



# SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITIONS AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN MAGHREB COUNTRIES

DR Nora Alleki

ADAPT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SERIES,  
“PRODUCTIVITY, INVESTMENT IN HUMAN  
CAPITAL AND THE CHALLENGE OF YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT”, MEXICO, COMMUNICATION  
AUGUST 2011

# RESEARCH'S FRAMEWORK

1. QUESTION : how to improve school-to-work transitions and youth employment through employment policies and human resources management in Maghreb countries?
2. HYPOTHESIS: school to work transitions don't depend on performance of education system, but on the opportunities given to youth to use their potential and to develop skills

# Regarding my definition of skills

1. A process which puts successfully into action a potential which is coming from a whole of qualification, experience and personal abilities
2. This potential is mainly acquired in initial and continuous formal education and training systems even if social and familial capitals participate greatly to this production
3. The skills are in movement, developed constantly during schooling path and working experience by doing or learning, especially when satisfaction to do or to learn is present

# Then, my hypothesis is that

- Better school-to-work transitions depend on:
  - (i) opportunities given to individuals to do or to learn in a life-long perspective
  - (ii) capacity of the environment to recognize what individuals have done or learnt
- Therefore, transitions depend on employment system and labour markets regulators : human resources management and employment policies

# My field of study : youth in 4 countries in Maghreb

- Exploratory results : first studies on the field in Morocco and Algeria to build my research problematic and ongoing studies on the field to test my results
- Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia share the same realities concerning youth and have a common background historically (invasions, islamization, colonialism) culturally (languages, religions, codes, arts) and socially (common values)

# Economicly, 2 groups

- Algeria and Libya: have protectionist strategies (heritage from socialism system), benefit of surplus trade balance and are public economies based on oil & gas
- Tunisia and Morocco: market economies opened to the rest of the world and attracted foreign investment
- Regarding macroeconomic indicators, all suffer of a lack of diversification and hegemony of public sector in terms of opportunities of employment for qualified youth

# I. Education system plays his role, does it job

- Education has positive impacts in Maghreb economy in strategies to integrate economies in the globalization theses last 10 years
- Progresses made in education in Maghreb are close to European countries and far from Sub-Saharan Africa
- EX. Youth illiteracy rates except in Morocco are lower between 2% and 8%
- The exception in Morocco is due to rural areas which absorb the child labour force

- Even if there are : shortage of financial and material means (ICT...), low achievements in VET, absence of mobility of students inside the region and problems of quality, the enrolment rate in education are good and the objective of universal education is quite to be reached
- Education system produces skills needed by the economy : skills of literacy and numeracy, life skills enable people to live a full social life in community, social and citizenship skills, skills for employment or employability which help people to enter and to evolve in labour markets (adaptability, autonomy, initiative spirit...)
- The specificity of entrepreneurial and management skills which need practices and partnerships between schools and companies (weak point) ...



## Situation of youth employment is alarming

- I focus on younger aged on 15-29 years old : 30% of the population (40% for Tunisia)
- They are :
- Important part of unemployed people; percentages vary approx. from 40% (Morocco) to 70% (Algeria & Tunisia)
- For the majority, transitions periods take more than 3 years
- Overrepresented in informal employment : in the region contribution of informal employment in GDP turns around 25%, Informal non-agricultural employment is estimated 43,3% in 1990's for North Africa

# And...

- Unemployment is more and more present among qualified youth: highest unemployment rates among secondary and higher education graduates (around 20% against 5% for unqualified people)
- Hold precarious jobs in services and in Libya and Algeria weakly present in main sectors : oil & gas
- Working for low wages

# And...

- The part of youth accepting an employment under their qualifications is estimated to 80%
- Candidates of illegal immigration: haragas (about 40%)
- Stigmatized and discriminated in the entrance of labor markets regarding their capabilities and skills meanwhile they are more qualified than previous generations and consequently than recruiters
- Vulnerable with the crisis

# conclusions

---

- Situation of young people in Maghreb is symptomatic of a social unease: don't think future is possible in their countries
  - Huge problem regarding demographic trends and gender gaps
-

Regarding the performance of education system and employment situations:

- What explain structurally youth unemployment and avoid skills development process?
- What is freezing school to work transitions and explain the low level of productivity ?



So, my demonstration is the  
following

Progresses made in education are not suitable  
with characteristics of youth employment and  
difficulties living by youth which are close to Sub  
Saharan countries and far from European  
countries

**Something is missing in employment  
policies and human resources management**

# What does it mean in Maghreb?

---

- Opportunities given to individuals have to be improved by
  - reforms for diversification of the economy and boosting jobs creations and entrepreneurship
  - capacity of employment policies to boost jobs creations
  - adaptation of labour markets reforms to a human resources management based on flexicurity
-

- Youth employment policies based on financial aids tax evasion and specific contracts which reduce the cost of labour, are not offering skills development opportunities
- Don't answer to the main problems: crisis of trust, misesteem of the degrees and high place of informal employment
- Alike, capacity of the environment to recognize what individuals have done or learnt depends on governance issues and capacities of governments & companies to manage informality corruption and gender gaps.



## Concerning informal employment

- By the majority, employment is informal . Or skills developed in informal activities are not integrated or recognized ; however it would formalize a part of informality Ex. Entrepreneurial skills...
  - Formalize informality
  - Implementing measures that can recognize skills acquired in informality and allow to informal workers to test, show and exchange in formal environment

- Create and develop a set of intermediary agencies or employment intermediates which
  - ❑ 1. help individuals to recruit and formalize jobs in sectors as child, care, cleaning, self food
  - ❑ 2. help self entrepreneurs to maintain their activity and business in long term buy offering mutual learning, pooling, instruments of sharing risks and communications actions (phoning, computing, local cultural, tourist and sportive activities)

# Concerning human resources management

---

- **dominant need of the employers lean non numerical flexibility (quantity and cost of labour)**
  - means the extension of short term contracts, restructuring, flexible wages and working time
  - meanwhile to develop skills, functional flexibility is needed
-

- This means to settle human resources management that can stimulate workers' motivation, recognize their efforts and qualifications and offer regular continuing alternating training opportunities, often vocational and technical training.
- But obviously, the companies in private sector for the majority don't have the structure neither the size to companies for that

- **To obtain an equilibrium and efficiency in human resources management, companies need to negotiate compromises between needs of numerical flexibility by employers and functional flexibility by employees. These compromises are defined as flexicurity pathways in academic literature. Employers have to manage the negative social consequences of numerical flexibility by offering some securities to their employees**

- **These guarantees can be: financing training which improves employability of workers, financing social protection as unemployment insurance, implementing transparent flexibility of wages based on performance of workers, developing and financing internships developing opportunities in training for vulnerable people (youth, long term unemployed people, women)...**

- In Maghreb, regarding the weak implication of the social partners, **governments have to involve labour market reforms to support human resources management based on flexicurity.**

# In the domain of governance the problem is huge

---

- High degree of corruption
  - Economic agents advance in a non-restrictive and non-transparent enable environment which doesn't facilitate cooperation, partnerships mutual learning and exchange of practices inside the country or at the Maghreb level.
-



- It also freezes the integration of the Diaspora and globally all forms of initiatives and innovations. As a result distribution of financial resources is not based on the need. In these conditions, employers are not encouraged to develop their skills and the companies produce under their capacities (x-inefficiency situations).

# Objectives of these tracks of research (1/2)

- Participate to debate about the place of education system in producing skills needed by the economy
- Break with the view that invest in VET is the majestic way to produce skills
- Analysis education system as a whole without distinction: academic, vocational, practical and theoretical...

# Objectives of these tracks of research and discussions (2/2)

- “Debuilding” systematic relations made between level of qualification and capabilities, investment in education and skills development, public expenditure and public policies...
- Participate to the sociological evaluation of youth employment policies in Maghreb



Thank you for your attention

