have lower turnover rates than men, though not all employers agreed with this assertion. Other positive attributes that employers ascribed to women's performance were higher levels of conscientiousness, intellectualism, patience, time management, and reactivity. One employer added that culture plays a role in the attitudes men and women bring to the workplace, explaining that women are conscientious, whereas men take time to "calm down" – i.e. accept responsibilities – and once they do, it can be too late. Young women who participated in youth focus groups shared the opinion that in work, women are more calm, patient, and serious than males.

Representatives at one company felt that women work hard to maintain their jobs especially if they

have families or parents to support, which suggests that in some cases women with families may be more likely to remain in their jobs, not less. One employer explained that he believes women are not more advantaged than men in their job searches, but rather they take more initiative to look for jobs and are more serious about their careers.

Female Salary Expectations

A theme that appeared in both the employer interviews and youth focus groups was that women are less demanding than men in terms of salary. For example, one employer mentioned that male employees will typically require a salary increase if their work requires them to travel, whereas females will not. Another explained that women are more willing to accept lower salaries than men without negotiating. Female participants in the youth focus groups explained that from their perspective, women are ambitious and place their focus on developing themselves, succeeding in the workplace, and on supporting organizational objectives, whereas men focus more on salary. The young women noted that women are willing to work for low salaries because of these additional objectives. For example, one female participant explained that "women are more ambitious, they look to progress but men want to make more money. Women work more." Male participants in the youth focus groups also felt that women are willing to work for low salaries, but they viewed this as a factor detrimental to men's job opportunities.

In a study on gender discrimination in the accounting profession in Oran, it was shown that employers demonstrated a preference for inviting female candidates to be interviewed over males. The study concluded that this preference was likely motivated by the belief that women are willing to accept lower wages than men. The study

explains that this female preference is not to women's benefit in the long run because it could lead to a tendency to funnel women into lower-skilled jobs.¹⁷ In order to be conclusive, additional research in more regions in Algeria and more industries would need to be conducted. However, the results of the research suggest that the possibility of female preference, at least within entry-level jobs, cannot be categorically denied, though it may not be to the economic benefit of women in the long term.

Youth Employment Decisions: The Role of Family

Youth focus group and interview results revealed significant differences in the attitudes that young women and men typically hold regarding the importance of family in making work decisions. Specifically, young women typically place a high level of importance on parental opinion, and many will not take a job without their parents' approval. Young men, on the other hand, were more likely to view their professional decisions as their own, with parents providing advice but not making decisions for them. For example, one female focus group participant explained, "From the beginning, if my parents do not accept it, I do not engage," whereas a male participant explained, "They [parents] give advice, that is all." Another male participant explained, "I tell them [my parents], if you don't like this, find me another job so that I will stop this one."

Some female participants explained that if their parents disagree with a decision they would like to make they attempt to convince them, but that in the end, it is the decision of their parents that they will follow. For example, one female participant explained, "I had the opportunity to do a casting, but my father did not accept it. I tried to convince him, but in vain." One male participant made reference to the fact that he attempts to

convince his parents in the case of their disapproval, but does not change course: "We continue on our path, but we try to convince them." Some female participants explained that their parents do not interfere much in their work, on the condition that they keep them informed regarding working conditions.

For young women who follow their families' preferences, areas in which parents tend to interfere include refusal to allow work travel, night work or work after 5:00pm, and jobs they view as "petit travail" such as retail or cleaning jobs. For example, one female participant explained, "My father refuses for me to work in dishwashing; he does not want me to work in just any job." Another explained, "I found a job as a salesperson but my parents did not want me to be a salesperson."

A small minority of female participants explained that they make decisions for themselves. For example, one participant explained, "I convince them. If that does not work, I do what I want." In the case of male focus group participants, those who were willing to forgo work opportunities when they had a significant impact on the family were the minority. For example, one male participant explained that in the case of disagreement over a work decision, he would try to convince his parents but that if they do not agree with his decision he would change course because he believes they have his best interest in mind. Another male participant added that he would consider the opinion of his spouse rather than his parents, explaining that "it is tricky for a married man to make any big work decision compared to a single man."

Youth interview participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that it is important that their family support their career decisions. They were also asked to indicate whether they would pursue a career direction their family does not support. Interview results

Although some women are more likely than men to follow the preferences of their family, there is a large share of women who are likely to take their own path or who are in between

provided additional support for the conclusion that young women place more emphasis than young men on family opinions in their career decisions. Young women were nearly 60% more likely than men to report that it is very important to them that their family agree with their career decisions. Meanwhile, men were nearly three times more likely than women to disagree that it is very important to them that their family agree with their career decisions (Figure 17).

Regarding the likelihood that youth would refrain from taking a step in their career if they did not have family support, women continued to report a higher level of concern than men regarding family opinion. Women were more than twice as likely as men to strongly agree that if their families did not support a career direction they would like to take, then they would not pursue it, whereas men were nearly twice as likely as women to strongly disagree (Figure 18).

This indicates that women have a much higher tendency than men to make career decisions according to the preferences of their families. However, not all women align with this tendency, as 9% of women somewhat disagreed and 23% strongly disagreed with the idea that they would not pursue a career path that their family did not

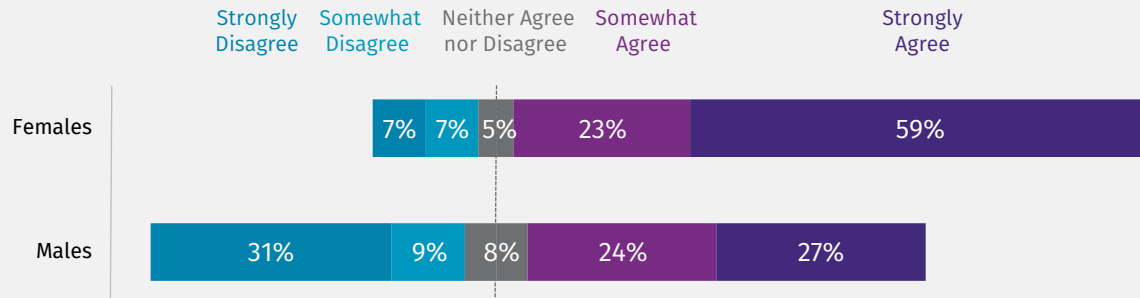
support. An additional 30% indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed. It appears that although some women are more likely than men to follow the preferences of their family, there remains a large share of women who are likely to forge their own path or who are in between. This underscores the importance of avoiding generalizations regarding what women are or are not willing to pursue professionally.

Participants were asked to provide any additional comments they wanted to share regarding the role of family in their career decisions. Some female participants explained that they value their family's advice and that their support is important, with one clarifying that this is the case given that her family provides both moral and financial support. Other women explained that their parents' opinions are important but that professional decisions ultimately fall with themselves, and yet others explained that families should respect their children's decisions. Some participants used a tone of appreciation to explain why they consider their family's opinion. For example, one female participant explained, "I really give importance to their advance because it's thanks to them that I have gotten to where I am."

Some male participants took a similar tone. For example, one explained, "It is important to me because they have more experience, so I take their advice into consideration." One male participant made reference to the changing nature of the culture surrounding family consultation: "It is important but nowadays there is a certain freedom in decision making, so the final decision is up to me." Another male participant referenced the possibility that families may be unable to provide relevant advice since there are domains that they do not know.

While women face barriers in securing and retaining employment in Algeria, study results reveal

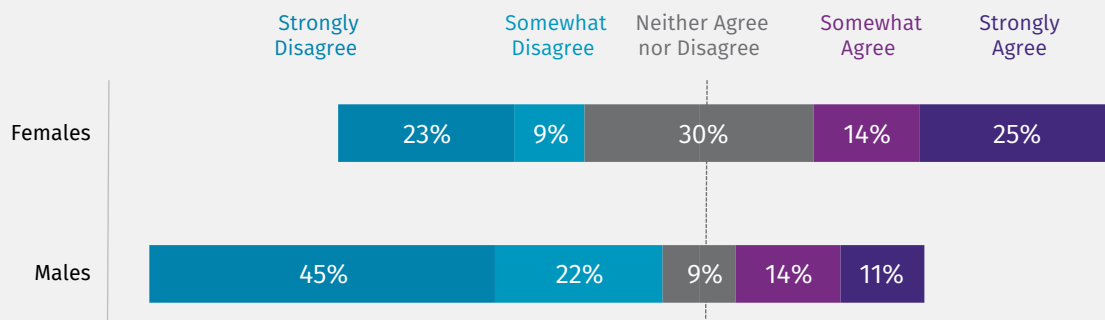
Figure 17: Young women placed significantly more importance than young men on whether their family agrees with their career decisions



Note: Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “It is very important to me that my family agrees with my career decisions.”

Source: Project youth interviews.

Figure 18: Young women were more likely than young men to indicate that they would not pursue a career path if their families did not support it, but there remains a large share of women who would



Note: Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “If my family does not support a career direction that I would like to take, I will not pursue it.”

Source: Project youth interviews.

that young women are eager to participate in the workforce, and that they believe in their ability to do so. Despite some detractors, results indicate that young women have the support of many of their male peers, as well as employers. Positive developments are underway that suggest that more young women may begin entering the workforce, especially in urban areas. However, the support of company leadership and managers will be critical to ensure that women's employment continues to develop in Algeria.

Approaches for Increasing Women's Employment

When asked if they believed the private sector could play a role in increasing women's employment, many employers felt that it could, primarily due to the fact that the private sector is currently driving most hiring activities in the country. Employers also explained that the private sector is advancing in the area of human resource management, and that it offers employees opportunities to continue developing their competencies. Despite these sentiments, one employer pointed out that the public sector is more stable for employees, however. It was also noted that outside of large cities, the public sector provides a significant share of the available job opportunities.

A small number of interviewed employers are actively working to address the gender gap. They have focused on efforts to recruit female directors and managers, including in less traditional areas such as factory management; adopted policies that require final candidate lists to include at least one female; and provided programming that builds women's skills and leadership capacity within the company. These companies are working to reach gender parity within their companies, including top leadership. The companies that are

placing greatest focus on this aspect of the business are multinationals, but some local companies are also making efforts in this area. One employer explained that in his opinion, there are a lot of unexplored paths to promote women's employment in Algeria. The efforts that some companies are making to integrate women are an encouraging sign that Algerian work environments may be becoming more supportive of women's workforce participation.

Youth focus group participants indicated that there were many ways to increase women's employment. Youth suggested approaches that included social media announcements and other advertising, incentives in job offers (no specifics were offered), prioritizing employment types that are most suited for women within the Algerian context, providing training specifically for women prior to recruiting them, adapting work hours to suit women, and not requiring experience as a condition for hiring.

When asked if they felt that there are any institutions that should play a role in developing women's workforce participation, employer interviewees cited universities, professional training institutes, and ANEM. One suggested that universities could include professional practicums and another suggested that ANEM could provide support to women in entering technical positions.

Youth focus group participants feel that there are a large number of institutions and organizations, both public and private, that play a role in promoting female employment. They noted that all public sector employers contribute to this effort, particularly the Ministry of Education and the Communal People's Assembly (APC),^{iv} which they explained hire a large number of females. In addition, they felt that banks play a role in promoting

iv The Algiers municipal council

The efforts that some companies are making to integrate women are an encouraging sign that Algerian work environments may be becoming more supportive of women's workforce participation

female employment, as do businesswomen clubs and associations, as well as private companies more broadly.

The Digital Economy

EFE explored the digital economy in Algeria under this study given its key role in the 21st century labor market and potential to create attractive jobs for young people. In addition to increasing job creation for youth, expanding the digital economy could contribute to economic growth and help Algeria diversify its revenues away from hydrocarbons. Expanding the digital economy will require reductions in the cost of internet access as well as improvements in broadband quality, and the creation of mobile and digital payment systems.¹⁸

The General Directorate for the Digital Economy, which sits within the Ministry of Post, Telecommunications, Technology, and Digital (MPTTN), is responsible for setting the national policy around the development of the digital economy. In addition, the recently created Support Organization for Digital Development (EADN), which also sits within the MPTTN, is tasked with building an ecosystem supportive of the digital economy, to close the digital divide, and help Algeria build

a knowledge-based economy. The EADN is also charged with digitalizing government agencies.¹⁹

This study sought to assess the level of engagement of youth in the digital economy, as well as their level of interest in working within it. It also sought to assess whether they foresaw any challenges to its expansion in Algeria.

Youth Interest in the Digital Economy

As a proxy for measuring the extent to which youth are acquainted with the digital economy in Algeria, youth interview participants were asked if they knew of any Algerian companies operating in the digital economy and if so, they were asked to name at least one. In asking the question, it was explained to youth that the digital economy refers to companies that conduct business via the internet. Two in three youth indicated that they were unable to name an Algerian company operating in the digital economy. There was no statistical difference between male and female participants in their ability to name a company. Among youth who indicated that they could name an Algerian company operating in the digital economy, 72% of participants named the online marketplace Jumia – which is, in fact, based in Nigeria. The second and third most commonly mentioned companies are Algerian and included the ecommerce and classifieds site Ouedkniss, cited by 18% of participants, and the taxi hailing application Yassir, cited by 10%. Some youth cited more than one company.

Although these results indicate that there is significant potential to increase awareness of the digital economy in Algeria among youth, they also point to the nascent nature of the digital space in the country. Sylabs, a technology entrepreneurship hub based in Algiers, conducted an ecosystems mapping of the startup space in Algeria which demonstrated that while there is interest and traction in this area, there remains room to

grow. The mapping identified only four late-stage startups: Yassir, Ouedkniss, the taxi hailing application Temtem, and the logistics and delivery company Easy Relay.²⁰

In order to gauge the potential for growing youth employment in the digital economy from the supply side, youth interview participants were asked to rate their level of interest in working in the sector. Overall, youth showed a high level of interest in working in the digital economy, with 25% indicating that they were extremely interested and 40% indicating that they were somewhat interested (Figure 19). There were no statistically significant differences between genders.

Youth focus group participants showed somewhat less enthusiasm toward work in the digital economy than interview participants. Some participants viewed the digital economy as a new and interesting area of employment, but interest levels varied based on individuals' perceptions of the work opportunities and environments in the sector. Youth felt that it would be an interesting domain if it allows for career growth and is within the public sector or offers similar benefits as those offered in public employment, such as equivalent salaries, social security, and insurance. Other benefits that would pique youth interest would be having clear, stable, and what they called "respectable" working arrangements, as well as bonuses and leave benefits similar to those offered in the public sector. The discussion surfaced negative impressions that Algerian youth have about the private sector more broadly, referencing the lack of stability or benefits that some have experienced in their jobs within the private sector.

Positive attributes that youth focus group participants associated with the digital economy are that it allows flexibility in work hours and allows employees to work remotely. They also felt that

Among youth interested in working in the digital economy, two in three felt that they faced obstacles in finding a job in the field

the sector does not place the same premium as others on prior professional experience. However, youth also expressed skepticism about the sector, with some viewing companies within the sector as phantoms with which they cannot gain direct contact. Females were generally more skeptical than males. Some female participants indicated that their interest in working in the digital economy would depend on the nature of work offered.

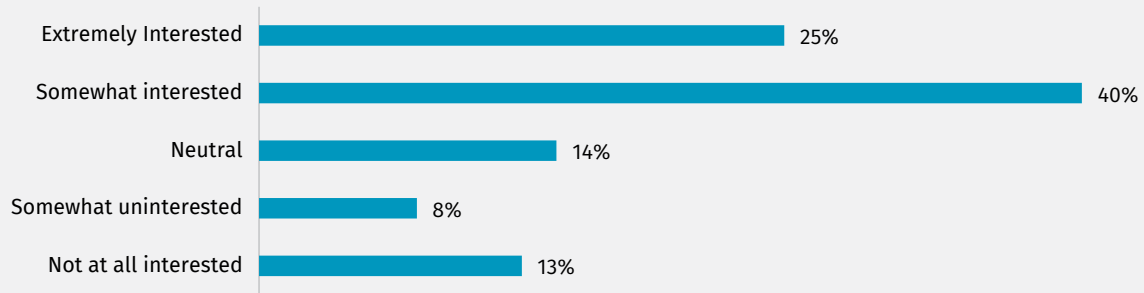
Perceived Obstacles to Joining the Digital Economy

Among youth interview participants who expressed interest in working in the digital economy, two in three felt that they faced obstacles in finding a job in the field. There were no statistically significant difference between genders.

Youth who felt they faced obstacles in finding a job in the digital economy were asked to cite up to two top obstacles they believed they faced. The most commonly cited obstacles included a lack of digital job opportunities in the market, cited by 38% of youth, insufficient professional experience in technology (33%), and lack of relevance of their area of study to existing job opportunities in the digital economy (25%) (Figure 20).

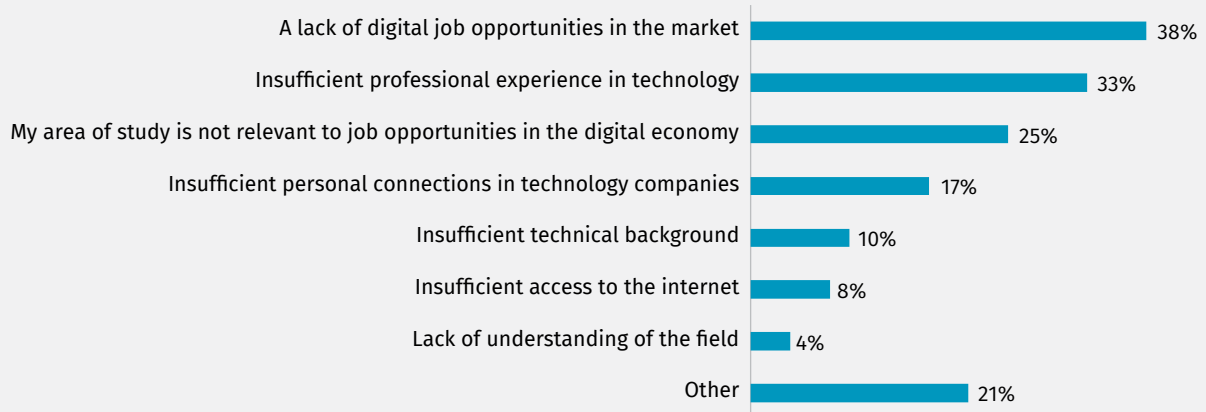
Youth focus group participants perceived the obstacles they face in joining the digital economy as similar to those they face in trying to enter the workforce more broadly. Those obstacles

Figure 19: Two-thirds of project graduates are interested in working at a company operating in the digital economy



Source: Project youth interviews.

Figure 20: Youth feel that a lack of digital job opportunities and insufficient preparation are the top barriers to accessing digital jobs



Note: Youth were permitted to select up to two top barriers. Other responses included a wide range of topics such as nepotism and lack of experience and resources as broad topics not specifically related to the digital economy, and the need to complete the national military service.

Source: Project youth interviews.

include experience, although some believe this is less of an issue in the digital economy, the role of personal connections, French and/or English language skills, and a lack of direct contact with companies.

In addition, some participants credited the digital economy with facilitating online job searches by creating new ways for youth to make contact with companies. They also felt that it had reduced the role of personal connections in job searches, provided more flexible work environments, and allowed opportunities for first-time job seekers due to a lesser focus on professional experience than other sectors.

Perceived Obstacles to the Development of the Digital Economy

Youth were asked to share their opinions regarding the obstacles that the digital economy faces in expanding within Algeria. More than half of youth indicated that they were unsure or did not have an opinion. Among those who had an opinion on the matter, the most commonly cited challenges included a lack of technological and financial means, such as internet access, access to credit cards, and the ability to pay online; a sense that Algerians have not developed a culture of engaging the digital economy; and a feeling that there is a lack of confidence in the digital economy in Algeria.

The digital economy is beginning to bud in Algeria. This growth can be accelerated and employment opportunities generated if obstacles to the sector's development are removed, awareness around opportunities is increased, and youth have access to training to prepare them for success in digital careers.

Notes

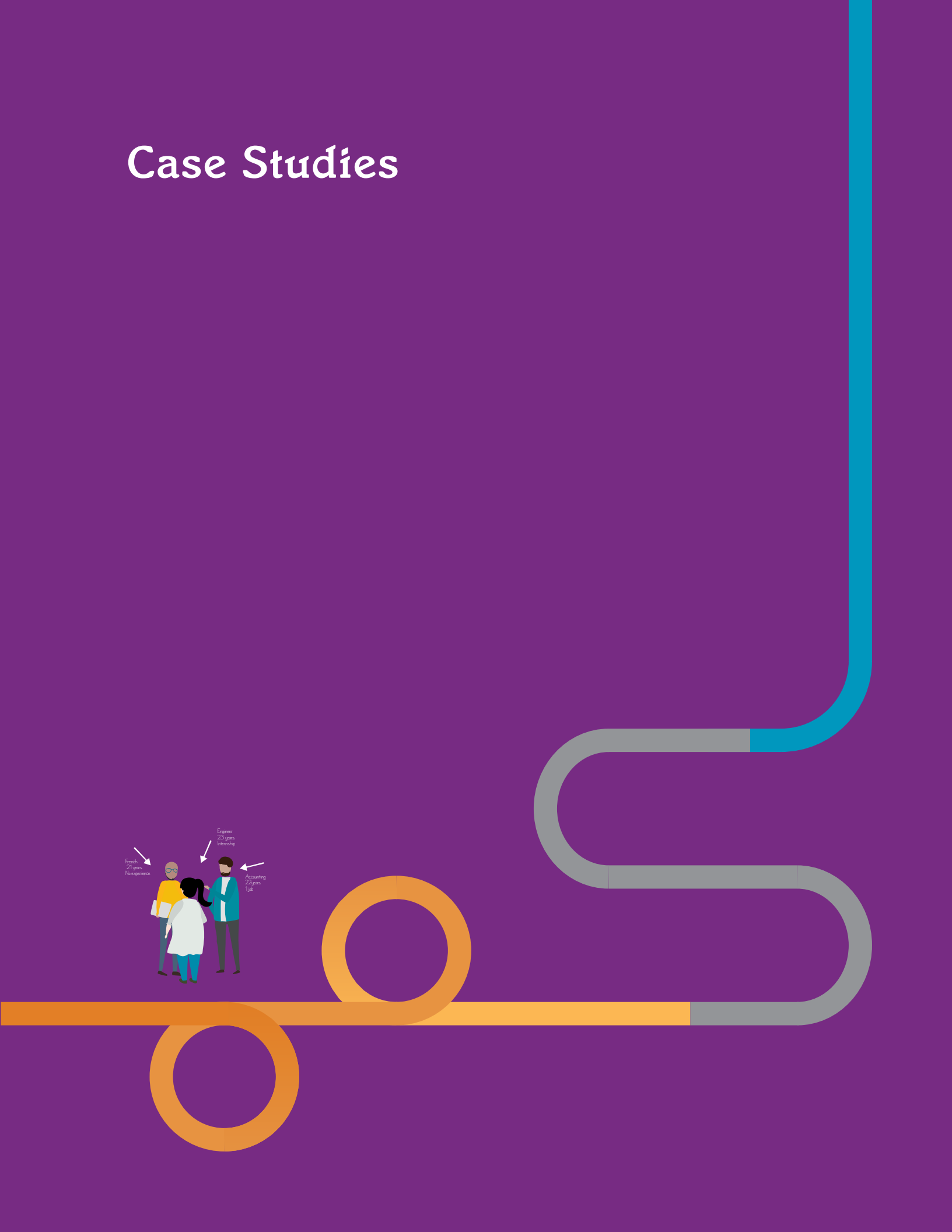
- 1 Benhabib and Adair (2017).
- 2 Information on employee tenure in 2018 is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm>.
- 3 Algérie Presse Service. "PLFC 2020: Réduction de 50% du budget de fonctionnement et revalorisation du salaire minimum garanti à compter du 1er juin" May 3, 2020. <http://www.aps.dz/economie/104675-avant-projet-de-la-lfc-2020-augmentation-de-50-la-reduction-du-budget-de-fonctionnement-et-revalorisation-du-salaire-minimum-garanti-a-compter-du-1er-juin-prochain>.
- 4 Angel-Urdinola and Kuddo (2010).
- 5 ETF (2019).
- 6 Kabbani (2019).
- 7 Gherbi (2014).
- 8 Gherbi (2014).
- 9 McKinsey & Company (2015).
- 10 Cuberes and Teignier (2015).
- 11 Labor force participation data for Algeria are from the World Bank Databank (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 26, 2020), <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- 12 Barry (2015).
- 13 Castilla and Benard (2010).
- 14 Information on labor restrictions is from the World Bank Women, Business, and the Law 2020 (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 18, 2020), <http://wbl.worldbank.org>.
- 15 Information on labor restrictions is from the World Bank Women, Business, and the Law 2020 (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed January 18, 2020), <http://wbl.worldbank.org>.
- 16 Information on maternity leave regulations in Algeria is from the ILO's Travail legal database (database), ILO, Geneva (accessed January 24, 2020), <http://ilo.org/travail>.
- 17 Benhabib and Adair (2017).
- 18 Internet expansion information taken from the article "How Algeria can boost its economy" by Rabah Arezki of the IMF, published on the World Economic Forum's website (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/04/how-to-liberate-algeria-s-economy/>).
- 19 More information on Algeria's telecommunications agencies, see the government's website at <https://www.mpttn.gov.dz/fr>. (Accessed January 28, 2020.)
- 20 For more information about Sylabs' Algerian Ecosystem Mapping, see Sylabs' website at <http://sylabs-dz.com/dz-ecosystem-mapping/>.

References

- Angel-Urdinola, Diego F., and Arvo Kuddo. 2010. "Key characteristics of employment regulation in the Middle East and North Africa." Working Paper, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Barry, Ashley. 2015. "First Jobs for Young Women in the Middle East & North Africa: Expectations and Reality." Washington, DC: Education For Employment.
- Benhabib, Lamia, and Philippe Adair. 2017. "Hiring Discrimination on the Algerian Labour Market: an Assessment with Testing." *Alger*.
- Castilla, Emilio J., and Stephen Benard. 2010. "The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 55 (4): 543-676.
- Cuberes, David, and Marc Teignier. 2015. "Aggregate Effects of Gender Gaps in the Labor Market: A Quantitative Estimate." *Journal of Human Capital* 10 (1 (Spring 2016)): 1-32.
- ETF (European Training Foundation). 2019. "Algeria: Education, training and employment developments 2018." Turin: European Training Foundation.
- Gherbi, Hassiba. 2014. "Caractéristiques et déterminants de l'emploi informel féminin en Algérie. Le cas de la wilaya de Bejaia." *Mondes en développement* 166 (2): 45-58.
- Kabbani, Nader. 2019. "Youth Employment in the Middle East and North Africa: Revisiting and Reframing the Challenge." Doha: Brookings Doha Center.
- McKinsey & Company. 2015. "The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth." New York: McKinsey & Company.



Case Studies



Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project Case Study

In recognition of the challenges that Algerian youth face in entering and succeeding in the job market, Education For Employment (EFE), with the support of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), implemented the Increasing Employment in the MENA Region – Algeria Project between 2015 and 2020. The pilot project benefitted 719 youth (39% females) in the *wilayas* of Algiers, Oran, Blida, and Bordj Bou Arréridj through soft skills and employability training, as well as private sector job placements. Over the course of the program, 94% of project graduates were confirmed as having secured employment following training completion, the majority of whom had done so with EFE's 17 project employer partners.

This case study outlines key results from the program, including a discussion of project outcomes for youth and the private sector, and highlights key learnings from the project.

Project Overview

The project consisted of two programming types: Job Training and Placement (JTP) and Employability.

The **JTP program** focused primarily on improving youth soft skills and was paired with sales and English language trainings depending on employer need. EFE worked with employer partners under the project to customize the JTP training to meet their companies' individual hiring needs. In addition, youth participants of the JTP programming were recruited from the applicant pools of employer partners. Following training delivery, EFE worked with its employer partners to help JTP graduates secure jobs with them. The JTP program

served 616 youth over the course of the project (37% females), securing a 98% graduation rate.

The majority of project participants were between the ages of 25-29, followed by 18-24 (Figure 21). Most participants lived in Algiers (83%), with smaller shares from Oran (7%), Bordj Bou Arréridj (5%), and other *wilayas* (5%). Nearly two-thirds of participants had either a bachelor degree or advanced university degree. This was intentional, as youth unemployment is higher in Algeria among more educated populations, so the program was targeted toward this group. Some youth had prior work experience, but all were unemployed at the time they entered the training.

The Employability program provided youth with key skills required to conduct an effective job search, including the development of a CV and cover letter, how to succeed in job interviews, and related skills. A total of 103 university students (50% females) enrolled in Employability courses, and 95 youth (48 females) increased their employability.

All participants were university students in Algiers at the University of Science and Technology Houari Boumediene (USTHB) and the École Nationale Supérieure de Management (ENSM). For this reason, employability participants were younger on average than JTP participants, with 90% of Employability participants being between the ages of 20-24 (Figure 21).

Analysis of Project Results

This section will focus on the results of the JTP program, as most measurement activities were focused on this component of the project since it provided more in-depth services to youth. Future projects delivering employability training could benefit from additional measurement activities.

Overview of Project Results

All Programs

719

youth served
(39% females)



JTP Program

616

youth served
(37% females)



604

training graduates
(38% females)



567

youth secured jobs
(35% females)

96%

employment retention
3 months after job start



92%

employment retention
6 months after job start*



17

private sector
employer partners



4

Wilayas: Algiers, Oran, Blida, Bordj Bou Arréridj

Employment Sectors: retail, agrofoods, industry, banking, telecommunications, and leasing

Employability Program

103

Total Youth Served
(50% females)



95

Youth who Improved their Employability
(48 females)

*Retention rate calculated by dividing the number of youth who were still working three or six months after job start, whether at their original employer or a new employer, divided by the number of youth reached for the status check. Four youth had switched employers within 3 months of job start and 15 had switched within 6 months. Unreachable rates for 3- and 6-month status checks were 5% and 15%, respectively.

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected during and after the JTP training delivery reveal that this project component had an overall positive impact on both youth and employers.

Impact on Youth

Feedback collected via focus groups with training graduates indicate that as a result of the JTP program, youth noted an improvement in their confidence in their ability to achieve objectives. They also felt that they learned how to resolve conflicts, gained an ability to stay calm and manage stress, and improved their communication skills. Youth also stated that it increased their levels of positivity and helped them learn how to bring out positive aspects of themselves. They found the high quality of the trainers and the applicability of the training to multiple sectors, as well as its applicability to both their personal and professional lives, to be one of the most helpful aspects. Youth indicated that the workplace simulations and roleplaying components of the training were beneficial because they provided opportunities for youth to practice the skills being taught in the training.

In order to measure youth satisfaction quantitatively, youth interview participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would recommend EFE to a friend or family member. Nearly 90% of youth interviewed indicated that they would recommend EFE, with 75% indicating that they were extremely likely. There was no variation between men and women. Youth interview participants explained that they felt the training was of high quality and that it was useful and practical. Some explained that it helped them find a job, and others explained that the training helped them in the workplace. A small number of youth felt the

training was not helpful for them, but did not provide a significant amount of detail as to why not.

Job Placement Characteristics

As referenced above, among the 604 graduates of the JTP training, 567 were confirmed as having secured jobs following the training.ⁱ A total of 98% of initial job placements secured after the training were full-time positions. Job placement rates increased over the course of the year following graduation from the trainings, but the majority of youth secured employment within 6 months after graduation. Placement rates for women were initially lower than those of men, but eventually caught up (Figure 22).

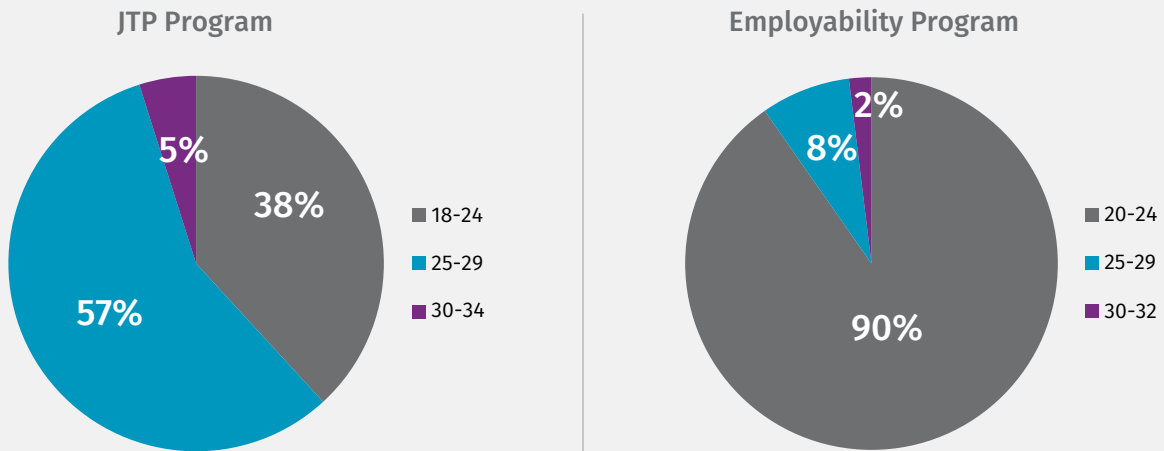
On average, project graduates work 42.3 hours per week

Information regarding the contract types that youth secured was not collected as part of the project monitoring data. However, the youth interviews conducted under this study shows that just over half of employed youth participants (56%) are working under fixed-term contracts (CDD), with the remainder working under permanent contracts (CDI). Male and female participants were equally likely to be working under each contract type.

The youth interview results also provide insight into the number of hours youth work each week. On average, project graduates work 42.3 hours per week, with some youth working as little as 8 hours

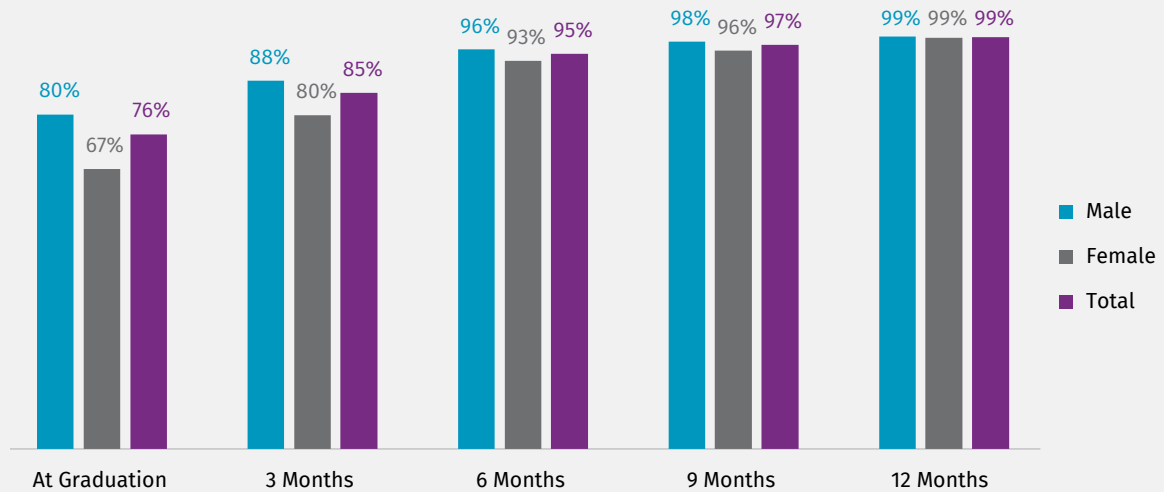
ⁱ Job status was confirmed via periodic phone calls with youth and their employers.

Figure 21: Program participant age breakdown



Source: Program monitoring data.

Figure 22: The majority of project graduates secured employment within 6 months of graduation



Note: Job placement rates were calculated by dividing the number of youth who were confirmed as having secured jobs by the number of youth reached for employment status checks. The unreachable rate at graduation was 1%, at 3 months was 2%, at 6- and 9-months was 3%, and at 12 months was 4%.

Source: Project monitoring data.

a week, and others working as many as 72 hours per week. There was no statistical difference in hours worked between male and female participants. In Algeria, a standard workday is eight hours, and the legal maximum for days worked per week is six.¹

Interestingly, 39% of employed graduates indicated that they had gained increased income following the program, with no statistical difference between genders. This may indicate that youth gained income from sources other than formal employment prior to joining the training, since all youth were unemployed prior to joining.

The most common industry of placement post-training was retail, with 41% of graduates securing positions in this field. Industry was the second most common, with 24% of graduates working in the field, followed by banking and finance, with 16% (Figure 23).

The composition of job placement sectors was the result of the sectors in which project employer partners operate. Retail was a highly successful sector for project graduates to secure job placements due to a number of reasons. First, EFE was able to identify major retail companies that were expanding their presence in Algiers and Oran and were therefore looking to hire for large numbers of entry-level positions. In addition, retail positions were ideal opportunities for young people who did not have substantial professional experience. Positions in industry were found to be attractive opportunities for young men given the cultural context, whereas banking positions were attractive opportunities for young women, also due to the cultural context.

More than half of youth who secured jobs following training completion worked in sales positions (57%), followed by customer service (15%) and manufacturing (8%) (Figure 24).

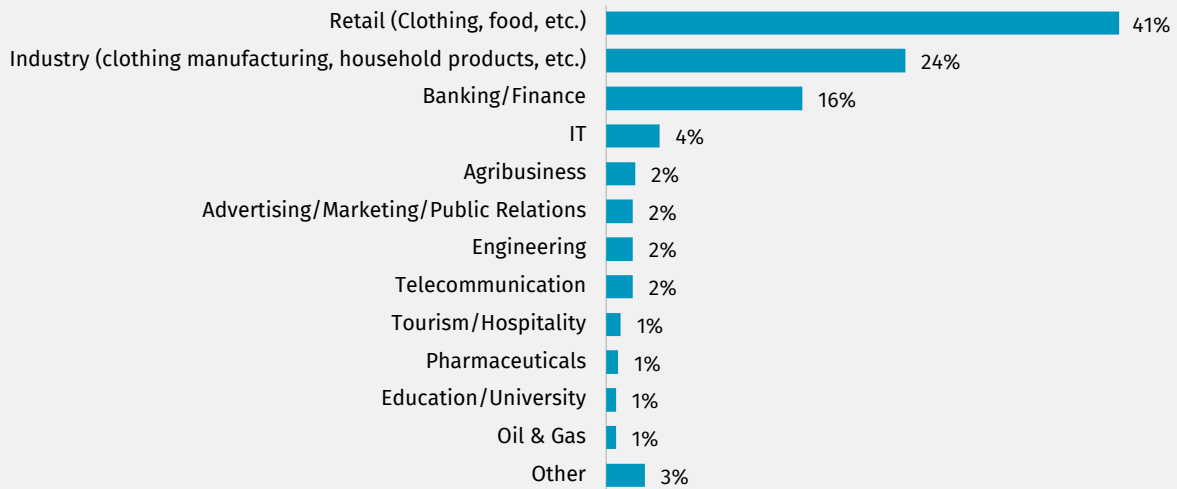
Almost all of the first positions that youth secured following graduation were formally declared. Program monitoring data on this point is available for 412 of the 567 youth confirmed as having secured employment. Among those 412, 99% had secured a formally declared job following the training. Data was not collected for the remaining individuals because the question regarding formality was added to the job placement questionnaire after job placement data for the initial cohorts had already been collected.

Employment Retention

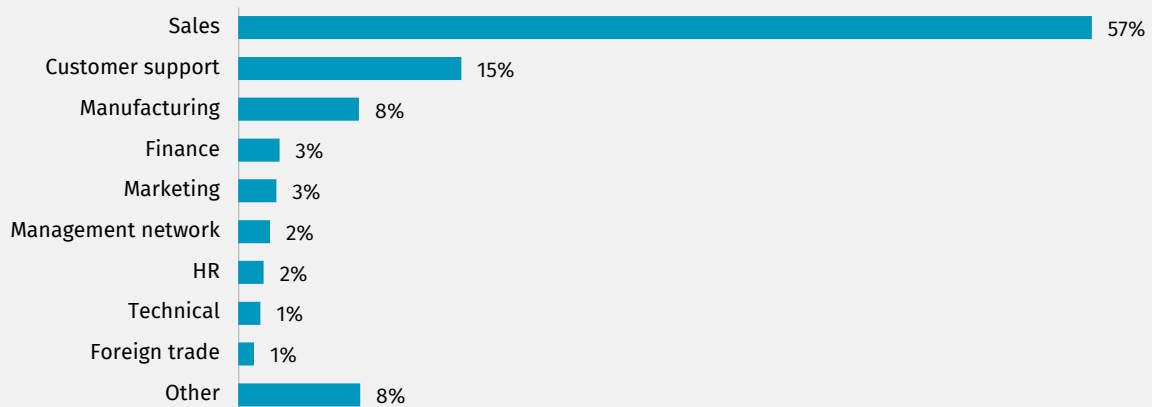
Job retention rates were strong overall, and remained high through 9 months following employment start. A drop off in retention was observed between 9 and 12 months, which was more pronounced for young women (Figure 25). Maintaining high response rates presented a challenge for retention measurement. Given that many youth in Algeria change their phone numbers over time, increasing numbers of beneficiaries became unreachable as time went on. The unreachable rate for the 3-month retention status check was 5%, compared to 15% for the 6- and 9-month checks, and 30% for the 12-month check.

Although the lessening response rates create challenges for data quality, the data that is available suggests that some youth – particularly young women – may face difficulties in remaining in their jobs for longer than 9 months. However, retention rates for young men at 12 months remain relatively strong.

Project consultants provided informal mentoring via social media groups that training graduates joined. This support was helpful in guiding some youth through challenges encountered early on in their tenure, but may not have been sufficient to promote longer-term retention. This point warrants further study to determine ways to maintain

Figure 23: The most common industries of job placement post-training were retail, industry, and banking

Source: Project monitoring data.

Figure 24: More than half of youth who secured jobs following training worked in sales positions

Source: Project monitoring data.

retention for a minimum of a year in order to help youth gain a solid amount of work experience prior to moving on to other opportunities.

The majority of youth who left their job placements had been working in industry or retail, and they had a tendency to change sectors in their second job placement. The share of youth working in retail was only 12% among those who secured a new job, compared to the 41% of youth who worked in the sector in their initial placement. Individuals who worked in banking and switched jobs, however, tended to move on to a new position in banking for their second job opportunity, with rates of employment in banking and finance remaining relatively stable at 12%. Employment in pharmaceuticals and construction increased to 12% in both cases, up from 1% and 0% of project graduate first-time job placements, respectively. This suggests that youth may view banking as a longer-term career path than retail or industry.

98% of initial job placements secured after the training were full-time positions

Among youth who left their initial job placements and began new positions, a large share continued to work in customer-facing roles including sales (21%), marketing (15%), and customer service (12%) across different industries.

Full-time positions remained the most common job type in subsequent positions, with 85% of youth securing them after leaving their first job following training completion. Much smaller shares worked in part-time positions (6%), self-employment (6%), and in temporary positions (3%). Youth interview data indicates that the

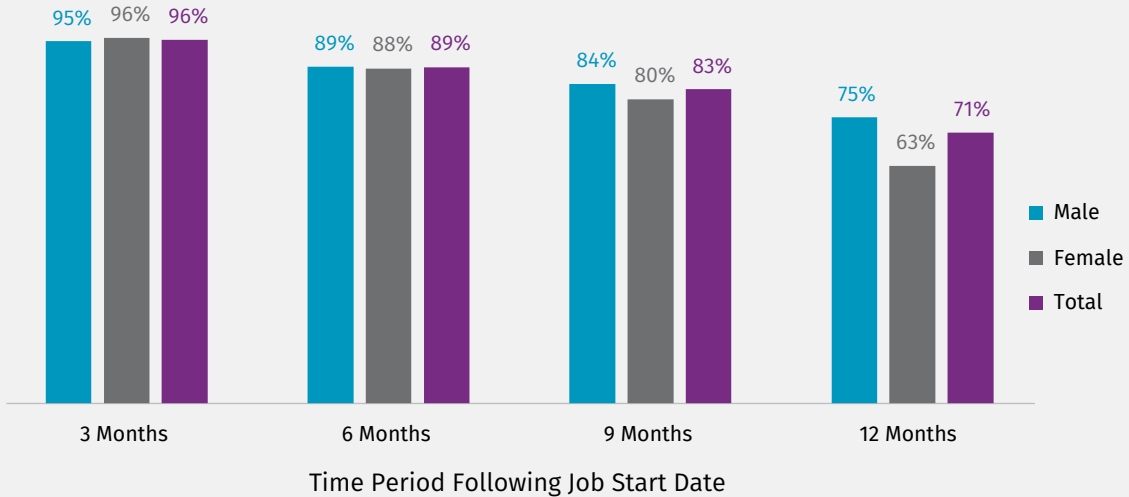
share of youth who were working formally may have decreased somewhat following initial job placements, although the overall share remained high. Among interview participants who were currently working, 90% were working in formally declared employment.

Cohort Effects of Working with Project Alumni

Working with other EFE graduates was correlated with individuals retaining a job for a period of three months. Among employed project graduates, 23% indicated that they worked with other EFE alumni. Two-thirds of individuals who indicated that they worked with other EFE graduates felt that it was beneficial (Figure 26). Youth cited many reasons for this, including a shared understanding with their coworkers, fluid communication, and improved group cohesion. One graduate explained that she was experiencing personal problems and that being surrounded by the colleagues from the training helped her through it. Another explained that he works in a high-stakes profession involving electricity, and that knowing his colleagues from the training makes him feel more calm. One employer partner noted that having youth take the training together created a friendly environment and another remarked that it helped support teamwork.

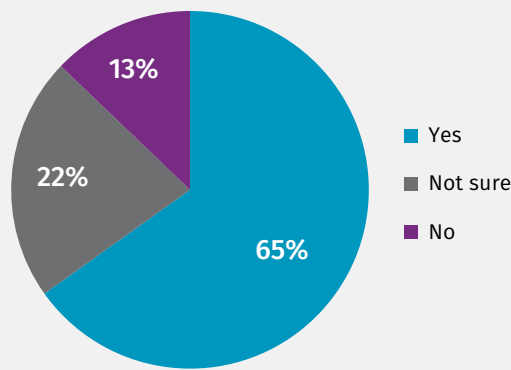
Although working with other EFE graduates was correlated with retention at three months after placement, it was not correlated with job retention at periods after three months. Most youth who left their jobs cited dissatisfaction with salary or benefits as a main reason for leaving their position (Figure 7), so it is likely that working with EFE graduates has a positive effect on youth retaining their jobs when they initially begin working at their companies, but that it is not sufficient to compensate for the other factors that eventually cause them to leave.

Figure 25: Job retention through 9 months remained strong, but there was a drop off between 9 and 12 months following employment start



Note: Retention rates are calculated by dividing the total number of youth confirmed as having retained their job for the duration of the measurement period, divided by the number of youth who could be reached for the status check. Unreachable rates increased with time and were 5% at 3 months, 15% at 6 and 9 months, and 30% at 12 months.

Figure 26: Nearly two-thirds of graduates who worked with other project graduates felt that it was beneficial



Source: Project monitoring data.

Youth Career Trajectories

In order to gauge the longer term effects of the program, the study considered youth plans for the next five years. Regarding their current employment arrangements, just over a third indicated that they did not know how long they would remain with their current employer, 17% indicated that they planned to stay for less than one year, and 30% indicated that they would stay for between 1-2 years. A small share of youth (8%) indicated that they planned to remain for more than five years (Figure 27). There was no statistical difference between young women and men or between those working under CDD or CDI contracts in terms of the amount of time they planned to remain with their current employer. The lack of variation between youth holding CDI and CDD contracts is interesting, as temporary contracts are often associated with higher rates of turnover. It is possible that youth responses to this question are more reflective of their lack of visibility on their future plans more broadly rather than their opinions regarding the relative stability and desirability of CDD versus CDI contracts.

Study results suggest that the program may have increased young people's sense of optimism surrounding their work opportunities in Algeria. Two-thirds of project graduates indicated that they agreed with the statement, "As a result of the program, I feel that I can build a career for myself in Algeria" (Figure 28). There was no statistically significant difference between male and female participants on this question, nor between project graduates who were working and those who were not.

In addition, the project may have had an effect on youth interest in migrating, though the results are not conclusive. Although many graduates of the EFE programs expressed the intention of remaining in the Algerian workforce, whether through

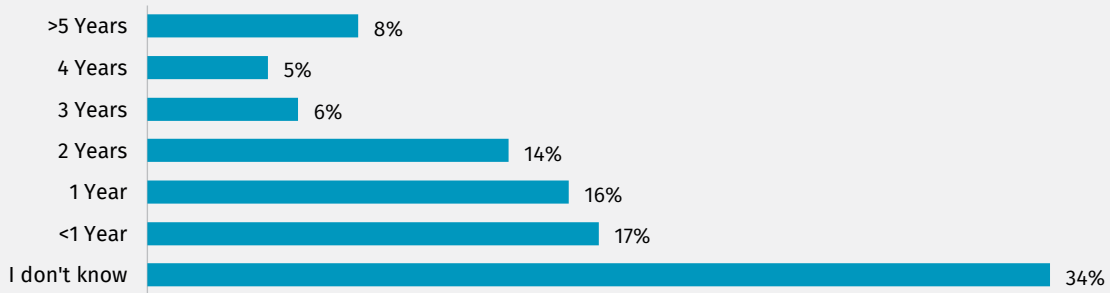
The majority of youth who left their job placements had been working in industry or retail, and they had a tendency to change sectors in their second job opportunity

wage employment or through starting their own business, 16% of females and 9% of males indicated that they would like to emigrate to work abroad. An additional 2% of females and 5% of males indicated that they would like to study abroad. Some male and female participants of the youth focus groups also expressed an interest in emigrating (Figure 29).

The SAHWA study of 10,000 youth in Arab Mediterranean Countries (AMCs) found that approximately 25% of youth in AMCs have an interest in migrating.² The stated preferences of the participants in the youth interviews conducted under the present study show a slightly lower inclination toward emigration than the overall rate in AMC countries. However, it is difficult to make a definitive conclusion regarding the role of the program in affecting this point since we do not have baseline data on project participant preferences against which to compare the endline results.

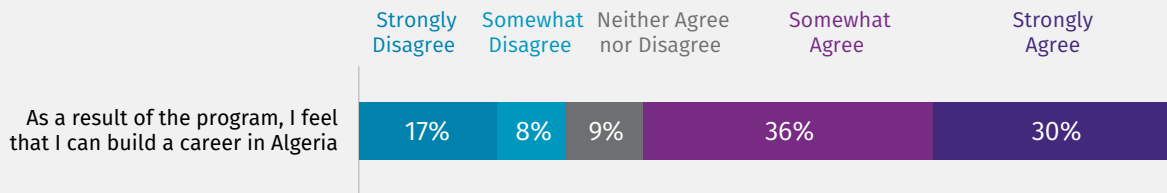
Perhaps the most surprising result from the study of young people's future plans was the large share of both male and female youth who expressed interest in starting their own business. In addition, both male and female participants of the focus groups expressed interest in starting their own businesses, noting that this interest was sparked following the EFE training. This is interesting, as the training did not include an entrepreneurship

Figure 27: A third of youth are not sure how long they will remain with their current employer



Source: Project youth interviews.

Figure 28: As a result of the program, two in three project graduates felt that they could build a career for themselves in Algeria



Source: Project youth interviews.

module. Among youth interview participants, 23% of young women and 26% of young men indicated that they would like to start their own business during the next five years (Figure 29). The BAYF study, which was mainly focused on individuals outside of Algiers, also noted an interest among youth in creating their own business ventures, especially among young women.

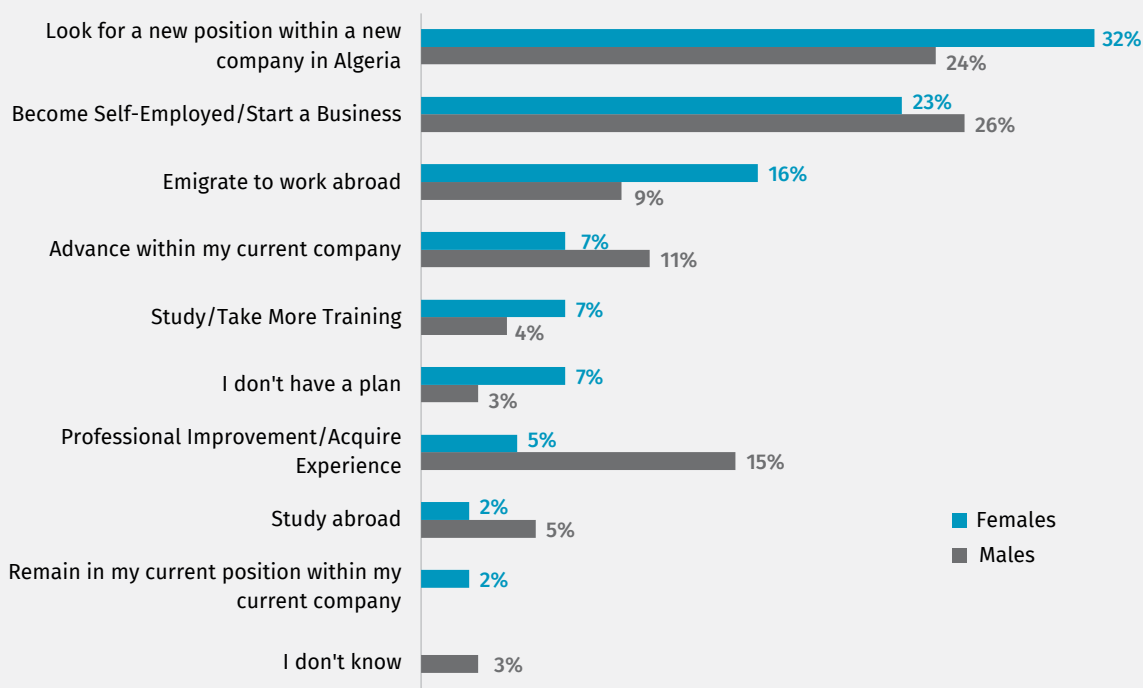
Value for Employer Partners

Overall, employer partners expressed that their companies and the youth had benefitted from their engagement with EFE under the project and that the trainings were of high quality. A number of employers mentioned the high quality of the trainers in particular. All employers interviewed

indicated that they were either likely or extremely likely to recommend EFE to a colleague seeking to hire young professionals for entry-level positions. Employers appreciated the training's uniqueness within the Algerian training landscape, and noted that it helps close the gap in workplace preparedness following young people's completion of university education. They explained that the training's focus on practice over theory is an important aspect. One employer noted that the training had enabled them to shift their recruitment toward recent university graduates.

In addition, some employers noted that the engagement was helpful because EFE helped companies select promising and more successful candidates from among their applicant pool. Through

Figure 29: During the next five years, most project graduates wanted to either start their own business or look for a new position within a new company in Algeria



Source: Project youth interviews.

Among youth interview participants, 23% of young women and 26% of young men indicated that they would like to start their own business during the next five years.

this process, one employer felt the program enabled them to get to know the candidates better prior to hire.

Some employers noted that the engagement with EFE had generated cost savings for their companies because of reduced turnover and absenteeism, improved employee sales performance, and increased speed at which youth integrated within the company upon hire. In addition, multiple employers noted that the fact that the training was provided free of charge had generated cost savings for their companies.

Employers generally felt that EFE graduates showed marked strengths compared to other entry-level employees. In addition to the points mentioned above, employers noted that EFE graduates are generally more prepared for the workplace, have better communication skills, behave more professionally, and have stronger problem-solving abilities, discipline, motivation, and a spirit of initiative. Other themes that emerged were that EFE graduates are able to maintain a positive attitude, manage their stress, and resolve conflicts. Employers also felt that graduates have better alignment with the overall mission and values of their companies and have a higher amount of openness and self-confidence.

However, some employers noted mixed results regarding aspects of project graduate performance. For example, a small number of employers noted that some graduates struggle to maintain motivation over the long term. An employer operating in the retail sector said that turnover was not lower for EFE graduates compared to non-graduates, explaining that EFE graduates had tended to remain at the company for around 18 months. One employer noted that in their opinion, some youth may have increased their expectations following the project training because it gave them a sense of the possibilities available, and contributed to overconfidence and shorter retention periods in some cases. Another employer theorized that because of the supportive training environment and the emotional nature of the training, youth may face a harsh reality when they join the workforce.

Employer feedback was highly positive overall, despite the few cases in which project graduate performance did not meet employer expectations. Employers expressed interest in continuing to collaborate with EFE on future trainings, with many employers adding that they would like to have their middle managers trained as well.

Overall Learnings

In the course of implementing the project, EFE gathered a number of key learnings and potential areas for program improvement:

The Algerian private sector is eager for opportunities to close the youth skills gap in order to support their entry-level hiring efforts. Employers are also eager to upskill their existing workforce through soft skills trainings. EFE delivered JTP trainings with 17 employer partners, and in some cases delivered several classes with the same partner. Employer partners provided positive feedback on the training given the changes they observed in young people's soft skills, and



expressed interest in having access to the training for their current employees, not just new hires. Employers felt that training middle management would create a more conducive environment for youth to apply the new ways of working that they learned in the training. They also believed it would address concerns that some employees have regarding equitable access to trainings for employees at different levels of the company hierarchy.

There is interest within public universities in providing career-oriented content, such as job search trainings. The project delivered four Employability trainings at USTHB and one at ENSM, as well as a JTP class at ENP and found a high level of enthusiasm amongst university administrators. This is an area that should continue to be developed under future programming, with enhanced measurement activities for Employability trainings to better determine program outcomes.

Although engaging SMEs is a worthwhile effort for workforce development programs, engaging

larger firms that are hiring in greater numbers is more conducive to securing high job placement rates following trainings. EFE found that the most effective and efficient approach was to form partnerships with employer partners that could hire between 15-20 youth at a time, and then tailor the soft skills trainings directly to the needs of those employers. This approach resulted in the highest employment rates for youth. Engaging SMEs would increase the risk that youth complete the training and are not hired afterward, and would significantly increase the coordination burden for each class. It should be noted, however, that even large companies can face challenges in accommodating large numbers of new hires at a time given that their hiring activities are not always predictable.

Future programs may consider holding information sessions for women and their families in order to increase the share of project participants who are female. Programming could also work directly with employers to track young women into career-building opportunities. The project aimed

to achieve a 50% rate of female participation, but was not able to reach this target, reaching only 39%. Given that female labor force participation in the country is less than half this figure, it remains an achievement. However, active engagement of both young women and employers could work to close the gender participation gap and ensure that young women gain access to opportunities that will help them launch their careers.

Youth often leave the soft skills training very motivated, but this motivation can go down over time as the reality of the job and workplace sets in. One way to approach this challenge could be to extend programming into multiple stages, including a mentorship and training refresher component to help youth acclimate to the workforce and manage challenges with the support of a mentor. The project had an informal mentoring component that developed organically through group social media chats with graduates and EFE's local consultants, but youth could likely benefit from having access to a more structured support mechanism. Job practicums that form part of the program could also be a way for youth to experience the workforce in a structured and supportive environment prior to beginning their independent employment journeys.

Trainings should continue to focus heavily on communication skills, and may benefit from increasing their sectoral focus. Employers emphasized the importance of communication as a key skill in the workplace, and they were generally impressed with the results of the training in this area. Given its importance, however, they explained that emphasizing the competency to an even greater extent in the training could be beneficial. In addition, increasing the sectoral focus of trainings could allow youth to gain a more specific understanding of their career trajectories within their particular sectors of focus.

EFE will incorporate these learnings into future programming when possible, and encourages other implementers to consider them for similar programming.

Notes

- 1 World Bank (2020).
- 2 Boucherf and Souaber (2017).

References

Boucherf, Kamel, and Hassen Souaber. 2017. "L'Impact des conditions socio-économiques sur la perception des problèmes de migration chez les jeunes." Barcelona: SAHWA with support from the European Union.

World Bank. 2020. Doing Business 2020: Economy Profile of Algeria. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. www.doingbusiness.org.

World Learning Case Study

Stimulating youth and women's employment in Algeria

World Learning is a US-based nonprofit organization founded in 1932 and dedicated to creating a more peaceful and just world through education, sustainable development, and exchange. Among its projects in over 100 countries, World Learning has worked in Algeria since 2005, including workforce development-related programming since 2010. With support from the US State Department,ⁱ World Learning has implemented the Algeria University Linkages Program (AULP), the Promoting Education, Altruism, and Civic Engagement program (PEACE), the Youth Employment Program (YEP), and the new Algeria Entrepreneurship and Employment project (AEE). Combined, the AULP, PEACE, and YEP projects reached over 22,250 youth with soft skills training and career advising, while AEE is planned to reach another 1,300. These projects have targeted youth in a total of 12 of Algeria's 58 governorates. World Learning's latest tracer study, involving 3,601 YEP alumni, documented an employment rate of nearly 80% among youth who engaged in an independent search for work after program participation, a significant achievement considering Algeria's general context of 29.1% youth unemployment¹ and low overall rates of youth labor force participation.

World Learning's core model in these projects has been to work with existing educational institutions—public universities and private and technical and vocational (TVET) institutes—to establish or improve career centers, applying the principles and tools of the organization's WorkLinks model. Such centers make available to youth a range of offerings: online and in-person career counseling,

employability and soft skills trainings, job fairs and other networking events, guest speakers, worksite visits, demand-driven professional, technical, or vocational courses, and some direct internship or job placements depending on local collaborations with ANEM. World Learning's individual projects have achieved an enduring impact on the context by ensuring that these capacities are built within existing institutions, many of which have continued serving thousands of youth after project close.

In addition to these large-scale career center projects, World Learning has also implemented a number of other innovative models, both with State Department and private funding.ⁱⁱ These models include programs offering English for the workplace, STEM education, and career guidance for young women under the organization's Bawsala Career Mentorship Program, and for high school students under the English Access Microscholarship and PLUS programs. Many of these models draw on the involvement of volunteers who want to make their skills available to other Algerians by serving as professional mentors, industry representatives, and volunteer youth mentors running STEM activities.

Over the years, World Learning has drawn three core lessons from these experiences:

- **Skills matter:** Young people need more opportunities to practice the specific employability and soft skills demanded in the Algerian context.
- **Flexibility works:** Scaling up youth workforce development in Algeria relies on entrepreneurially creating opportunities, using what you have, within an overall context of unpredictability.

ⁱ Project funders included the US Embassy Public Affairs Section and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

ⁱⁱ Private funders have included Anadarko Petroleum, Dow Chemical, Boeing, and HSBC bank.



Students participate at a career fair in Ouargla

- **Diffusion is possible:** Especially at the local level, Algerians are eager to help expand successful models—implementers should spread the inspiration, the tools, and the lived experience.

The following paragraphs briefly summarize the organization's learning on these topics.

Skills Matter

World Learning's experience implementing soft skills programming in Algeria has highlighted the need to learn in greater depth about the specific skills requirements in Algeria's labor market, as well as draw on recent advancements in international research in teaching soft skills.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2018, World Learning designed and undertook qualitative research in Algeria to examine specific contextual needs for soft skills, as well as determine what the organization's existing soft skills courses were achieving. This research included re-analyzing qualitative interview data with employers

from nine earlier YEP local labor market assessments. It also involved new individual questionnaires and focus group discussions with stratified groups of 90 Algerian youth beneficiaries of the program—male and female, employed and unemployed—in six governorates.

Youth described personal weaknesses that had hindered them in their job search, as well as contextual obstacles they faced, and they shared their own theories regarding the major differences between youth who had and had not succeeded in finding employment. Overall, the research concluded that there were 12 essential soft skills for Algerian youth to obtain employment, divided into three domains:

- **Intrapersonal:** positive self-concept, self-motivation, perseverance, adaptability, managing emotions (particularly stress), goal-orientation, conscientiousness or being hardworking

iii See, for examples, Soares, F., Babb, S., Diener, O., Gates, S., & Ignatowski, C. (2017). Guiding principles for building soft skills among adolescents and young adults. Washington, DC: USAID YouthPower Implementation.

- **Interpersonal:** social skills (building relationships with others and managing conflict), communication skills (combining oral, written, nonverbal, listening), and professionalism (as defined by Algerian employers, including self-presentation, work ethic, and etiquette)
- **Cognitive skills:** problem-solving, and planning and time management

In particular, the importance of self-motivation, perseverance, adaptability, and managing emotions stood out in the comments of Algerian youth. Employed and unemployed, male and female youth made comments like the following when trying to explain why some youth found jobs and others did not: “It depends on the level of motivation of the person. If you are a motivated person, you won’t stop looking” (unemployed female), and “It all comes down to persistence—you have to be proactive during the search, you have to be aware of the job openings. Otherwise there is no way it is going to work” (employed male). For

more information, World Learning’s full research report is available online.²

Flexibility works

In entrepreneurship theory, “effectuation” is a flexible logic that many successful entrepreneurs exhibit, and which differs from causal step by step planning to reach a predetermined project or business goal.³ If we are to scale up workforce development efforts in contexts like Algeria, which are often unpredictable at the same time as having strongly entrenched bureaucratic structures, World Learning has found it important to apply principles of effectuation—to work with the resources at hand to craft nimble solutions that can adapt to negotiations with important stakeholders—government institutions, educational institutions, private sector actors, funders, and youth themselves—over time.

For example, World Learning learned early on in its initial efforts to establish career centers at



Representatives of TVET institutes discuss the employment environment for youth

public universities that these institutions cannot be easily reoriented to focus on the employment of graduates once they finish their degrees. University administrators and faculty see their role as only promoting academic learning and research. Simultaneously, institutional structures do not allow for the flexible addition of new job titles such as “career counselor.” While these realities have hindered expansion of the availability of career services through the public system, World Learning was able to communicate this reality to funders and adapt a new approach in partnership with private training institutions—which had greater internal flexibility plus a closer understanding of employers’ needs, and the incentive to respond to those needs.

World Learning has also used large-scale events and social media to spread skills related to career centers and career counseling more broadly, including helping to build the relationships that must underlie any genuine social movement. Through such efforts, the directors of several institutes decided to join together of their own accord to create Techghil, a national career center federation, to continue exchanges around how to promote career advising around the country. World Learning has supported this unplanned initiative in a flexible manner, as this nascent institution gradually determines what its goals will be and how they will achieve them. The organization hopes that continued efforts in these directions, undertaken in an organic way as “effectuation” thinking suggests, may eventually lead to increased labor market orientation within public sector universities and related institutions.

Diffusion is possible

World Learning has sought to make its tools and resources available to a wide variety of different stakeholders in order to diffuse more broadly the improvements in career services and workforce

development that Algeria’s economy and society need. Through the hosting of two large-scale Youth Employment summits, including the participation of youth, education administrators, government representatives, and the media, World Learning has shared toolkits for operating career centers and offering soft skills trainings. The organization also used its social media platforms (anchored by the World Learning Algeria Facebook page, with 40,000 followers) to share ideas and resources broadly. Most importantly, the organization has ensured that people with experience implementing these models can share their enthusiasm with others. As a result of these efforts, World Learning has seen student Youth Employment Summit attendees arise to create informal career center clubs at some campuses, and at least one educational institution has created a new formal career center of their own initiative, using World Learning materials. Several groups that participated in the inaugural Youth Employment Summit also went on to establish career centers that served as project partner sites under subsequent workforce development programming, illustrating the positive compounding effects that sustained funding for this work can generate.

Another inspiring example of diffusion—and the power of individual initiative—comes from World Learning’s STEM centers, which are building future skills for a transforming economy. In a context with very little hands-on STEM experience in the formal school system, World Learning launched a STEM center with private funding support in 2016 in Algiers. Offering after-school workshops and camps in areas such as biology, graphics design, gaming, and robotics, this STEM center soon attracted a devoted following of youth. Many of these youth went on to mentor other youth as volunteers, and even to begin teaching Algerian teachers how to implement these methods within their classrooms. The success of Algeria’s first team to enter an international robotics competition, a team



Career center staff plan for center sustainability

nurtured by the Algiers STEM center, prompted many of these youth to seek ways to extend STEM center activities to other *wilayas*—so that future robotics teams could represent the whole country rather than just Algiers. As a result, World Learning now supports two formal STEM centers and seven additional STEM “corners” in geographically diverse governorates—as youth themselves strive to share these skills and experiences with their peers.

Overall, World Learning’s experience promoting youth employment in Algeria has shown that soft skills matter, that flexible “effectuation” thinking can help seize opportunities in a complex environment, and that spreading inspiration and lived

experience can help to diffuse new and promising models around the country. World Learning looks forward to continuing its engagement in these areas in the coming years.

Notes

- 1 Office National des Statistiques (ONS), September 2018
- 2 https://www.worldlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/YEP-Qualitative-Research-Analysis_SummaryReport_MEPI.pdf
- 3 See www.effectuation.org

In order to increase youth employment, young people must gain an improved understanding of the skills needed to secure jobs and succeed in the workplace, and private sector employers must provide supportive environments to help youth ease the education-to-work transition

Despite the challenges that Algeria faces in reducing youth and women's unemployment, the country has significant resources at its disposal to build a future in which youth and women participate fully in the economy. In order to increase youth employment, young people must gain an improved understanding of the skills needed to secure jobs and succeed in the workplace, and private sector employers must provide supportive environments to help youth ease the education-to-work transition.

Employers can support this process by taking the time to understand young employee motivations and interests, in addition to working collaboratively to outline how youth can expect to see their careers – and salaries – grow within their companies over time. In addition, employers can offer short employee trainings to help youth develop their soft and hard skills while also increasing employee engagement.

For its part, the higher education system can increase its private sector orientation through the provision of soft skills and job search trainings for

students. Through the creation and development of career centers, universities can help youth choose market relevant areas of study and locate internship opportunities to gain professional experience in low-stakes environments.

Like youth employment, women's employment constitutes a largely untapped resource that can help grow the Algerian economy. While much progress has been made in increasing women's educational attainment in Algeria, women's labor force participation remains one of the lowest in the world. However, if the private sector and Algerian women themselves continue to build upon the positive trends documented in this study, women's labor force participation stands to increase, as does the share of women in leadership positions. Thoughtful and deliberate action from company management to support women in building self-confidence and taking on non-traditional roles can ensure that this progress continues.

Study results indicate that Algerian young women hold a wide range of beliefs regarding the importance of their family's opinions in making career decisions. Employers should take pause and consider this diversity when making hiring and promotion decisions so as not to assume that women are unable to meet the needs of leadership roles because they require travel or working long hours, for example. On the other side, Algerian women and their families should be aware that placing restrictions on women's travel limits their ability to take on leadership roles within the private sector in some cases.

From the regulatory side, the Algerian government may wish to consider convening a public dialog on the topic of current legal restrictions on women's ability to work at night. In some cases, this regulation is serving as a justification for not hiring greater numbers of women.

Lastly, the digital economy presents a significant opportunity for the Algerian economy to keep pace with the changing nature of work in the 21st century, maintain competitiveness on the global scale, and diversify revenue away from hydrocarbons. In order to reap the benefits of this opportunity, the Algerian government may wish to prioritize reforms that enable digital payments and simplify business registration processes. In addition, educational institutes and startup incubators can increase the extent to which youth are acquainted with opportunities in the sector and provide roadmaps for how to build careers within it.

The preceding analysis has generated the following recommendations for the Algerian government, the Algerian private sector, implementers, and funders.

Recommendations to the Algerian Government:

Recommendation 1.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider incorporating job search and soft skills modules within standard educational curricula at both secondary and tertiary levels, possibly managed by career centers. Algerian employers in the private sector feel that youth are not adequately prepared to conduct effective job searches and succeed in the workplace. Youth often do not prepare quality CVs, and are unsure of how to highlight their competencies to employers and how to succeed in job interviews. When they do secure private sector employment, youth often lack the soft skills needed to retain their positions. An increased understanding of how to engage employers and work effectively in the private sector would improve employment results for youth and build their confidence.



Recommendation 2.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider incorporating professional practicums within tertiary education systems, and continue to provide apprenticeships within the TVET system. Study results indicate that employers face difficulty in hiring youth, in part, because they lack the experience required for success on-the-job. Incorporating these components within university education, and continuing to implement them within the TVET system, would help increase the extent to which graduates are prepared to succeed once they secure their first job.

Recommendation 3.A: Impact evaluations of government-funded active labor market programming can be conducted to determine effectiveness. Rigorous evaluations will help ensure that government programming is producing the intended results on youth employment and making the most efficient use of government resources.

Recommendation 4.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider convening working groups that bring together private sector companies, youth, university representatives, and key decision makers from ANEM, ANSEJ and ANGEM, as well as employment agencies at the regional level, in order to increase coordination among main system actors for the benefit of youth employment and entrepreneurship. The disconnect between educational institutions and the private sector in Algeria is a central driver of youth unemployment in the country. As referenced in this study, some employers are proactively engaging universities to incorporate specific modules into their curricula. Under the leadership of ANEM and related institutions, this type of coordination could include a wider range of stakeholders in a more formalized manner, therefore increasing the sustainability and efficiency of the approach. In addition to engaging youth within key stakeholder convenings, social media platforms can be leveraged to gather a broad range of youth perspectives.

Recommendation 5.A: The Algerian government may wish to continue relaxing regulations on the private sector, including simplifying business registration processes, in order to stimulate private sector job growth and enable youth entrepreneurship. These steps would be in line with Algeria's New Economic Growth Model 2016-2030 focusing on structural transformations and improving the business climate. They would also address one of the key challenges driving youth unemployment, which is inadequate job growth.

Recommendation 6.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider continuing modernization efforts for ANEM to improve the services it offers to youth and employers. Promising areas for development could be the inclusion of soft skill competencies for youth within the ANEM system given their importance to private sector employers, and to continue investments in IT systems to enhance accessibility of services on all types of devices. IT tools that enable broad gathering of job postings and labor market information, such as the AI tool used in this study, could also be considered.

Recommendation 7.A: The Algerian government may wish to consider convening a public dialog on the topic of the legal restriction on women working at night. Multiple employers cited this legal prohibition as a reason why they had not hired more female employees. The World Bank's *Women, Business, and the Law Index* includes women's ability to work at night as one indicator of their ability to contribute economically.

Recommendations to the Algerian Private Sector:

Recommendation 1.P: Algerian private sector employers should put in place transparent hiring mechanisms to ensure they are recruiting the best talent and are reducing their reliance on personal networks for hiring. The heavy reliance

on personal networks in hiring excludes youth who do not have strong personal networks. It also discourages youth from conducting active job searches. Furthermore, it shrinks the talent pool from which companies can draw, thereby reducing the chance that employers are hiring the best candidates available.

Recommendation 2.P: As part of the onboarding process for new employees, companies should outline the career trajectory that young entry-level employees can expect to take if they remain with the company. Youth expressed frustration in feeling that they only find “petites postes,” or low-level jobs, during their job searches. In addition, the top reason youth leave their jobs is due to dissatisfaction over salary. Given that youth have not been oriented toward the private sector during their education, employers may increase retention by investing time during the onboarding period to understand youth aspirations

and explain the road map for how youth can grow within their companies.

Recommendation 3.P: Consider approaching engagement with young employees with a focus on creating a sense of stability and career growth potential. Many youth feel that their employment situations are unstable, and some do not feel supported by their supervisors. Both factors are likely to contribute to turnover. In order to address these issues, employers may consider offering permanent contracts (CDI), ongoing training and job shadowing opportunities for youth, as well as soft skills training for managers to help them engage constructively with young employees.

Recommendation 4.P: Prioritize efforts to increase the share of female employees at different levels within companies, including leadership. The benefit of women's employment to national economies is well documented, as is the financial



benefit of diversity to companies' bottom lines. Employers should work to actively recruit young women in non-traditional roles and support existing female employees in advancing within their companies. Young women hold a variety of perspectives about how they would like to participate in the labor force, so employers should support young women as individuals and not make assumptions according to how women have traditionally behaved in the workforce.

Recommendations to Implementers:

In addition to the key learnings and recommendations highlighted within the Case Study section, the following recommendations present high-level areas where implementers may wish to focus.

Recommendation 1.1: Consider including women's families in active labor force programming aimed

at increasing the participation of young women. Study results indicated that young women are significantly more likely than men to report that it is very important to them that their family agree with their career decisions. Young women were also more likely than young men to indicate that if their families did not support a career direction they would like to take, they would not pursue it. As noted previously, there is a wide diversity of opinions among young women on these points, with some women indicating that they make decisions on their own. However, for some young women, the findings suggest that proactively engaging their families through career information meetings, for example, could encourage them to join nontraditional career fields and remain in the workforce.

Recommendation 2.1: Emphasize to youth the importance of remaining in their first job for as long as possible in order to demonstrate steady



work experience to future employers, and consider providing mentoring and occasional short refresher trainings during the first year of employment. Along with insufficient soft skills, employers cited insufficient professional experience as a key barrier to hiring youth. In addition, both project graduates who were searching for their first job and those who left their initial job placement after a short time to search for another opportunity were most likely to cite insufficient professional experience as a factor preventing them from finding a job. This indicates that duration of early employment opportunities matters. The drop off in retention rates between 9 and 12 months following job start suggests that providing youth with support through a period of one year may help them overcome challenges that arise after the initial excitement of soft skills training and employment wear off.

Recommendation 3.I: Encourage youth to pursue online or distance learning to develop technical skills and foreign languages through platforms that provide certificates upon course completion. Although employers emphasized the need for youth to improve their soft skills, they also noted that youth often lack other key skills for the workplace, such as an understanding of how to use Microsoft Office and a command of the French language. Youth should prioritize the use of e-learning platforms that offer certificates of completion, and should also utilize the National Center for Distance Learning when possible.

Recommendation 4.I: Orient youth toward professional opportunities in the digital economy by connecting them with existing start-ups and incubators, and by providing trainings to familiarize youth with digital competencies. The Algerian government is taking steps to develop the country's digital economy due to its importance in



supporting Algeria's competitiveness on a global scale. This opportunity can be harnessed to connect youth with innovative job opportunities, but only if youth increase their understanding of the sector and what is required to succeed within it.

Recommendations to Funders, including the US Government:

Recommendation 1.F: Funders should consider directing resources toward efforts to integrate a private sector orientation into higher education institutions in Algeria. Given the structural nature of youth unemployment in Algeria, reducing the gap that exists between higher education and the private sector would ease the education-to-work transition for youth. As noted in this report, multilateral funders are engaging in this type of work in Algeria. However, it will take considerable time, cooperation, and resources to achieve the educational reforms necessary to fully close the gap.

Recommendation 2.F: Funders should consider directing resources toward promoting women's economic engagement and leadership by supporting rising female leaders in Algeria. Women continue to face challenges in developing their economic engagement due, in part, to societal expectations that view the family as women's primary responsibility. These norms restrict women's ability to travel for work or devote additional time to their jobs beyond the standard workday when required. This study demonstrated that there is a wide range of beliefs that women hold regarding their economic participation, which suggests that efforts to support rising female leaders – and communicate their successes to other young women – could encourage women to pursue the professional paths they find most fulfilling.

Recommendation 3.F: Funders should consider supporting the budding start-up ecosystem in Algeria through exchange programs with technology companies in global tech hubs, such as Silicon Valley, and support for needed regulatory reform. Exchanges with companies in global tech hubs would give Algerian technology entrepreneurs the opportunity to learn from companies that succeeded in clearing critical hurdles to launching their businesses, such as customer acquisition, fundraising, and others. In order to unleash the potential of Algerian companies, however, regulatory reform is needed to create an enabling environment. Funders could work with the Algerian government on designing updated regulations that reflect the changing reality of financial technologies and data centers in particular, as well as reducing the number of steps required to register businesses. Support could also be provided to improve broadband quality and coverage.

Youth and Women's Employment in Algeria:

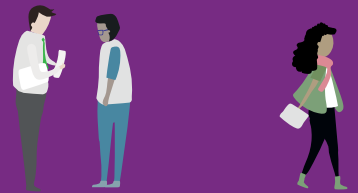
Barriers and Opportunities

With more than 53% of Algeria's population made up of youth under age 30, the country has a significant opportunity to drive economic growth and benefit from its demographic dividend if working-age youth and women are able to pursue job opportunities and contribute to the Algerian economy. However, persistently high rates of unemployment and inactivity among youth and women present a barrier to the achievement of this growth.

Youth and Women's Employment in Algeria: Barriers and Opportunities examines key trends in youth and women's employment in the country, told through the perspectives of private sector employers and youth themselves. The report presents candid opinions from real people, giving life to the reality behind the statistics, and provides concrete recommendations for how the Algerian government, the private sector, program implementers, and funders can each contribute to this important objective.

Ashley Barry is the Director of Organizational Learning at EFE-Global

Dina Dandachli is the Director of Programs at EFE-Europe



EFE's mission is to create economic opportunities for unemployed youth so they can create a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities. To learn more, please visit www.efe.org.

