

Taqeem Case Studies

The Youth Employment Network

M&E implementation at Education for Employment (EFE), Morocco

- ► ► An overview of the technical support initiative delivered as part of the Taqeeem program to increase the understanding and knowledge of Measurement and Evaluation in the MENA region.

Key Messages

- Conducting a follow up survey amongst program beneficiaries is recommended to show evidence of achieving outcomes. Follow up surveys should allow sufficient time for outcomes to appear, which varies depending on the training program.
- When facing a large number of beneficiaries to follow-up with and depending on the purpose of the follow-up, sampling might be advisable, as opposed to tracking all beneficiaries. The sampling can be done by random selection which helps reduce bias in results.
- While web based surveying is a great way to reduce time and resources, it poses numerous challenges which need to be addressed well in advance. Qualitative evaluations are ideal to deepen quantitative findings coming out of these web based surveys.
- Having somebody fully dedicated to M&E is necessary for any organization working on youth employment and wishing to implement the full cycle of an M&E plan.

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The Youth Employment Network



The Youth Employment Network (YEN) is an inter-agency partnership of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the United Nations set up in 2001 to provide new solutions to the youth employment challenge.

The Taqeeem Community of Practice is a regional support program aiming at improving results measurement of youth employment and entrepreneurship dedicated non-governmental organizations. YEN's *Taqeeem case studies* highlight the experiences of Taqeeem member organizations.

Background

EFE's "Finding a Job is a Job" Program

Education for Employment (EFE) is a non-profit organization headquartered in New York, with independent affiliates in six countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. The EFE network aims at addressing the youth employment challenge in the MENA region by offering various technical and vocational training opportunities to unemployed youth, with the goal of reducing the gap between diverging youth qualifications and employers' human resource requirements. EFE Morocco was founded in 2007 and currently runs four distinct training programs, one of which is called Finding a

Job is a Job (FJIJ). FJIJ is a three day employability training targeting unemployed youth, often youth whom are in the transition from school to work). FJIJ teaches job search skills, improving the CV and cover letter, and how to perform in a job interview. Every course brings together one trainer and 20 to 25 participants. EFE Morocco's goal is to train 12 500 youth in FJIJ over a four year period which started in 2011. EFE Morocco partners with youth centres and universities in the delivery of the project and training is delivered in six regions of Morocco.¹ The FJIJ training takes place under the umbrella of the Al-Morad initiative, a wider project financed by the MasterCard Foundation.

EFE and Taqeem

EFE joined the Taqeem initiative because of a desire to reform its M&E system. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function at EFE falls under the Performance Management department which is a centralized function overseen by EFE headquarters in New York. Each EFE affiliate has an M&E manager responsible for all projects in the country. In the past two years there had been a sud-

den increase of projects under EFE's portfolio and the current system could not handle the resulting increase in data. Furthermore, data was only being collected at the output level and EFE's stakeholders have been demanding more evidence of long term outcome results. Finally, EFE's data collection tools were outdated and being misused, response rates to forms and surveys were low and often times responses were not being transcribed to the database for analysis.

EFE decided that it would pilot its new M&E approach using the FJIJ project in Morocco. For the past twelve months and with the support of M&E experts, EFE has rolled out a series of revised data collection tools and while the reform process is not yet complete, evidence of program outcomes is materializing and findings are being used to improve the program design. The following paragraphs detail the data collection tools that have been planned, provide evidence of some early monitoring results, and finally address the challenges faced in the form of recommendations and next steps.

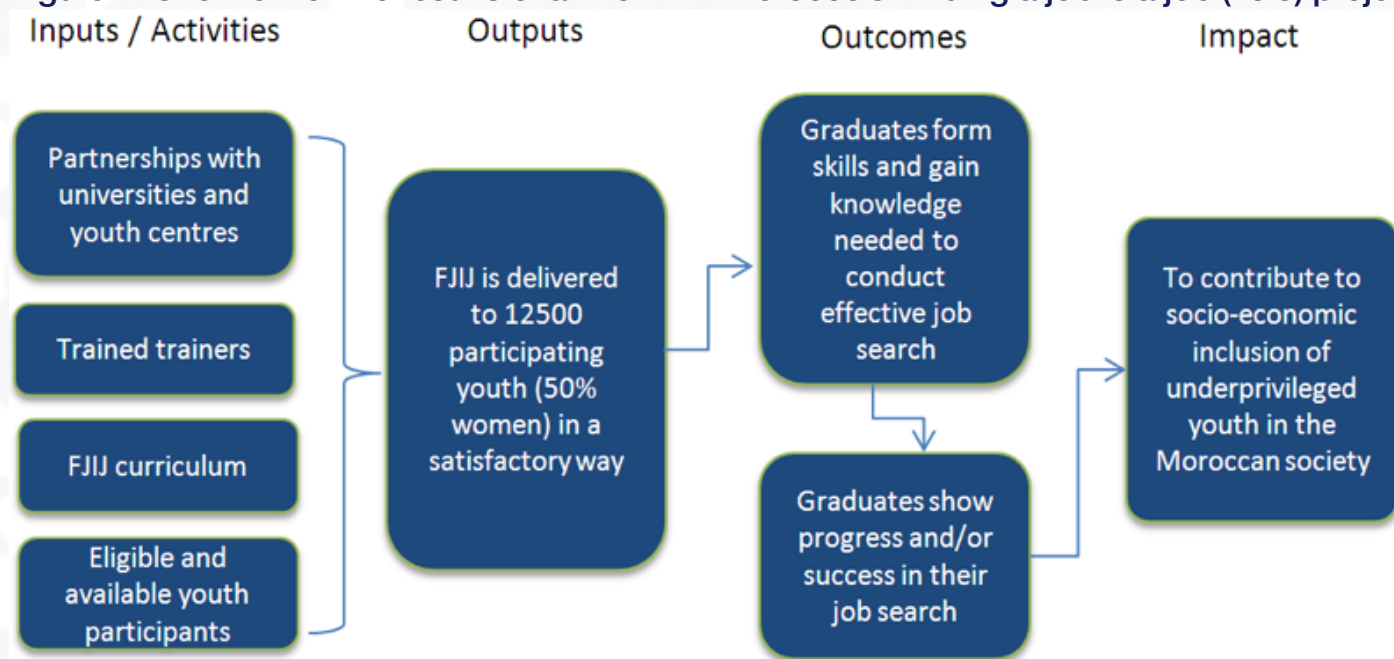
M&E System

Results chain

The results chain for the FJIJ program is based on the assumption that the education, knowledge and skills provided by public education system in Morocco are many times insufficient to find quality employment. It also assumes that jobs are available for young people that have the rights skills. With this in mind, the long term impact of the project is to contribute to socio-economic inclusion of underprivileged youth in Moroccan society. For socio-

economic inclusion to be achieved, EFE will need to meet two outcomes: young people gain skills and knowledge on how to conduct an effective job search and the job search is successful leading to decent employment. At the output level and the basis for EFE's intervention strategy is the FJIJ training program from which 12,500 young people are expected to graduate. Figure 1 above gives an overview of the project's results chain.

Figure 1: Overview of the results chain for EFE Morocco's Finding a job is a job (FJIJ) project



Data collection instruments

While the results chain helps us to map the logical framework of the project design, it needs to be complemented by a strategy for measuring whether objectives have been achieved. Attached to each entry in the results chain are indicators. While indicators tell us what data we will be measured, the data collection instrument tells us how that data will be measured. The M&E plan for EFE's FJIJ project includes five instruments which measure a series of indicators, as described below in Table 1.



Table 1: Description of the data collection tools and main indicators of the M&E system for FJIJ

Instrument	Status	Indicators	Description
Application form and interview	Pilot phase (Procedures are being revised)	• No. of applicants to FJIJ • Job search knowledge at baseline • Job search skills at baseline • Attitude towards employment at baseline • Motivation to get a job at baseline	What? An online application form to which youth apply. It asks questions on socio-demographics, work status, education and motivation. EFE's sourcing team determines eligible applicants (age, family income, work status, motivation) and contacts them for a short interview. When? On an on-going basis. Takes 10 minutes to complete and contains around 15 questions. Management: Data is exported to Excel and filtered. Accepted candidates are forwarded to the training team who arranges the training and to the M&E team who registers data into the database. Implementation: Was improved on multiple occasions and works well, but fails to include FJIJ participants from partnership with universities.
Attendance sheet	Roll out	• No./% of youth participants • No. of trainings delivered	What? Attendance sheet, managed by the trainers. Important since graduation is only given if attending 60% of the sessions. Also includes columns to verify contact details of participants. When? Signed after every session of FJIJ. Management: After every FJIJ, trainers send a scan of the attendance sheet to the training team, who manually updates participant's data in the database. Implementation: Successfully tested and implemented
End of training questionnaire	Roll out	• % of graduates satisfied with trainers and training • No./% of graduates, self-perception of effective skills formed	What? An online questionnaire sent to graduates with the objective of measuring participants' satisfaction with the training, evaluate the initial skills and knowledge gained and understand participants' short term plans for looking for work. When? Upon completion of the training. Takes 10-12 minutes to complete and contains around 20 questions. Management: Data is exported to Excel, filtered and incorporated into the database, then regularly analysed and shared with program staff. Implementation: One of the challenges has been a low response rate as many youth do not receive the email, do not have internet connection or simply ignore the communication. Remedies such as incentives, reminders and face-to-face interviews are being explored.

Two and four month follow-up surveys	Pilot phase	• No. of graduates who used/ benefited from the skills/ knowledge formed • No. of graduates getting admitted to a job • Average number of jobs applied to in the last months • No. of interviews granted in the last months	What? Online follow up surveys sent to graduates with the objective of following graduates' job search activities and outcomes. Addresses topics such as use of different job search techniques, time invested, applications sent, interviews granted, assessment of FJIJ contribution, etc. When? Two and four months after the training ended. Takes 10-12 minutes to complete and contains around 20 questions. Management: Data is exported to Excel, filtered and incorporated into the database, then regularly analysed and shared with program staff. Implementation: Never fully implemented due to the time burden on staff and low response rates. The pilot survey has been tested with 200 graduates and received feedback from the beneficiaries. It has been recommended that EFE drops the 2 month follow up survey to reduce the burden of answer for graduates as well as focus on the intermediate job outcomes (more relevant to measure after 4 months).
Focus groups	Pilot phase	• Assessment of FJIJ contribution for many indicators	What? Group discussions moderated by EFE Morocco's M&E manager, bringing together 8-10 FJIJ graduates, involving 4-6 key questions used to complement quantitative findings from the online surveys. The moderator is accompanied by a note taker who records all conversation. When? Held 2-3 times per year, each lasting around 60-120 minutes. Management: To analyse the data, EFE will use a "Participatory Live-likelihoods System Analysis"², an efficient tactic for interpreting results. Implementation: To be performed

Figure 2 shows EFE Morocco's data collection cycle starting with the application form and ending with the 4 month follow up survey. A full cycle is completed in five months.

Figure 2: Overview of the data collection workflow of the M&E system for FJIJ



Data management

EFE Morocco's M&E database is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet where all administrative and survey data is input, cleaned and analysed. While not an ideal tool, it was decided to use excel for this operation to provide a simple, low-cost solution and one that staff already had the skills to operate.

Data from the online surveys can be automatically exported to the spreadsheet while data from the attendance sheets is transcribed from paper. The M&E manager is responsible for controlling the quality of the data which includes the arduous task of matching records from the various surveys to the same individual.

EFE Morocco is seeking to migrate to a more powerful database software in order to better deal with the growing number of data entries and to gain flexibility in the analysis performed.

Findings

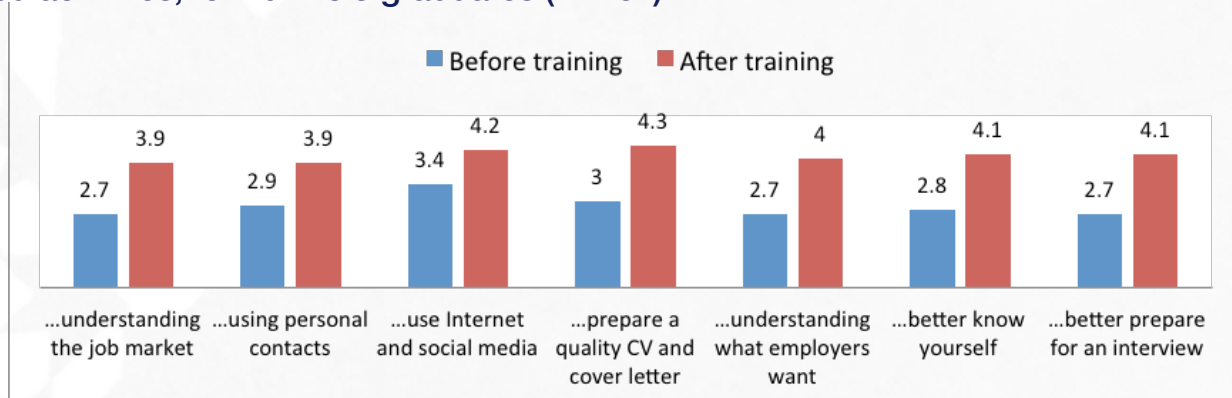
The aim of this section is to showcase EFE Morocco's incoming data results and demonstrate how it can be displayed and shared. The data provides evidence that EFE is on its way to achieving its objectives for FJIJ. Results presented below look at three of EFE's main indicators, namely job search confidence, job search techniques and employment. These results should be interpreted with precaution, mainly for two reasons

- Response rates among graduates remain low. It is unknown yet if the respondents significantly differ from the non-respondents, and if results obtained from the sample can be extended to the whole population of FJIJ graduates.
- Assuming that the collected data could be extended to the whole population of graduates, the problem of causality would persist. Causality between the program and the outcomes can only be assumed, since no counterfactual group exists.

Self-perception of effective skills formed

EFE asks graduates to assess their level of confidence before and after the FJIJ training regarding many aspects of job search techniques and skills. Results highlighted in Figure 3 show that in the seven topics covered during the training, the graduates' level of confidence upon the completion of the training is much higher than it was before the training.

Figure 3: “Before and After” comparison of the level of confidence in performing job search related activities, for 202 FJIJ graduates (N=182)

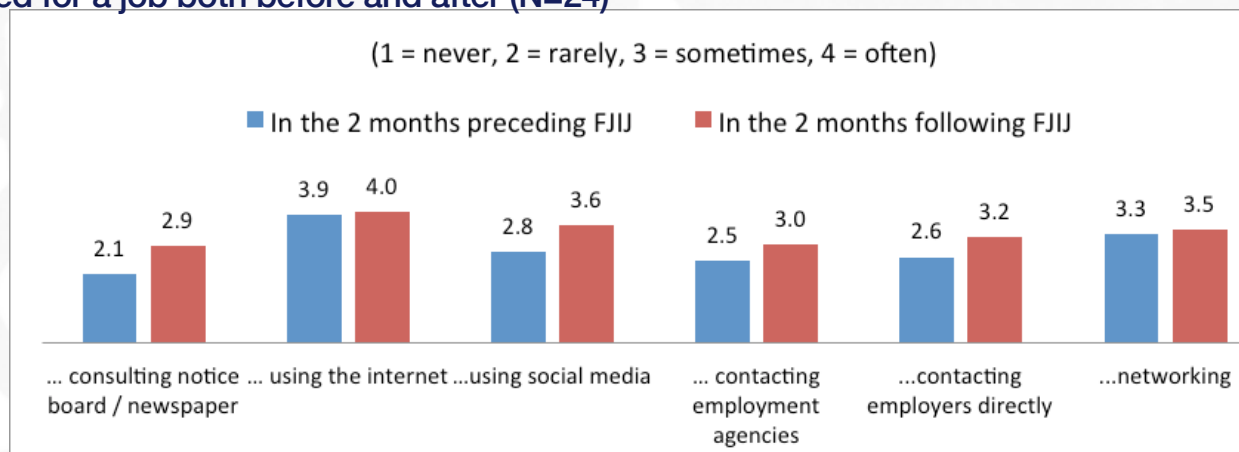


Use of acquired skills

EFE Morocco is also interested in knowing if techniques graduates use to find a job after the training have changed compared to before. Figure 4 presents the frequency of use of six different job search techniques. It suggests that the frequency of use increases after the training, compared to

before. It can be noticed that an essential component of the FJIJ training, using your personal contacts for job search (networking), only shown slight improvement. If judged relevant, EFE Morocco could therefore reinforce this portion of the training.

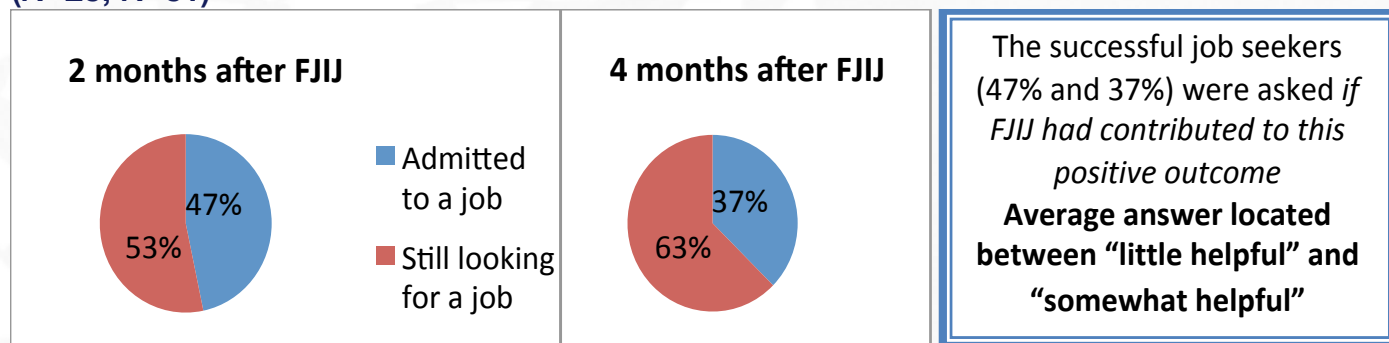
Figure 4: “Before and After” of the use of job search techniques, for 2012 graduates who looked for a job both before and after (N=24)



Admission to a job

Figure 5 illustrates results of FJIJ graduates getting admitted to a job 2 and 4 months after training. The findings tell us less than half of the graduates found a job. Interestingly, graduates who found a job don't seem to attribute this success to the FJIJ training although we do not have information to tell us what they attribute their success to. Bringing together successful job seekers in a focus group to better understand this data would be advisable.

Figure 5: Percentage of job seeking FJIJ graduates who found a job, for 2012 FJIJ graduates (N=25, N=51)



These selected findings are examples of good guidance provided by the M&E system to improve the internal management of the project (program delivery, restructuring of the curriculum, etc.). Since EFE Morocco collects all information at the individual level, further disaggregation analysis by socio-demographic variables can be performed on these results, and would be help determine if results apply to all categories of graduates.

Recommendations

Based on the challenges faced by EFE Morocco in the implementation of their M&E system, several recommendations can be formulated. The current case study focuses on four main recommendations.

Survey random sample of your beneficiaries

EFE regularly sends online surveys to hundreds of youth per month. All youth who participate in EFE trainings are sent both an end of training survey and two follow up surveys. Response rates to the surveys have often been low; in a recent EFE survey, only 24% of surveyed youth provided a response.

In the future, EFE does not need to send their surveys to all training participants and instead can only send the survey to a smaller sample of respondents, creating a sample frame.

Calculating a sample frame can be difficult as one would needs to know the population size, the confidence interval and the confidence level. For a medium sized NGO like EFE, a couple of intuitive tips can help the M&E team improve validity:

- Only survey a sample of the training participants: as a rule, the bigger the sample frame, the more accurate the results will be. But this depends on a few

conditions. In the future, EFE should only include a percentage of the training participants in the sampling frame. Determining the sampling frame through random selection would help reduce bias.

- Reduce non-responses: each non-response increases the likelihood for bias. This means that people who do not respond have the potential to be different from those who do respond, reducing the representativeness of the sample. As a rule of thumb, the non-response rate should be no more than 20%.
- Increasing response rate: strategies for increasing response rate include offering an incentive, sending several reminders and personalizing communication.

The M&E database

EFE Morocco has relied on Microsoft Excel to compile and analyse data about FJIJ. While Excel is good for one time analysis, as new columns and rows get added, formulas and ranges need to be modified. Furthermore, working with an external online survey platform means regularly exporting data and integrating it to an Excel database. This requires setting up complex formulas that are hard to understand and adapt.

EFE Morocco, as well as practitioners expecting to face the same issues, should seek a data management and analysis software to allow them to better process the large amounts and different types of data that are being

collected. A more harmonized approach which provides integrated surveying and database functions would be beneficial. A “cloud” based system would mean the data would be available anywhere where there is an internet connection and could easily be shared with staff and stakeholders.

Using a web based survey instrument

EFE has been using the popular platform SurveyMonkey for the past two years though their success using this tool is not yet proven. EFE’s reliance on a web based survey instrument poses a number of challenges, including low Internet connectivity, use of “open” surveys (anyone with the survey’s URL can submit an entry) and creation of “survey fatigue” among beneficiaries.

Some recommendations are provided to help EFE increase the quality of SurveyMonkey data. They are using SurveyMonkey to embed respondents’ names when sending out the surveys. This will hopefully booster the response rate and contribute to eradicate “open” surveys. They are also in the process of deleting the follow up after two month only to keep the one after four months, hoping to reduce “survey fatigue”. Offering incentives for answering is also being discussed, as well as finding ways :

- EFE has been using “open” surveys meaning anyone with the survey’s URL can submit an entry. In the future, EFE can restrict access to the surveys only to those email addresses that have been approved.
- Young people most likely have “survey fatigue” meaning they often receive requests for information and feedback over email. EFE should find a way to make their request unique such as providing a creative slogan in the subject line or personally addressing the respondent in each request.
- Increase the incentives offered to respondents

Next Steps

Piloting focus groups

Organizing focus groups amongst FJII graduates has been difficult. Focus groups tend to be labour and time intensive for staff, as graduates are often unavailable due other commitments like employment. Graduates are also sometimes sceptical as to why they are being contacted, even though careful precautions are taken regarding the wording of the invitation message (email and telephone). As a result of these challenges, the EFE’s first pilot focus group had to be cancelled because no participants showed up and a second one was conducted with only four of eight confirmed participants in attendance. In the future, EFE plans to try to overcome this issue by offering a larger incentive to youth. Planning is essential and EFE will have to send meeting multiple reminders to participants.



Sustainability of the M&E system

EFE Morocco faces high staff turnover, especially in the M&E function. This has meant significant delays in implementing the new M&E system. Considerable time delays were observed in the implementation of the M&E tools, as well as a lacking ability to manage and use the collected data. Practitioners anticipating a similar challenge should ensure that the M&E component becomes sustainable by being integrated to all of Units in the organization.

Revisit M&E system for second major outcome

A second major objective (intended outcome) of the FJII program is to build the capacity of partner institutions to better serve youth, using examples from successful EFE programs. EFE is currently developing the results chain and indicators tied to this outcome which will be followed by the design of data collection.

On-going technical assistance

The Swiss Academy for Development, a consultancy firm specialized in monitoring and evaluation, has provided external expertise to EFE in this reform process. Upon

validation and full roll out of the system in Morocco, EFE is looking forward to replicate the model to EFE affiliates in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen.

Pipeline impact evaluation

Finally, when a functioning and strong M&E system is in place, and if judged relevant according to future plans of FJJ, an impact evaluation (IE) could be performed on the training program. A study to assess the feasibility of conducting an IE of FJJ was conducted by SAD. It was recommended to postpone the evaluation until targeting and admission procedures were revised. It was also considered risky from a cost-benefit perspective to evaluate an intervention which

Notes:

¹ Partnerships were originally planned to be established with 30 youth centres and 3 universities.

² A qualitative and systematic approach to result-oriented M&E, initially developed to plan and measure outcomes and impacts of community based livelihood interventions, adapted and combined with FGDs to reduce the workload for recording and analyzing while still pursuing a systematic approach.

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