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ALGERIA YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

Labor Market Assessment

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Research report

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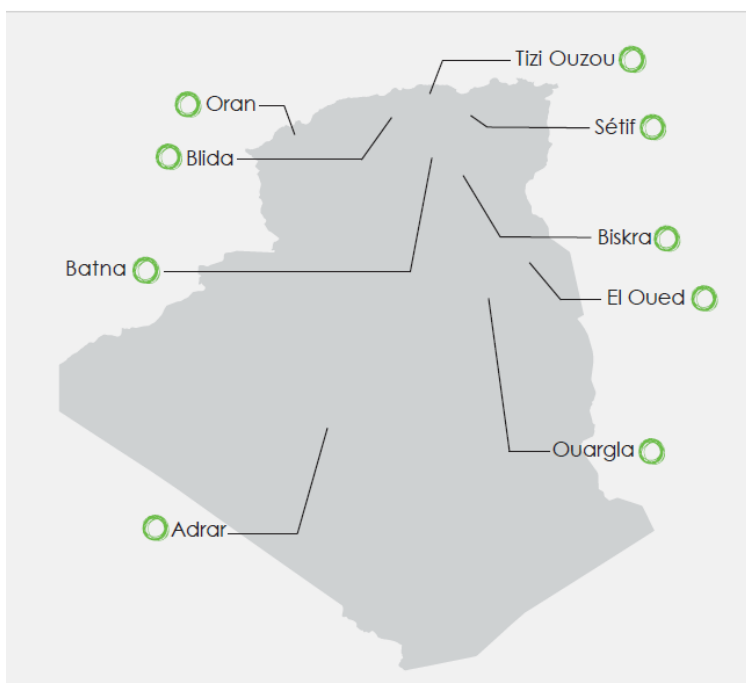
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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, the needs of yesterday's economy are no longer those of tomorrow's. At the same time, in Algeria as elsewhere, economic development is limited by persistent unemployment, particularly among young people, who comprise a significant part of Algeria's population.

To empower these youth to serve as the principal driver of the economy of the future, in late 2015 World Learning Algeria launched a three-year project aiming to reinforce the linkages between young people and the world of work. With the support of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI, a program of the U.S. State Department), World Learning launched the project by establishing youth employment centers in private vocational training schools in four sites (Adrar, Blida, Ouargla, Setif). Three further sites were added in the second year (Biskra, El Oued, Oran), later followed by a final two schools (Batna, Tizi Ouzou).



With these nine partner schools, the Youth Employment Project worked along the following axes:

1. The upgrading of training methods and materials to enable the vocational training centers to offer more robust training courses;
2. Vocational trainings that are updated and adapted to the needs of the local markets in specific technical domains;
3. Supplemental trainings in job search and essential professional skills to prepare the young participants to be dynamic, motivated, and conscious recruits;
4. In partnership with Souktel, a regional leader in employability technologies, the rollout of a new job search and matching platform;
5. Internship and job opportunities for young participants with a range of local employers;
6. Reinforced linkages between the technical schools and local businesses to ensure the relevance and sustainability of services offered to young job seekers.

The nine labor market analyses presented in this document were conducted between 2016 and 2017 and served as the foundation for ensuring that the YEP technical and soft skills trainings matched the

requirements of Algerian employers in each of the target *wilayas* (governorates). World Learning is now publishing these in a collection as a resource for others seeking to promote youth employment in Algeria, particularly in light of the limited range of published information available.

Before the project's close in 2019, World Learning assisted partner institutions to ensure the training of some 9,500 young Algerians, achieving a 79.7% employment rate for those who sought work and further training for others, enabling them to successfully integrate into local employment markets and contribute to the future development of their communities.

ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The objective of these *wilaya*-level labor market analyses was to better understand the economic context and key aspects of local employment markets in target regions in order to orient service delivery under YEP. Deeper understanding of obstacles, gaps, and needs in the local labor market around each project site allowed World Learning to ensure that technical trainings and other project services supported youth in a way that maximized impact. Such understanding helped to orient service delivery toward sectors with unmet employment demand and avoid training more youth for sectors already oversaturated with job seekers. Analysis can also shed light on the particular skills that youth need to succeed in priority sectors and in their future careers.

The assessment investigated the following themes:

A. Labor market indicators

- Key economic sectors in the region (agriculture, industry, oil & gas, services, etc.)
- Employment distribution by sector, including recent trends
- Employment distribution by type (formal vs. informal, short-term vs. long-term, salaried vs. consultant, low-skill vs. high-skill, etc.)
- Principal employers
- Unemployment rate, including youth unemployment rate
- Labor force participation rate
- Employment turnover: recruitments per year, including by sector
- Projected future growth, including by sector

B. Quantity gaps

- Economic sectors with excess demand (more job openings than job seekers)
- Economic sectors with excess supply (more job seekers than job openings)

C. Quality gaps

- Mismatch between job seekers' skills/qualifications and those sought by employers (in technical skills, soft skills, or both)
- Mismatch between types of employment offered and job seekers' expectations (salaried vs. freelance, informal vs. formal, short-term vs. long-term, etc.)

D. Communication gaps

- Job seekers and employers not connecting with one another

- Job seekers and employers searching on different tools/networks/media
- Job seekers and employers not finding opportunities to meet, not being connected by employment agencies/brokers
- Possibility for technological solutions to bridge gaps

E. Other factors

- Academic and vocational skills trainings currently offered by universities and vocational training centers in region; Relevance, quality, and perception of those trainings in the local job market
- Role of government agencies (ANEM, et al) in facilitating employment in region; Services currently offered and particular strengths and weaknesses in those services
- Bureaucracy and red tape posing obstacles to recruitment
- Other obstacles that prevent job seekers from finding employment (Geographic distance, language issues, challenges in recruitment process, others)
- Other employment support projects or initiatives attempted in the region (past or current). What initiatives met with success, which didn't, and why?

DATA SOURCES

The assessments sought to capitalize on existing data, complemented by extensive in-person interviews in the target regions to uncover new information and complete World Learning's understanding of the unique and evolving labor market landscape in each region. While grounded in an understanding of the global and national labor markets, the assessment focused primarily on the employment situation in the particular regions where YEP would operate, in order to present an approach closely tailored to the specific needs of each locality. Officials from World Learning's selected local partner schools played a key role in guiding and informing the assessment in each region. Below is a summary of the sources of information consulted.

- 1. Desk review - Publications:** *To identify key information on target regions, particularly labor market indicators and past/future trends.*
 - Algerian government sources ([Ministry of Interior](#), [Ministry of Vocational Training](#), [CACI](#), ANEM, ONS, CNES, [ANDI](#))
 - United Nations, International Labour Organisation
 - Local and international civil society
- 2. Desk review - Press:** *To identify recent developments of consequence in labor market, particularly those that indicate future trends (i.e. increased investment in particular sector(s), economic transition in particular region, etc.)*
 - [APS](#) (regional bureaus: [East](#), [West](#), [Center](#), [South](#)), [L'EcoNews](#), [Maghreb Emergent](#)
 - [Djazairiess – Algerian news aggregator](#)
- 3. Desk review - Online Job Boards:** *To identify common job postings, skills frequently requested, responsibilities frequently assigned, types of employment offered, principal employers, other key trends.*

- [Emploitic](#), [OuedKniss](#), [Option Carrière](#), [Tafigo](#), [CVya](#), [Emploi Algérie](#), [Emploi Partner](#), [Journal de l'Emploi](#), [Algérie360](#), [ANEM-authorized agencies](#)
- Regional Facebook groups

4. Interviews in region: Key project stakeholders and others active in employment sphere to confirm assumptions, gather new perspectives, and understand most pressing market needs as well as past and future trends.

- YEC school directors and staff
- Key employers in key local sectors
- Chamber of Commerce
- ANEM (National Employment Agency)
- Ministry of Vocational Training centers
- Private employment agencies

5. Additional sources: The above information was supplemented with information from partners, including follow-up conversations with local partner schools and findings from the MEPI-funded BusinessWise focus groups and online survey project that took place in spring 2016.

The resulting individual assessment reports on each region included in this publication present an analysis of the local labor market, including key indicators, quantity and quality gaps, and particular training needs, as well as recommendations on what interventions (including types of technical and soft skills trainings, job matching tools, and other services) should be emphasized to increase youth employment.

Individual Interview Questions for Employers

What are your core business activities?

How many employees does your company have?

Do you have key positions or skill sets for which you are challenged to find employees? If so, which?

Do you see gaps in the preparation of employees you do hire? Are these primarily in technical skills, soft skills or both? Please describe?

Are there any certifications that you require employees to have or acquire?

Do you have challenges hiring workers who can understand and reference the technical jargon of your industry? Is the technical jargon in English?

Do you have a need, and are you able to hire workers to meet this need, to speak English or other languages with international customers?

Please rank the following technical skills in order of importance to your company's success:

Please rank the following academic skills in order of importance to your company's success:

Please rank the following thinking skills in order of importance to your company's success

Please rank the following interpersonal skills in order of importance to your company's success.

Are there skills or certifications that you are not able to hire that you believe prevent your company from growing or earning profit? Please describe:

Are you concerned about employee retirements or turnover?

What is the most common reason an employee leaves your organization?

Do you have anything further to share?



ADRAR OVERVIEW

Despite its remote location and harsh desert climate, the *wilaya* of Adrar has grown in visibility in recent years thanks to important new gas exploitation projects and infrastructure investments. While trans-Saharan commerce and artisanal agriculture around desert oases were traditional drivers of the region's modest economy, many see it having a promising future thanks to adoption of modern "desert agriculture" techniques, development of its industrial potential, and expansion of the tourism sector.

Official statistics indicate that the building and public works sector employs over half of Adrar's workers, though the large informal sector and significant presence of informal immigrant labor makes it difficult to assess the market's precise contours. Quantity gaps certainly exist in the market, in many cases due to young job-seekers' preference for office jobs over manual labor, despite strong demand and high salary offers for laborers. Quality gaps appear particularly acute in Adrar, where multinational and local companies alike struggle to find qualified workers to handle complex technical tasks or oversee quality control, health and safety, and other facilitation roles. The search for qualified labor is a subject of palpable frustration on the part of employers. As one local business owner said, "Whenever I think about making a new investment, my first obstacle is human resources."

World Learning's selected local partner school, Afaq Language & Computer School¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in Adrar from February 22 to 27, 2016 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the "Analysis Framework" document. To allow for collection of a wider range of perspectives in a shorter timeframe, World Learning and the Afaq School director organized two roundtable discussions with key local employment actors from the following institutions and companies:

Public sector agencies (24 February 2016):

- National Employment Agency (ANEM) Adrar
- Adrar Regional Labor Inspection (*Inspection de travail*)

¹ [facebook.com/schooladrar](https://www.facebook.com/schooladrar)

- Vocational Training Organizing Bureau
- Touate Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI)
- Adrar region Labor Directorate (*Direction de l'Emploi*)

Private sector employers (25 February 2016):

- Tamazgoud petroleum services company
- GSA ADRM
- EURL El Aloui trade and construction company
- EURL Elomes, solar energy firm
- EURL Chorafa
- Samsung Engineering
- Lee Jongbin, Samsung Engineering

Over a six-week period, World Learning and Afaq School also published an online survey and collected responses from youth around Algeria to gauge their educational background, professional skill sets, career aspirations, and training needs. Among over 700 responses nationwide, 44 came from the Adrar region.

Findings from desk research, discussions, and surveys comprise the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Covering a sizable pocket of Algeria's Sahara Desert, the Adrar region has traditionally offered way points along trans-Sahara trade routes, mostly in the form of small population centers clustered around water sources. Limited agricultural activities supported these communities, while nomadic and semi-nomadic populations lived off animal husbandry and commerce. In recent decades, agriculture with more modern irrigation methods, the birth of a small tourism sector, and gas discoveries have fostered a modest expansion of the region's economy. Exploitation of Adrar's strong potential for growth in renewable energies has been slow to take hold.

Adrar is particularly striking for its large size (427,000 km², or 18% of Algeria's land mass) and small population (reportedly 453,169 in 2015).¹ The *wilaya's* population density only just reached 1 person/km² around five years ago (far lower than densely populated northern *wilayas*, or than the national figure of 16 people/km²). But at 2.6% annual growth, Adrar's population is expanding faster than the national average (1.6% growth), and 3 out of 5 citizens are currently under 25 years old.²

Unlike in other regions assessed, World Learning was able to obtain official employment statistics for the *wilaya* from government sources, the National Agency for Intermediation and Property Regulation (ANIREF) and Ministry of Labor's regional Labor Directorate. However, these statistics provide only a

¹ Statistics provided to WL by Direction de l'Emploi Adrar.

² Direction de l'Emploi.

partial picture of the overall employment situation in the region. ANIREF figures from 2012 indicate 10.0% unemployment along with a strikingly low labor force participation rate of 29.0%.¹ Labor Directorate figures from 2015 revise downward both the unemployment rate (to 9.0%, below the official national average of 11.2%²) and labor force participation rate (to 25.4%).³ The low participation rate is indicative of both the region's large population of economically inactive youth and the extensive informal sector not captured in official statistics. The size of the informal sector—which anecdotal evidence suggests is a substantial employer in Adrar—clouds the picture of the labor market and makes it challenging to assess the extent and nature of economic participation. The presence of some 2,000 registered foreign workers and significant numbers of illegal ones (mostly Malians working in manual labor) also complicates efforts to understand the labor market's contours.

While some degree of hope for and/or anticipation of an economic transition in Algeria has been a theme of analysis discussions in each region studied, a stronger consensus was visible in Adrar. “The public sector is over,” was heard more often, with clear implications: “We need to think long-term about employability because big changes are coming.” The seeming consensus even extended to the very sectors that would drive the region's economic transformation: agriculture, industry, and tourism.

These are by no means the region's strongest sectors today, however. The most recent available statistics (from ANIREF) provide the following sectoral breakdown for the Adrar region's active workforce, as of 2013:⁴

- Agriculture: 1%
- Building and Public Works: 69%
- Industry: 3%
- Services and Administration: 26%

Particular findings for each of these sectors are as follows:

Agriculture: The extreme heat and inhospitable climate that grip Adrar for much of the year make agriculture a challenge, but underground water sources and traditional irrigation systems (*fogaras*) and their modern successors have long made cultivation possible, particularly in the northern “green belt” extending between Timimoun and Aoulef. Dates are an important traditional crop, and tomatoes have blossomed in recent decades, particularly since a long-dormant regional canning factory reopened in 2015 under private ownership. Several other crops—including tobacco, peanuts, and onions—are also grown in the region, mostly for consumption in the local area or elsewhere in Algeria. More so that in the temperate northern regions where natural resources are abundant, the possibility of environmental changes place Adrar's agricultural sector at great risk. Aquifer depletion is a growing concern as the

¹ ANIREF.

² [“Le taux de chômage en Algérie repart à la hausse”, Le Journal de l'Emploi, 11 January 2016.](#)

³ Direction de l'Emploi

⁴ “Rubrique Monographie Wilaya: Adrar”, ANIREF, 28 July 2013.

population expands and agriculture develops. Climate change also threatens to accelerate desertification, rendering previously arable land unusable.

Recognizing the sector's potential alongside these threats, some in government have taken steps to expand young people's interest in the sector and give them tools to render it sustainable. Vocational training and university offerings in "desert agriculture" are reportedly growing, and many young people are said to be using interest-free loans from the National Agency for Support of Youth Employment (ANSEJ) to purchase pivot irrigation units. But a representative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI), highlights the challenges that follow: "The youth can get a pivot machine from an ANSEJ loan, but then they have no idea how to install, maintain, or repair it."

While agriculture only contributes a tiny minority of the region's formal employment, as the ANIREF figures illustrate, it almost certainly employs many more informally and has strong potential for growth through improved irrigation and greenhouse practices.

Building and Public Works: The construction sector's dominance of the local economy in recent years is due in large part to substantial investments intended to expand the vast region's highway network, support industrial production and new hydrocarbon extraction, and house the region's growing population. According to figures provided to World Learning by a representative of the National Agency for Investment Development (ANDI), between January 2004 and March 2016, 761 (or 96.0%) of the government's 793 economic development projects launched in the *wilaya* have been in the building and public works sector (as compared to only 17, or 2.1%, in agriculture and 15, or 1.9%, in tourism).¹

The sector is characterized by a particularly fluid, unstable workforce that is apparently insufficient to cover the demand. "IT workers and computer technicians? Nobody needs these!" an exasperated interviewee from a construction company, told World Learning. "What we can't find is solderers, builders, masons, etc. The training isn't there... [so] it's impossible to find an electrician who is free these days." Two or three new projects, including new gas facilities at Aougrou and Reggane launched in recent years, "have absorbed the entire laborer class and laid bare the shortfall of qualified labor," according to an employee of the regional Labor Inspection office. The shortfall has warped the market, "Today it's impossible to find someone who works through the duration of the project. An electrician, a plumber... you can't find one who will stay" said a construction respondent. Other business owners in the sector expressed similar frustrations, and also noted that young people in the region are unwilling to move in to fill this gap. "The youth prefer to go take ANSEJ loans, because being a mason is 'shameful.' We offer them 80,000 DA [US\$800] a month and they still don't want to work. So it's all Africans working in the building sector." Another construction firm owner agreed: "We have asked ANEM for workers, but there just aren't qualified young people in any of these domains that we need. It's a problem of the youth here."

Industry: In Adrar's few designated industrial zones, production focuses on construction materials, mining, and food processing. ANIREF lists several projects under development, including over 400 km of natural gas pipelines, a new 200-hectare industrial zone near Adrar city, and expansion of water treatment and

¹ Statistics provided to WL by ANDI Adrar.

storage facilities.¹ One CACI representative also cites a major cement factory being built near Aoulef that will soon come online and require a substantial workforce.

Actors in the sector complain of significant shortcomings in workers' skills as a damper on industrial development. A respondent of a local company, which produces PVC pipes and also offers services to the petroleum industry, attributes the gaps to poor training and low motivation, states "Youth don't have training in or knowledge of new industrial technologies. In general, the quality of *cadres* has dropped since the 1990s, and the youth lack motivation to learn the basics and then build expertise in a domain. But the people trained in the 1980s and 1990s? You give them two or three days and they can understand everything." These gaps are costing producers. Regulations on workplace safety, environmental management, and security are very strict, he says, "Yet we don't have any staff specialized in quality control. We have to call on external consulting bureaus that are extremely expensive." In addition to Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) specialists, maintenance workers are in high demand. Industrial operators are desperate for solutions, an interviewee from an oil company says: "We tried bringing in Chinese teams as workers, engineers, and technicians. But 50% of the tubes they made in the first two weeks were unusable, so we had to stop." On many projects, producers rely on sometimes costly migrant labor from Morocco or south of the Sahara.

Traditional handicraft production is another area suffering from a shortage of skilled workers. According to a labor inspector, many artisanal producers have abandoned handicraft production, seeking the stability of public sector jobs in other fields. Artisanry is also an area that appears not to appeal to young people. "The youth are avoiding it," said one interviewee. An interviewee from a regional labor office lamented that "In the artisan sector, there is no relief coming from the next generation."

Services and Administration: While young people benefiting from the YEP project will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing youth to enter this sector will not be a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in Adrar—as it is across Algeria—but is heavily oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand in the future.

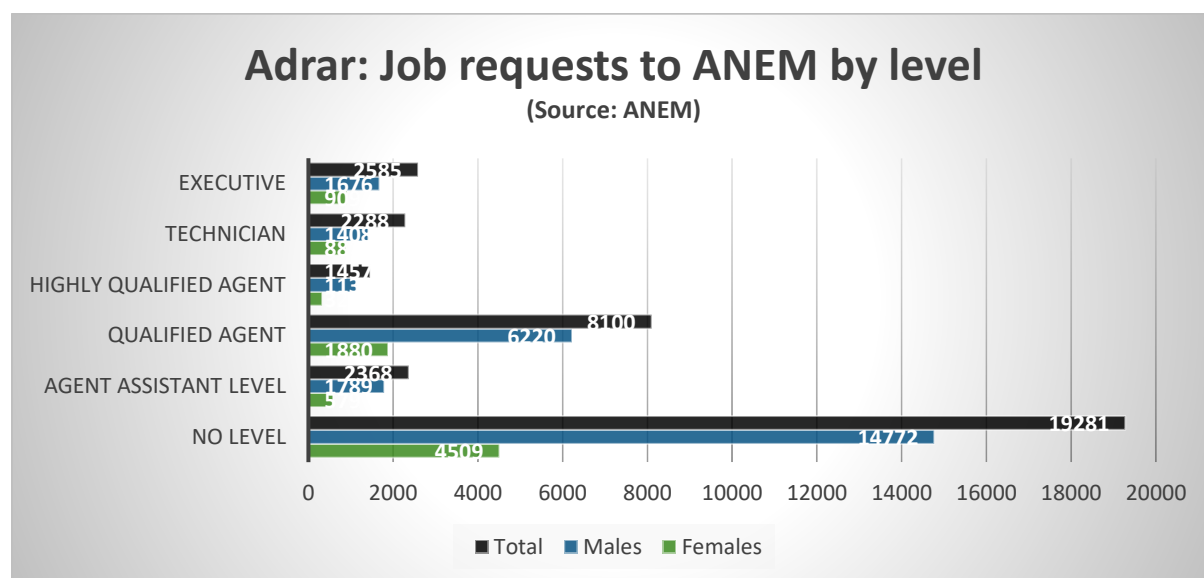
Tourism is widely cited as an area of likely future growth. With its striking desert landscapes, historic *ksar* settlements, libraries of ancient manuscripts, Adrar offers strong potential for both national and international tourism. The Ministry of Tourism is roughly mid-way through a five-year spurt of infrastructure investment, with five new hotels to be finished this year in and around Adrar city, as well as others in Timimoun in the coming years. Locals note that many staff in the current hotels come from the north, but the new projects present opportunities for qualified local job-seekers. One respondent from a local agency, calls tourism "the most important sector to focus on and also the easiest area to make a rapid difference by training recent university graduates." A regional employee notes that "We need dynamic tour guides if we are going to develop the tourism sector, to capitalize on the region's cultural and natural attractions."

¹ ANIREF

Limited knowledge may be a substantial obstacle, an interviewee cautions, “We don’t know tourism as well as Moroccans or Egyptians, or have senior experts to explain our history or restore our ancient manuscripts and cities.” Security may also be a challenge; due to the threat of attacks in the region, all foreigners in the *wilaya* are required to travel with police escorts, discouraging outside visitors.

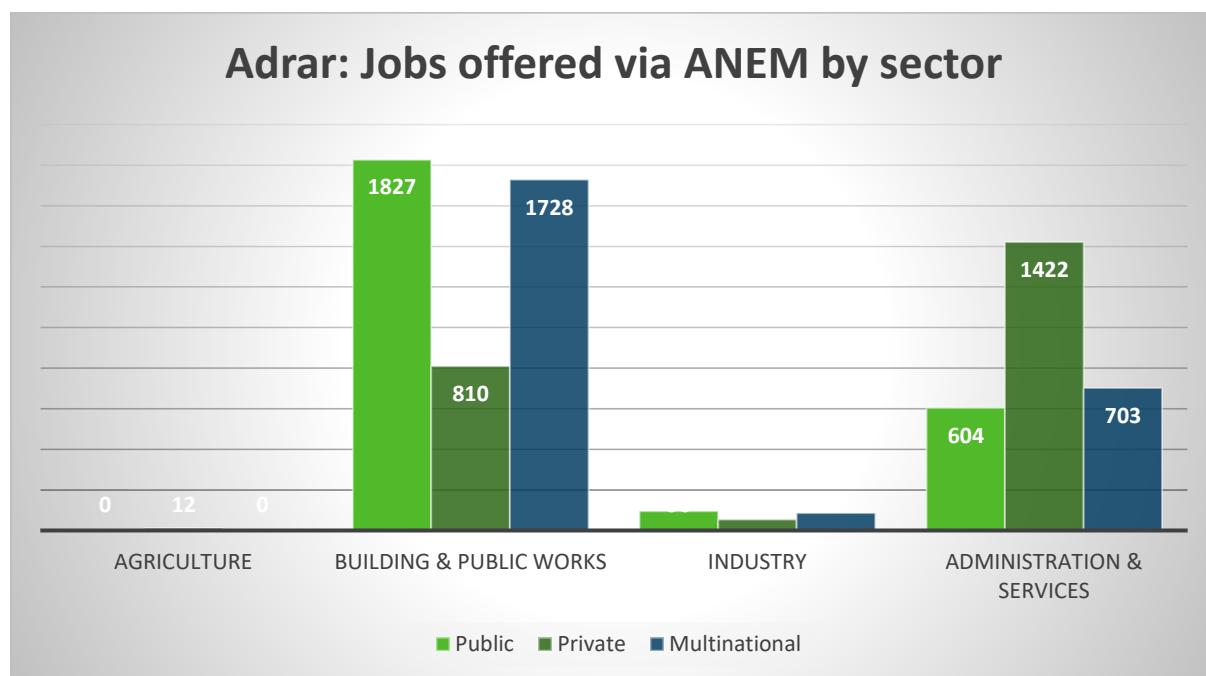
QUANTITY GAPS

As in other southern *wilayas*, the obligation for employers to recruit via ANEM is strongly enforced, so statistics from the agency offer a more accurate picture of the labor market than in some other regions. Those figures, provided to World Learning by ANEM, point to strong excess supply of labor. In the first eight months of 2015 (the latest statistics currently available), ANEM received 25,749 requests for employment from job-seekers, but only 5,373 offers from employers—of which 1,860 were in the public sector and 3,513 private.¹ ANEM’s statistics indicate that while the number of job offers has remained essentially unchanged year-on-year, between 2011 and 2014 the demand for jobs increased 47%. This is likely due to the large youth population coming of age and seeking to enter the workforce, stretching ANEM’s absorption capacity—and the market’s more generally. Indeed, detailed figures from the Labor Directorate show that the 25-to-29-year-old age group has registered the greatest number of requests for jobs, with the two adjacent age groups close behind. (This overall trend also holds true when examining applications from men and from women exclusively.)²



¹ “Fiche technique de l’agence de l’emploi, *Wilaya* d’Adrar, au 31 Août 2015”, ANEM.

² ANEM.



As noted above, certain sectors like agriculture, construction, and traditional handicrafts seem to be suffering from personnel shortages that may be difficult to fill because of job-seekers' preferences. A representative of the Vocational Training Organizing Bureau for the *wilaya* notes that "Youth especially are orienting themselves more toward office work and IT rather than agriculture and petroleum extraction jobs, which have traditionally been important sectors here. We are seeing changing demand from the youth." He notes that every trainee who graduated from the vocational training system with a plumber's certificate finds work easily, and that there remains strong unmet demand for jobs as diverse as topographers/surveyors, plasterers, and graphic designers.

QUALITY GAPS

Perhaps even greater than the quantity gaps that exist in the region's labor market, quality gaps complicate recruitment in the Adrar market. Despite the severe excess in the labor supply revealed by ANEM's statistics, the agency has been unable to match job seekers to all openings. Over the past five years, ANEM has matched job seekers to approximately three of every four jobs proposed, leaving the other 25% unfilled. "Our job seeker files are full of profiles with no qualification or training," an interviewee explains. He notes that some of the quality gaps are due to lack of training: "There is no well adapted training for builders, form setters, specialized welders, crane operators, and drivers in all categories." Business owners in the region echo these complaints. As one lamented to World Learning, "The engineers come out of the university with no real qualifications or any practical experience." These problems cost employers, as another noted to World Learning: "The lack of training represents a huge loss of money in economic terms for companies, due to the cost of on-the-job accidents, recruiting expatriates, and conducting training in-house." Another cited in particular the lack of soft skills: "New recruits, and especially the youth, really lack an understanding of how to behave with their employers, their direct supervisors and the teams with which they work. The young recruits are aggressive!"

The approximately two dozen international corporations operating in Adrar seem to have particular problems with the quality gaps. According to one respondent, Samsung and two sub-contractors are seeking to scale up in the coming years from around 1,000 employees to nearly 3,500 to support several large construction and industrial management projects in the region. But they describe frustrations in trying to work with ANEM to hire civil engineers, HSE specialists, electricians, and other technical workers with soft skills and English language abilities from the local area. “The first problem is communication,” he says. “For engineering and supervisor grade recruits, they say ‘We have so many’ but in Adrar we can’t find people with good communications skills. We need English for reporting, for writing, for correspondence. If they can’t understand then it’s a real problem, because we have about 37 Koreans supervising, and everyone underneath them has such limited English.” Currently, he says, the company pays heavy government penalties for recruiting workers abroad, and is attempting to find internal solutions (language training) or outside partnerships that can help ease the burden. (For example, Samsung attempted to establish a partnership with the University of Adrar to recruit English-speaking engineers, but he says the recruits that were proposed did not have the necessary English capacity to fill the positions, and Samsung abandoned the initiative.)

The government has also recognized the gap in soft skills among young job-seekers. According to one ANEM representative, “The vocational training office and ANEM already have trainings in job search, CV writing, and similar topics, but we keep hearing of the need for similar trainings.”

COMMUNICATION GAPS

The limited internet penetration in Adrar means that Emploitic and other employment sites used widely in northern Algeria are far less important in Adrar. As noted above, a considerable portion of the region’s recruitment passes through ANEM, though multinational companies have shown a willingness to pay penalties to bypass the agency in order to bring in qualified external workers.

One notable particularity of the Adrar labor market is language; unlike in northern cities, Arabic is fully dominant in Adrar, and followed second by English, rather than French, which few residents can speak comfortably. The predominance of English over French as a second language is particularly pronounced among younger generations.

OTHER FACTORS

Founded in 1986, Ahmed Draïa University of Adrar has five schools offering training to over 9,000 students in science and technology, economics and commerce, humanities and Islamic studies, law and political science, and literature and languages from “license” degrees through doctorate.

The vocational training system in the *wilaya* currently consists of two national specialized vocational training institutes (INSFP) in Adrar city and 18 vocational training and apprenticeship centers (CFPA) in major towns around the *wilaya*. These offer a range of 52 “qualifying training” programs lasting between three and six months but offering only a limited boost in credentials, and “diploma training” programs.

Currently, the ministry offers 2,250 places for the latter, split among 240 courses lasting anywhere from six to 30 months, depending on the topic. They are offered in the following areas:

Vocational Training Category	No. of Places Offered
Tailoring and clothing	313
Building and public works	290
Traditional handicrafts	276
Electricity, electronics, energy	208
Administrative and management techniques	205
Service jobs	161
Agriculture	152
Metallic construction	142
Hotel and tourism	127
Information technology	110
Woodwork and furnishing	65
Mechanical, Motors, Engines	65
Water and environment	55
Mining and quarrying	40
Leatherwork	30
Audiovisual technologies	6
Food processing industry	5
TOTAL	2,250

Few of the economic actors World Learning spoke to in Adrar offered praise for the vocational training system. A representative of the Labor Directorate notes that after completing a training course, “People don’t see the result, and so people lose trust in the certificate and are hesitant to invest time in training.” Officials are reportedly working to improve the system, including through the establishment of a regional commission comprised of the Labor Directorate and Ministry of Vocational Training to study future needs of the labor market and adapt the training offerings. Some are also attempting to partner with the training centers to help trainees gain experience; agriculture and construction trainings often have options for apprenticeship on real job sites, and Samsung is beginning an internship program with a CFPA near one of its gas production facilities to funnel young masons, scaffolders, and solderers into the company. Despite these few cases of public-private partnership, however, one CACI representative laments that graduates of the vocational training program “go to work for the state for the benefits, the stability, and the flexible hours. Job seekers here prefer the public sector.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers in line with suggestions of local business leaders, including themes like career planning, leadership, professional communications, writing, personal

development, networking, professional culture, et al. Base on existing World Learning Algeria “Job Access” curriculum, with modifications.

2. *To start, target soft skills and language offerings toward vocational training system trainees.* To assure a fast start to activities and begin adding immediate value to the labor market, offer the skills most often cited as lacking—namely, soft skills and English language—to vocational training grads from Afaq or the local CFPAs. The vocational training officials’ willingness to partner should facilitate such an arrangement, which will substantially enhance the young graduates’ employability.
3. *Develop technical training offerings for young job seekers in truck driving, hospitality (hotel-restaurant management, customer relations, tourism, etc.) and qualified labor (electrical, masonry, soldering, industrial repair, machinist, etc.)* and other fields based on needs expressed by local employers. For truck driving, reinforce current training to include more days of practice. For others, Afaq’s close relationship with the vocational training administration provides easy access to existing curricula, which can then be adapted to better respond to employers’ needs. Keep in mind October and February start dates for Afaq classes when preparing to launch new modules.
4. *Offer add-on trainings in key subjects* that can help project graduates meet all needs of employers. These include:
 - a. English language: Offer “English for Business” classes to hospitality trainees, and adapt a basic version mixed with “Technical English” for manual labor trainees.
 - b. Computer skills: Basic computer use, internet search, e-mail, Microsoft Office suite can add value for hospitality workers. Consider partnering with Microsoft to use “Digital Literacy” and/or “Imagine Academy” packages.
 - c. Basic HSE: This can serve as a useful certificate to supplement qualified labor trainings. Include basic first aid, workplace safety, and similar, along the lines of Afaq’s existing collaboration with Algero-American Training Center.
5. *Provide additional support to CV development.* Given the low rates of internet penetration and computer use in Adrar, many job-seekers have never managed to compile their experience into a single typed CV. The career center can add value and increase some job-seekers’ employability simply by filling this gap, for example by helping young people to prepare a CV and giving them a printed and digital copy on a USB key. Explore options with Souktel to include a simple CV creation and export feature in the job matching platform.
6. *Explore potential technical trainings in agriculture field.* While agriculture in Adrar is mostly artisanal, family-run, and confined to the informal sector, it is a major employer in real terms. World Learning and Afaq should continue to discuss ways in which training may add value and expand stable, formal employment in this important sector.

7. *Provide “alternance” internships for trainees.* As in other regions, employers in Adrar express interest in recruiting workers with practical experience and willingness to help young trainees gain that experience through internships. The “*alternance*” model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout the week, is an ideal way for youth to link their classroom and workplace knowledge. Agreements can provide for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement.
8. *Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.* Work with Afaq team to decide how counseling, training, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account students’ availability. Explore how to “package” the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand them to attract new students and build name recognition within the regional business community.
9. *Consolidate private business network.* Business leaders with whom World Learning and Afaq staff met expressed strong desire to contribute to the project’s success and recruit competent graduates into local companies. Capitalize on Afaq’s extensive network and on this interest by consolidating the advisory committee and structuring internship and job placement agreements. Consider expanding partnerships to include the Tourism Directorate, National Unemployment Insurance Agency (CNAC), ANSEJ, ANDI, and private sector employers.
10. *Define long-term business model.* Beyond the initial budget development exercise, the sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Given the low income levels of many families in Adrar, consider making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students’ commitment. Afaq could also tap private companies, such as multinational employers, to subsidize training costs in the future.



BATNA OVERVIEW

The unofficial capital of Algeria's eastern Aurès mountains, Batna is the rugged heartland of the country's Chaoui Berber people, and a key player in the economy of the wider eastern region. Though Batna's climate and terrain are unforgiving, agricultural production, mineral deposits, and other resources are sufficient to sustain burgeoning population centers and a diversifying economic base.

Thanks to its expanding urban population, substantial commercial traffic, and a central location between the southern desert, northern ports, and Tunisia to the east, Batna is emerging as a hub of rapid industrial growth. Several international and domestic firms have established major vehicle manufacturing plants in Batna, which is also home to important metal transformation and food processing factories, as well as many associated support services. This transition is transforming the prospects available to local youth in this traditionally agrarian region. At the same time, as in other regions, Batna's labor market is still plagued by substantial quantitative and qualitative mismatches. Employers report challenges recruiting sales agents, skilled laborers, and technicians with the right balance of practical experience, academic training, and interpersonal skills.

World Learning's selected local partner school, ILIMA School¹, the local affiliate of the Ibn Rochd educational group, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in Batna from October 1 to 3, 2017 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the "Analysis Framework" document.

To allow for collection of a wider range of perspectives in a shorter timeframe, World Learning and ILIMA School staff organized a roundtable discussion at the school on October 2 with key local employment actors. Representatives from the following institutions and companies attended:

- [ANSEJ, a state-run youth loan agency;](#)
- [Groupe Hodna, milk producer;](#)
- [MartiMétal, steel plant;](#)

¹ www.ibnrochd.com

- [Canon](#) electronics supplier;
- SERO EST, construction firm;
- [Batna University 1](#);
- [Batna University 2](#);
- Cook Family, cake factory;
- [GIPLAIT](#), milk producer;
- [GMI, Hyundai and KIA affiliate manufacturer](#);
- Chaker driving school;
- [DC Laboratoire, engineering firm](#).

Before and after the roundtable discussion, World Learning and ILIMA staff also visited several employers and officials directly from these institutions and businesses:

- [MartiMétal](#)
- [TIRSAM](#), tractor manufacturer;
- Ibn Rochd education group;
- Rehaouet Distribution;
- [Groupe Benbellat, construction developer](#);
- [Danone](#);
- [Batna University 1](#);
- [GIPLAIT](#);
- Benpack, packing supplier;
- [ANEM, national employment agency](#);
- [Groupe FAJO SGBDE, construction materials producer](#).

Findings from desk research and in-person discussions form the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Covering the heartland of Algeria's eastern Aurès Mountains, the *wilaya* of Batna has been an important trading and agricultural center since at least the time of the Romans, who invested heavily in the region, leaving extensive settlements that remain visible today. In modern times, the regional capital—also called Batna—has grown into Algeria's fifth largest city and emerged as an important industrial and commercial hub. Today it is home to numerous manufacturing plants, which take advantage of favorable conditions including road and rail links to other major cities, two large universities in Batna city, mineral deposits and other natural resources in the surrounding mountains, and more. Even so, Batna's industrial sector—along with other high-potential sectors like construction and tourism—still has considerable room to grow.

The most recent publicly available employment statistics for the Batna region date to end-2013, and place overall unemployment at 9%,¹ roughly in line with the national rate of 9.8% at the same time.² With a huge proportion of youth among its 1.2 million residents (2012 estimate³) now coming of age, it is likely that the unemployment rate among that segment is much higher in Batna today, in line with national trends. (In April 2017, the latest available national statistics put Algeria's overall unemployment at 12.3%, and at 29.7% for 16-to-24-year-olds.⁴)

The most recent available statistics (from the National Investment Development Agency, ANDI) provide the following sectoral breakdown for the Batna region's active workforce, as of 2009:⁵

- Building and Public Works 23.4%
- Administration 22.6%
- Agriculture 22.4%
- Commerce 15.0%
- Services 8.6%
- Industry 7.9%

These statistics are regrettably outdated and likely no longer provide an accurate approximation of the relative importance of each sector in the region's labor market. Direct observation and discussions with local actors would suggest that industry's and services' shares of the regional labor pool have grown considerably in the past eight years, likely at the expense of building and agriculture.

Particular findings for each sector are as follows:

Building and Public Works: Building is centered in the city of Batna, Algeria's fifth largest city, which is seeing extensive public and private investment in residential construction. New housing developments clustered in satellite quarters now surround Batna, while in the city, extensive building has accompanied the industrial and commercial growth observed in recent years. Elsewhere in the *wilaya*, important secondary cities like Barika, Ain Touta, Merouana, and Arris are also seeing significant construction as part of an ongoing urbanization trend in the region. As in the neighboring *wilaya* of Biskra, demand in the construction sector appears especially focused on skilled labor.

Administration: While young people benefiting from YEP will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector is not a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in Batna—and across Algeria—but is heavily oversaturated with demand and unlikely to expand in the future. A national hiring freeze across much of the public sector was set in late 2014, and austerity measures have continued since.

¹ ["Batna: Unemployment rate maintained at 9% thanks to development projects," *Le Financier*, 18 March 2014.](#)

² ["Rate stabilized at end 2013: unemployment under the 10% bar", *Midi Libre*, 13 March 2014.](#)

³ ["Informational card on the wilaya of Batna", *Wilaya of Batna*, 2013.](#)

⁴ ["Unemployment rate rose to over 12% in April 2017", *Algeria Press Service*, 12 August 2017.](#)

⁵ ["Monographie de wilaya: Batna", ANDI, p13.](#)

Agriculture: For centuries the backbone of the region's economy, agriculture today plays a smaller but still important role—particularly in the plains that cover the northern reaches of the *wilaya*. Substantial underground water reserves help farmers overcome limited precipitation levels. But rocky soil and harsh winter and summer temperatures pose significant challenges and are among the factors pushing many residents to abandon their pastoral traditions and seek a living in urban centers. Slightly less than 40% of the region's arable land (itself representing 40% of the *wilaya's* total surface area) is dedicated to grain production¹, while poultry and livestock herding (mostly sheep and goats) are also important activities. Other key products include honey and tree fruits such as apples, apricots, and olives, as well as their derivatives.

Commerce: Batna city is a key commercial center in Algeria's east. With rail links to northern metropolises, proximity to Tunisia, and access via road to the eastern sea ports of Jijel, Skikda, and Annaba, the city of Batna serves as a vital hub for goods traveling through the wider region. The region's considerable industrial output and population growth in recent years make it an important site for both production and consumption of diverse goods.

Services: The established construction sector and booming industrial sector are behind growing demand for support services such as legal, financial, medical, technological, and logistical assistance. Growing urbanization (which accelerated during the violence of the 1990s civil war and has continued into the post-war period) is also fueling the sector's growth. One particularly untapped subsector is tourism and leisure. Batna is home to numerous Roman ruins (including Timgad, a UNESCO World Heritage site), impressive natural sites such as the Ghoufi canyon, and the unique cultural heritage of the Chaoui Berbers. But as recently as five years ago, the region boasted just 14 modest hotels; new investment and construction has boosted this number of late, but quality and selection remain limited.

Industry: Even as Algeria at large has grown ever more dependent on imports in recent years, throwing its trade deficit severely into the negative, Batna has witnessed substantial growth in its industrial sector. Plentiful raw materials (including sizable deposits of gypsum, clay, marble, and dolomite for construction materials, as well as other minerals), access to nearby markets, and a growing population have all supported this expansion. Today, Batna is emerging as an important hub for vehicle manufacturing (with GMI's large Hyundai plant and several tractor and truck producers) and heavy industry (including steel production through Portuguese firm MartiMétal and a major joint venture launched in 2016 at Ain Yagout between US-based General Electric and Algeria's Sonelgaz to manufacture power turbines), and numerous food processing plants (including multiple dairy processors and the N'gaous juice factory, one of the country's largest producers). Industrial expansion is continuing; in March, for example, GMI began construction on its new KIA vehicle production facility, which is expected to open next year.² New firms like Aures Solaire (located in Ain Yagout) are producing renewable energy technologies. The National Agency for Intermediation and Property Regulation (ANIREF), which oversees designation of special

¹ ["Monographie de wilaya: Batna", ANDI, p14.](#)

² ["Cornerstone of Kia Motors Algeria laid March 19 in Batna", Algérie Eco, 14 March 2017.](#)

industrial zones, maintains a 130-hectare industrial park at Ain Yagout, a suburb of Batna city adjacent to the regional airport.¹ Three industrial zones in Batna city and Barika host 264 lots covering over 430 hectares. ANIREF has licensed an additional 450 individual industrial lots in five activity zones.²

QUANTITY GAPS

Leading employers in Batna cited numerous posts for which they consistently struggle to find sufficient numbers of recruits. A local employer pointed to a need for qualified sales staff; representatives of milk producer GIPLAIT cited biologists, accountants, and welders; one director listed quality control agents, machine operators, steel painters, and welders. In the focus group discussion, employers cited agriculture and tourism as sectors that generally struggle to find sufficient labor. A representative of a packing supplier told World Learning that, due to high turnover (an issue discussed in more detail below), his factory constantly faces shortages of industrial maintenance personnel, including mechanical, electromechanical, and high-voltage electric technicians.

GMI, the Algerian manufacturing affiliate for Hyundai and KIA, is rapidly scaling up its production facilities at Ain Yagout. Company representatives report that they expect to hire 1,110 new workers between now and end-2018. Of these, 450 will be elite engineering graduates and 660 will be electricians, mechanics, metalworkers, and other skilled laborers. Given that other employers already list several of these positions among those in short supply, shortages in those fields are sure to persist in the coming year and likely beyond.

QUALITY GAPS

Batna suffers from substantial gaps between the qualifications of job seekers and those sought by regional employers. “The biggest problem that economic operators here face is the competency of their employees. It’s really a tragedy for some,” an interviewee concluded at the close of the market assessment meetings.

Part of the problem is basic education. According to official figures, 23.3% of the region’s residents are illiterate and 23.8% lack even a primary school degree.³ These figures are slightly higher than the national averages, and present significant obstacles to employers seeking skilled labor.

More specifically, employers express difficulty finding recruits with technical capacities that meet their standards. “To teach,” says a respondent from an education program, “our staff need skills and experience in dealing with children’s psychology. But new recruits lack experience, and don’t have the skills and techniques to work with kids.” In the light industry sector, another interviewee says that graduates from the university’s engineering programs sometimes “don’t even know which way to turn a bolt to unscrew it.” He tells World Learning that “We bring them in for training, but many don’t know how to analyze the

¹ [ANIREF 2017](#).

² [“Monographie de wilaya: Batna”, ANIREF, p5.](#)

³ [“Literacy rates”, National Statistics Office; “Educational attainment rates”, National Statistics Office.](#)

problem of a broken machine. They didn't learn mechanical logic in their program, and can't even read a mechanical diagram." A respondent from a manufacturing company, also points to shortcomings in universities: "Academic training isn't any good. People only learn on the job." International companies face additional difficulties. Portuguese affiliate MartiMétal requires "competencies that don't exist in Algeria," said one employee. Her firm's internal regulations require that at least one engineer with particular international certifications be present at all times during factory operation, severely limiting their potential to operate, much less to expand.

Soft skills such as job search skills and basic professional capacities are another key area of need mentioned by multiple employers in Batna. "We see university graduates who don't know how to draft correspondence," says a respondent. Another interviewee agrees, "We had to train agents to complete all the reports, because the mechanical workers don't know how to. So we had to hire special staff to follow them around and write up all the reports on the maintenance tasks performed." Benpack, he affirmed, would be "very interested in technicians with soft skills." He also expressed a desire to recruit maintenance managers capable of thinking strategically, in order to manage repair staff and prevent problems rather than just fixing them once they arise. Knowledge of how to navigate the job market is also an essential skill some employers claim is lacking. "I need [job seekers] to know how to prepare a CV, how to do a job interview, how to write a cover letter," says a respondent from the food sector. Several employers indicated they would hire recruits without any experience if they demonstrated strong interpersonal skills and professionalism.

But not all employers shared this view. One factory employee asserted that experience is all that is needed. University students should be spending several months a year in apprenticeships at factories, he said. "That will help them know what it means to work, and the university to know what businesses need. Kids don't need to know how to make a pretty CV, they can copy a model online. They need to know how to do real things in a factory."

COMMUNICATION GAPS

"They don't even try. They don't even have their CV ready, and then they tell you it's impossible to find a job. But really they don't know how to, or even what's the process." One interviewee from an engineering firm had that to say about his fellow youth who today dominate the ranks of Algeria's unemployed.

"They don't know how to search for work," agrees one representative in the food sector. "Information isn't circulating, and youth don't know where to look for or find a position that's open." To overcome this problem as he and his colleagues prepare to launch their new factory next month, he is taking a multi-pronged approach. He has searched for appropriate profiles at national employment agency ANEM (as most employers in the region report doing, in line with national legislation, though ANEM officials in the region are alleged to quietly accept work-around arrangements). But a representative tells World Learning he has had more luck approaching particular training centers in Batna's two universities and requesting graduating students with specific profiles from them. Interestingly, he noted a substantial divergence in qualifications along gender lines: "We did psychological tests [on our new recruits], and the majority of

those who are ready to work are women, even on the technical side. The young men aren't really ready to work." To affirm this, he also mentioned that, "The Mechanical Institute [at Batna University 1] only gave us women's names when we requested machine operators and maintenance staff."

Besides recruiting via ANEM and universities, multiple businesses in the region note that they take on interns as a means of testing and identifying potential new recruits. Representatives of vehicle manufacturer GMI mentioned that they work with centers from the public vocational training system (described below) to recruit interns. A interviewee confirms that her firm does the same, eventually hiring the best performing interns for full-time positions.

OTHER FACTORS

As in other regions, multiple employers in Batna lamented new recruits' lack of dedication to their posts. A respondent points to a 30% annual turnover rate among his factory's personnel, and many of his peers cited similar concerns. "There's no fidelity," laments one informant. "It's not good to invest in them—to pay and then see them leave." As Maala's statement suggests, this perception likely pushes many employers to limit their investment in staff development, raising the relative value of seasoned workers in the labor market and further complicating the obstacles faced by first-time job seekers.

Many employers who may theoretically see the value in such training still express reticence about investing significant time and money. "I have deadlines. I don't have time for training," a construction employee. An interviewee expresses similar sentiments: "I don't have time to train teachers; I have other tasks. And of course, parents don't want a trainee teaching their kids. In the private sector they won't tolerate it." Others have proceeded with training but found that it hindered productivity. One GMI representative recounted that the 15 best-performing staff were sent from the Batna factory for a two-week training period at Hyundai's South Korean headquarters, but "the production of the entire factory dropped" during their absence. (Incidentally, he even claims to observe the same phenomenon when new recruits are added to production lines: "As soon as you recruit two new people the cadence of the entire factory drops.")

If few employers in Batna are willing to invest in training their staff, formal training institutions must shoulder the burden instead. Batna is home to two universities, one in downtown Batna city and the other in nearby Fesdis, with over 60,000 students between the two studying a full range of disciplines in the sciences and humanities.¹ The region is also home to 26 vocational training institutes (24 CFPA training centers, 1 INSPF superior institute, and 1 IEP vocational education institute). The centers offer varied training options:²

Vocational training offers by category	Initial qualifying training	Qualifying training	Diploma training
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¹ [Vice Rectorate for External Relations, 2017](#); [University of Batna 1, 2017](#); [University of Batna 2, 2017](#).

² ["Portail de la Direction de la Formation Professionnelle, wilaya de Batna", February 2017.](#)

<i>Multiple specializations are offered within each training category.</i>	<i>(3-6 months)</i>	<i>(1-6 months)</i>	<i>(6-30 months)</i>
Tailoring, clothing production	40	395	505
Building and public works	150	140	455
Services	20	285	386
Administration and management	0	0	649
Hotel, restaurant, tourism	70	250	150
Information technology	55	175	215
Traditional artisanry	15	45	311
Electric, electronics, energy	30	25	314
Agriculture	180	120	55
Motor and engine maintenance	0	0	190
Metallic construction	0	0	156
Woodworking and furniture making	25	0	121
Mechanical and steel construction	0	0	50
Water and environment	0	0	25
Leatherwork	0	15	5
Audiovisual	0	0	5
Totals	585	1,450	3,592

Among the few business associations active in Batna, the public Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the only one to offer training (a small selection of administrative and foreign language courses).¹ Batna is one of only two *wilayas* in Algeria without representation from the Business Leaders Forum FCE², though the smaller General Confederation of Algerian Enterprises (CGEA) does maintain a Batna office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers** in line with suggestions of local business leaders, including existing modules on career planning, leadership, professional communications, writing, personal development, networking, et al. Consider developing a third set of “soft skills” modules to cover workplace culture, professional expectations, and other post-recruitment themes. These trainings will serve as a core service of the career center, given the diversity of technical skills in demand in the Batna market.
2. **Offer career counseling** through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech’s Tamheed³ platform) in order to provide clear guidance to young people in launching their careers—a factor

¹ [“Formations 2016/2017”, CCI Aurès.](#)

² [“Directory of Delegates by Site”, FCE.](#)

³ Tamheed is an online psychometric assessment test designed by Qatar-based Silatech to provide youth with access to quality career advising services and resources. In Algeria, World Learning collaborates with Silatech to offer Arabic, French, and English versions of the test and train counselors.

that local business leaders noted was absent. Such orientation can help job seekers better focus their job search and identify corresponding training needs.

3. **Develop technical training offerings to young job-seekers in industrial (machinist, welder, electrician, industrial painter, maintenance workers, etc.) and sales fields** in line with needs expressed by local employers. These represent the career centers' key opportunities in the region, and are achievable particularly in close cooperation with private companies. An emphasis on recruitment of seasoned trainers with practical experience is highly recommended. Preparing these courses will require an expansion of ILIMA School's existing training offerings; school leaders should see the project as an opportunity to expand into promising new areas of expertise while assuming minimal commercial risk. ILIMA's expertise in computer training is noted but should be given lower priority compared to these high-demand sectors, until such time as demand changes demonstrably.
4. **Capitalize on companies' offers of agreements in order to offer job seekers practical training and direct placement**, particularly in the industrial sector. Major employer GMI and new cakes producer Cook Family have offered to establish *conventions* that could facilitate collaboration, including *alternance*-style trainings that intersperse training and internship hours throughout the work week. These offers present ideal opportunities for on-the-job training, internships, and direct job placement of trainees, and should be given highest priority by career center staff.
5. **Offer add-on trainings in key subjects** that can help graduates in all fields meet or exceed employers' expectations. These may include:
 - a. Communications: Including public speaking skills, email and professional writing for sales agents.
 - b. Foreign language: Offer "Professional English", "Professional French" or other language classes tailored as much as possible to individual fields where such skills are needed.
 - c. Computer skills: Basic computer use, internet search, e-mail, Microsoft Office suite can add value for sales staff. Rely on ILIMA School's demonstrated capacity, and if necessary consider using Microsoft's publicly available "Digital Literacy" and/or "Imagine Academy" packages.
 - d. Basic HSE: This can serve as a useful certificate to supplement training for qualified laborers and technicians. Include basic security, first aid, workplace safety, etc.
6. **Explore partnership with universities cautiously.** Overtures from officials at Universities of Batna 1 and 2 to establish triangular education-and-internship partnerships between ILIMA School, the university, and private enterprise present interesting possibilities. But they should be explored with caution in light of the Algerian higher education system's rigid structures and oppressive bureaucracy, which often block even the most sincere administrators' intentions to think outside the box. Given their high enrollment numbers, Batna's universities hold a substantial reservoir of

young talent, but in practice, navigating the process of establishing a partnership is likely a long-term proposition at best, and should consequently not be a priority in the short term.

7. **Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.** World Learning and ILIMA School teams should collaborate to determine how counseling, training, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow job seekers in various fields to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account job seekers' availability. Explore how to "package" the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand them to attract new trainees, build name recognition within the regional business community, and thus ensure sustainability and eventual commercial viability.
8. **Capitalize on private business network and public alliances.** Business leaders with whom World Learning and ILIMA staff met expressed strong interest in contributing to the project's success and recruiting competent graduates into local companies. ANEM staff also expressed interest in collaborating, and could provide critical support in ensuring recruitment and job placement. ANEM's offer to share information on recruitment supply and demand in the region is an opportunity to be seized. In private sector outreach, capitalize on and expand ILIMA's existing network, especially through reinforced ties to the CCI Aurès, to consolidate the advisory committee and structure internship and job placement agreements. Remain open to new partnerships as the project advances, in order to take advantage of opportunities that emerge.
9. **Define long-term business model.** Beyond the initial budget development exercise, the sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Given the low income levels of many prospective trainees in the region, strongly consider making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students' commitment. ILIMA could lobby the CCI Aurès or leading employers such as GMI to subsidize training costs in the future, perhaps in exchange for preferential recruitment access.



BISKRA OVERVIEW

One of several inland cities known as a “gateway to the desert”, Biskra sits in the semi-arid band between Algeria’s fertile coastal region and the sparse Sahara Desert, some 400 km (250 miles) southeast of Algiers. Known primarily for its agriculture—Biskra is renowned as the source of Algeria’s best dates—the region also supports modest industrial production, particularly of construction materials. The *wilaya*’s capital and only major city, also called Biskra, is a regional commercial hub. Given its rugged natural beauty, the region also has considerable potential as a touristic destination, but years of underdevelopment in that sector pose challenges.

As in many other regions, the labor market in Biskra is marked by substantial quantitative and qualitative mismatches. Inexperienced job-seekers with humanities and even technical diplomas abound, while employers report severe challenges in finding skilled laborers, mechanical technicians, agricultural workers, sales staff, and hospitality workers, among others. At the same time, employers note gaps in job seekers’ technical knowledge, and reiterated the need for strong interpersonal skills and, in certain fields, special capacities like foreign languages.

World Learning’s selected local partner school, Bacha School¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in Biskra from January 25 to 28, 2017 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the “Analysis Framework” document.

To allow for collection of a wider range of perspectives in a shorter timeframe, World Learning and Bacha School organized two roundtable discussions on January 26 with key local employment actors. The following business owners and institutional representatives attended the first discussion, held in the morning at Bacha School, and/or the second discussion, held in the afternoon at the regional [Business Leaders’ Forum \(FCE\)](#) office:

- H-Transaction, cement building firm;
- [Technical Institute for the Development of Saharan Agronomy](#) (ITDAS);

¹ facebook.com/bacha.school

- ETUC, public works construction firm;
- Groupe Chennoufi
- AGRODAT, date producer and exporter;
- CTHP hydraulic works and construction firm;
- [Biskria Ciment](#), cement manufacturer;
- Golden House Agro, agricultural supplier;
- [SONATRACH, state oil producer](#);
- Doghmane, medical supply company;
- Biskra city hall (APC);
- Soprema, construction material supplier;
- [Kenzi](#), cosmetics and para-pharmaceutical manufacturer;
- [Hermès](#), tourism agency
- ETP Dradja, construction firm;
- Hadi Promotion, real estate development firm;
- Benaissa, public works firm;
- [Groupe Tahraoui](#), with subsidiaries in many sectors including food production and processing, agricultural equipment, public works, mining, and medical care;
- Groupe Tahraoui;
- AGRiOME;
- EMGDR, industrial producer;
- Houhou, food processing group;
- [National Employment Agency](#) (ANEM).

On January 28, World Learning staff also visited the Jardin des Zibans, Algeria's first aqua-park and one of Africa's largest, which is slated to open later this year. Findings from desk research and in-person discussions form the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Though dates are the first product that come to mind when many Algerians think of Biskra, the region is a diverse production and distribution hub whose importance is likely to grow in the coming years. As the Algerian government seeks to diversify the economy away from hydrocarbon production, Biskra is well placed to expand agricultural and industrial production, commercial distribution (linking the interior to the coast, as well as Algeria to nearby Tunisia), and particularly tourism. While agriculture remains the region's dominant economic activity, substantial public and private investment are fueling a construction boom that looks likely to bolster expanded output across multiple sectors.

The most recent available statistics (from the National Investment Development Agency, ANDI) provide the following sectoral breakdown for the Biskra region's active workforce, as of 2010¹:

- Agriculture 40.8%
- Services 18.6%
- Administration 13.4%
- Building and Public Works 11.4%
- Industry 4.2%
- Other 11.7%

While these statistics are regrettably outdated, they provide at least an approximation of the relative importance of each sector in the region's labor market. Particular findings for each of these sectors are as follows:

Agriculture: By reserving slightly more than three-fourths of the region's 21,670 km² surface area for agricultural usage², authorities' have long made their ambitions for the *wilaya* clear. But just 11.2% of that surface is considered arable³, highlighting the challenges that farmers face in raising crops at the edge of the expanding Sahara. While aquifers, wells, and traditional irrigation systems have long provided water to date palms in the region's verdant oases, demand for water is increasing today, straining the region's supply in years with limited rainfall. (In 2015, for example, the region's farmers were forced to sell off an estimated quarter million date palm trees for replanting in the north, rather than lose them to drought.⁴) Improvements in irrigation and greenhouse technologies and design in recent years, coupled with decreased costs for imported and locally produced materials, have allowed farmers in Biskra to expand production beyond traditional crops (such as dates, wheat, olives, potatoes) to also grow more sensitive crops like tomatoes. In 2016, agricultural authorities estimated the region's total fresh vegetable production at 650,000 tons, and cereals production at nearly 90,000 tons.⁵

Animal husbandry is popular on a small scale but the potential for scale-up is limited by the scarcity of vegetation; most farmers are only able to support modest flocks of sheep and goats. Cattle and camels are also raised for milk and meat, though again at relatively modest scale compared to some northern regions.

While most agricultural products are destined for domestic consumption, Biskra does produce dates for export, particularly the high-grade "*deglet nour*" variety, grown primarily around the Tolga oasis. Authorities estimated the region's date production in 2016 at 475,000 tons.⁶ In December 2016, the

¹ ["Monographie de wilaya: Biskra", ANDI, p12.](#)

² ["Monographie de wilaya: Biskra", ANDI, p13.](#)

³ Ibid.

⁴ ["Silent tragedy in Biskra: Due to lack of water, some farmers ditch their date palms", HuffPost Maghreb, 22 March 2015.](#)

⁵ ["The process is launched", El Watan, 6 September 2016.](#)

⁶ Ibid.

regional [Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) (CCI) organized its second annual [Biskra International Date Salon](#); though small in size, the fair provides a boost to local producers' visibility and reputation.

Services: Accounting, medical, legal, IT, design and communication, and many other service niches have expanded in proportion with the region's population and economic growth in recent years, and provide important employment opportunities for young job seekers. The service sector with the strongest growth potential, however, is widely considered to be tourism and leisure. Biskra's nearly completed Jardin des Zibans aqua-park is one of several projects that will soon complement the region's longstanding natural attractions. Since at least colonial times, Biskra's rugged natural beauty (comparable to the American southwest in climate and terrain) has attracted visitors from far and wide. Years of neglect, however, have left Biskra with a dilapidated hospitality infrastructure and degraded human capital—both of which are in need of substantial investment and renewal.

Administration: While young people benefiting from YEP will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector is not a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in Biskra—and across Algeria—but is heavily oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand in the future. A hiring freeze across much of the public sector was set in late 2014, and continued austerity measures may necessitate further paring down of the civil service.

Building and Public Works: Along with rising real estate prices, new investment in tourism, infrastructure, and industrial development in recent years has provided a substantial boost to the construction sector. (New hotel construction and refurbishment of existing hotels constitute a particularly visible niche today in Biskra city.) While much of that investment is continuing, the state is expanding austerity measures first introduced two years ago, raising fears of a slowdown in public sector demand. And even where public projects are continuing, concerns about competence and quality abound; in September 2016, floods in Biskra city paralyzed several neighborhoods, even as houses remained without water service for weeks amid a major infrastructure renovation campaign.¹ Despite concerns about public sector demand, several local promoters told World Learning that overall demand for building remains strong—and that supply is limited only by the availability of skilled laborers.

Industry: According to the National Agency for Intermediation and Property Regulation (ANIREF), which oversees designation of special industrial zones, Biskra holds 17 industrial zones of various types totaling 650ha, with a new 200ha industrial park under study for Oumeche, just south of Biskra city.² Undated ANIREF figures list seven public sector producers, 60 in the private sector, and 26 mines.³ Construction material production, milling, food processing, and paper production are among the most important industrial activities. Guedila, a major water brand sold across Algeria, is bottled in Biskra. In July 2016, French conglomerate Lafarge opened a major cement factory in Biskra in response to ongoing demand for locally produced alternatives to expensive imported construction materials. Once it reaches full

¹ [“Protests in Hai Jawad \(Biskra\): The reasons for anger”, *El Watan*, 15 September 2016.](#)

² [“Les Zones d’activités et industrielles”, ANIREF; “Monographie wilaya: Biskra”, ANIREF.](#)

³ Ibid.

production capacity in the coming months, the cement factory—which is the third of its kind to open in Biskra in just the past year—is expected to employ 600 industrial technicians, HSE specialists, and others.¹ Over the next two years, Biskra will bring a cement factory in Branis online, requiring 700 new workers, primarily electrical and chemical technicians.

Other: Commerce, including both bulk and retail sales, is another important activity in the *wilaya*. Biskra's historical role as a regional transport crossroads has made it a longtime commercial hub, with proximity to Tunisia and important trade arteries. The national rail system connects Biskra to northern markets (Algiers, Constantine, Oran) as well as sea ports (Algiers, Annaba, Bejaia, Skikda). These established trade connections may prove especially beneficial for merchants and producers in Biskra as Algeria seeks to ramp up domestic production to rebalance its existing trade deficit.

QUANTITY GAPS

A recent press story reported that the official unemployment rate in Biskra is only 4.7%—less than half the 11.2% nationwide figure reported for September 2015, or the 10.0% rate officially cited for Biskra in 2010.² While this figure appears questionable, there is ample reason to believe that the problem among youth is substantially more acute, in line with national trends. (Official statistics placed the unemployment rate for 16-24-year-olds nationwide at 26.7% in September 2016.³) Highlighting the sensitivity of the employment question in the region, in July 2016 nine leaders of a national unemployed workers' movement were arrested for trying to organize a gathering in a central square of Biskra city; they were later sentenced to a year in prison and heavy fines.⁴

Local business leaders cited several fields currently suffering from a particular dearth of qualified workers in Biskra. As in other regions, skilled manual labor appears to be in short supply; one construction materials supplier told World Learning, "We can't find qualified personnel, so we are obliged to bring them in from Portugal instead." One interviewee from the agricultural sector, confirmed that the same was true for his business. A fellow industrial producer agreed: "All our needs are in the technical fields: electrical especially and also mechanical, but that one is a little easier since we can train them more on-site." Several small- and medium-size employers mentioned the need for commercial sales agents, market research officers, and sales reps. Another respondent from the agricultural sector cited a shortage of qualified agricultural engineers. Amid a boom in hotel construction, tourism is another sector with strong and growing demand; many local business leaders cited hotel managers, receptionists, cooks and servers, and similar profiles in the hospitality sector as severely lacking in light of impending needs.

In a recent interview on local radio, a Biskra city ANEM employee stated that the agency has 14,000 open positions available for young job seekers in the construction, public works, and agriculture sectors alone,

¹ "The cement factory CILAS Biskra begins production", *Le Matin d'Algérie*, 03 August 2016.

² "14,000 Work Openings Vacant", *El Watan*, 03 January 2017; ANDI, p12.

³ "Unemployment rate in Algeria: 20% among women and 8% for men", *Radio Algérie*, 14 January 2017.

⁴ "Biskra: A year of prison for the unemployed", *El Watan*, 08 December 2016.

but has great difficulty in finding interested applicants.¹ The problem, he told World Learning, is founded in orientation and culture: A young person often finds himself “in a training that he doesn’t like, and that doesn’t suit him. He may find himself in a plumbing training program but he wants to work in IT.” (Multiple business leaders seconded this point, noting that youth receive no orientation that could allow them to make informed choices early in their careers.) Second, he says, “There are people who refuse to change specialty when [they are seeking work in a field where] there is no demand. ... And their family may be proud to have an unemployed history degree holder yet ashamed of having a plumber who earns 100,000 dinars [US\$900, over five times the national minimum wage] per month.”

While acknowledging the importance of cultural factors that discourage youth from seeking work in certain high-demand fields a young manager in the food industry pointed out that “With new technologies today, those jobs are becoming more interesting. Painters can now operate 3D printers, for example.” Similarly, the growth of mechanized agribusiness may revive interest in farming as new irrigation and harvesting technologies expand in the region in the coming years.

QUALITY GAPS

With lower educational attainment and literacy rates than the national averages, Biskra also suffers from notable gaps between job seekers’ qualifications and employers’ needs.²

Technical skills are the first area where the shortfalls are visible. One industrial manager told World Learning that “Youth come to work for us and they have their diploma, but they don’t have the practical knowledge we need.” In the agricultural sector, one representative noted that it is essential “for all job seekers” to have basic HSE and IT skills, and yet few have them. An interviewee from the pharmaceutical industry said, “There is a terrible lack of training, for example in commercial skills. There is no training available in this area, in how to be a pharma rep or salesperson. When we recruit new staff, we are obliged to train them. It’s a huge loss of time and very costly, but we have no choice.” In addition, some business leaders raised concerns that outdated curricula in the public education and vocational training systems were failing young people seeking modern technical jobs, for example in the renewable energies sector—an area with substantial growth potential in Biskra.³

Soft skills are another qualification that employers say job seekers lack. A respondent told World Learning, “The interpersonal skills and behavior are what we need, because we can do the rest,” citing the importance of professional conduct and ability to integrate into the workplace culture. Another respondent agreed stating, “[The career center] needs to work on how to make the person apt and ready to work. It’s the personality that counts. As for a diploma, you can buy it—you just go to a school and you pay for it. But it’s how a young person manages their career, how they speak and express themselves and show their competencies, that counts.” More specifically, several business owners noted the importance of teaching youth how to plan their careers, so they will see the advantages of staying with a promising

¹ [“14,000 vacant work posts”, El Watan, 03 January 2017.](#)

² [“Literacy rates”, National Statistics Office; “Educational attainment rates”, National Statistics Office.](#)

³ [“Renewable energies in Biskra: Ideal conditions for developing solar”, El Watan, 14 December 2016.](#)

long-term post rather than leaving for quick, short-term gain. Others cited the need for seriousness, responsibility, punctuality, patience, and leadership skills.

A employee from the agricultural sector was one of several business leaders who mentioned the need for language capacities alongside technical and soft skills, saying “There are people who are very competent, but if they don’t have the language skills then they can’t use their knowledge.” He noted the need for English for working with American and German business partners. Other business leaders expressed similar needs for English, French, and other foreign languages to facilitate dealing with foreign partners.

COMMUNICATION GAPS

Unsurprisingly, ANEM plays a central role in recruitment in the Biskra region (though some employers do report bypassing the agency and recruiting via alternative channels such as newspaper classified ads or popular online job boards). Numerous employers were critical of ANEM’s performance in matching job seekers to job openings in the region. “We ask ANEM for candidates and they send us people who are supposedly qualified”, said one interviewee, whose company employs over 100 industrial technicians, machinists, and repair technicians. “But we are in the private sector. We don’t have the luxury to play around. We can’t help people [by offering them training] for months and months.” An additional respondent noted that his agency is currently reviewing its classification system “to make sure it is coherent with that used by employers and job seekers, and to be speaking in terms of competencies needed rather than in terms of job titles.”

While some private sector employers lamented the difficulty of accepting interns as a low-risk means of trial and recruitment (“The Labor Inspector’s office requires the same paperwork for interns, so it’s essentially employment.”) He pointed to the IDMAJ pre-employment mechanism, which can at least help youth seeking to enter the public sector. He also noted that ANEM is working to provide greater support to both employers and job seekers, including through greater local-level outreach, and would welcome opportunities to collaborate with the career center. He has invited career center staff to accompany an upcoming “employment caravan” that will visit each commune in the region later this year, and suggested he could instruct his agents to orient job seekers to the Bacha School career center to boost their professional skills and recruitment potential.

OTHER FACTORS

Biskra is among the rare regions to have two highly active business associations—FCE and CCI—rather than just a single predominant one. Both groups have extensive membership networks across the regional business community and can be strong allies for the project. The CCI offers paid professional English and French classes to help the region’s businesses¹, but these classes are modest in comparison to the offerings of traditional education and training institutions.

¹ [“Special foreign language trainings”, CCI Ziban.](#)

Some 33,000 students are enrolled at Mohamed Khider University in Biskra city, which offers a full range of technical and humanities specialties.¹ In Biskra the vocational training ministry also maintains a network of three national specialized institutes (INSFP), one professional training institute (IEP), 17 vocational training and apprenticeship centers (CFPA), and six CFPA annexes.² According to a listing updated in February 2017, these establishments offer over 4,500 places in a range of vocational trainings:³

Vocational training offers by category <i>Multiple specializations are offered within each training category.</i>	Initial qualifying training <i>(3-6 months)</i>	Qualifying training <i>(1-6 months)</i>	Diploma training <i>(6-30 months)</i>
Building and public works	25	123	556
Tailoring, clothing production	0	365	293
Services	60	300	207
Hotel, restaurant, tourism	0	325	143
Information technology	0	150	300
Electric, electronics, energy	100	0	260
Agriculture	145	115	69
Administration and management	0	0	299
Traditional artisanry	0	45	211
Motor and engine maintenance	45	0	120
Metallic construction	0	8	147
Food processing industries	0	0	41
Woodworking and furniture making	0	0	25
Leatherwork	25	0	0
Mechanical and steel construction	0	0	9
Water and environment	0	0	5
Fish aquaculture	0	0	5
Totals	400	1,431	2,690

While the vocational training system covers a broad range of categories, not all trainings offered are relevant to today's job market. Amid rapidly growing demand for qualified recruits in the hospitality sector, for example, just 35 of 468 openings in the "hotel, restaurant, tourism" category are for hotel reception and management training; all the others are for various types of cooking. Vocational training graduates have also complained of a lack of support following their training, and in at least one recent case, of dropped promises of internship placement at public companies.⁴

¹ univ-biskra.dz

² dfp.mfep.gov.dz

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Biskra: Interns in telecommunications abandoned", *El Watan*, 03 December 2016.

Also in the realm of vocational training, the agricultural ministry maintains a special center in Biskra, ITDAS, which offers hundreds of students from across Algeria theoretical preparation and hands-on practice at five working farms in the region.

Businesses themselves repeatedly told World Learning that they do not have the luxury—in terms of either time or money—to invest in training new recruits, and are eager to find recruits who can be fully operational from the first day. A construction employee told World Learning, “In the industrial field it’s obligatory to have someone with experience. If we don’t find them we have to bring someone from abroad,” an expensive proposition, he says. Others note that employers prefer to recruit retirees rather than young job seekers. Many employers also hesitate to take on interns, apprentices, or employees-in-training because of negative past experiences in which new recruits leave after just a few months, taking the company’s investment with them. Few small companies seem to be aware of the possibility of recruiting with fixed-obligation contracts (“*contrat de fidélité*”) and even fewer seem to apply the practice, though it is reportedly used by large firms operating in the region (i.e. Sonatrach and telecom operator Ooredoo).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers** in line with suggestions of local business leaders, including existing modules on career planning, leadership, professional communications, writing, personal development, networking, et al. To also respond to additional needs expressed by local employers, strongly consider development of a third set of “soft skills” modules to cover workplace culture, professional expectations, and other post-recruitment themes. Given the wide range of technical skills demanded in the Biskra market, and local employers’ emphasis on the need for personal development, the project site should focus to a substantial degree on provision of these skills.
2. **Offer career counseling** through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech’s Tamheed¹ platform) in order to provide clear guidance to young people—something that multiple local business leaders noted was lacking, leading to considerable problems as young people try to launch their careers. Such orientation can help them to better plan their careers and identify their corresponding training needs.
3. **Develop technical training offerings to young job-seekers in industrial (health and safety officers, maintenance and industrial technicians), and services/hospitality (hotel-restaurant manager, customer relations, sales, tourism)** and other fields based on needs expressed by local employers. Use Bacha School’s relationship with the vocational training administration to access existing curricula and then identify necessary supplemental modules. This may require substantial

¹ Tamheed is an online psychometric assessment test designed by Qatar-based Silatech to provide youth with access to quality career advising services and resources. In Algeria, World Learning collaborates with Silatech to offer Arabic, French, and English versions of the test and train counselors.

expansion of Bacha School's existing training offerings; school leaders should see the project as an opportunity to expand into promising new areas of expertise while assuming minimal commercial risk.

4. **Offer add-on trainings in key subjects** that can help graduates in all fields meet or exceed employers' expectations. These may include:
 - a. Communications: Including public speaking skills, email and professional writing, and basic media relations.
 - b. Foreign language: Offer "Professional English", "Professional French" or other language classes tailored as much as possible to individual fields where such skills are needed.
 - c. Computer skills: Basic computer use, internet search, e-mail, Microsoft Office suite can add value for hospitality workers. Rely on existing Bacha School capacity, and if necessary consider partnering with Microsoft to use "Digital Literacy" and/or "Imagine Academy" packages.
 - d. Basic HSE: This can serve as a useful certificate to supplement training for qualified laborers and technicians. Include basic security, first aid, workplace safety, etc.
5. **Explore potential technical trainings in agriculture niches.** While much agricultural activity in Biskra remains artisanal, family-run, and confined to the informal sector, it is the region's dominant sector. World Learning and Bacha should continue to explore how training may add value and expand stable, formal employment in this important sector. Particular attention to new techniques and farming methods (modern irrigation and green house systems, new crops, etc.) may help identify areas of demand not yet met by public training systems.
6. **Organize "alternance" internships with local enterprises.** As in other regions, employers in Biskra express interest in recruiting workers with practical experience and willingness to help young trainees gain that experience through internships. The "alternance" model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout the work week, is an ideal way for youth to combine classroom and workplace learning. Agreements can provide for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement.
7. **Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.** World Learning and Bacha School teams should collaborate to determine how counseling, training, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students in various fields to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account students' availability. Explore how to "package" the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand them to attract new students, build name recognition within the regional business community, and thus ensure sustainability and eventual commercial viability.
8. **Capitalize on private business network and public alliances.** Business leaders with whom World Learning and Bacha School staff met expressed strong interest in contributing to the project's

success and recruiting competent graduates into local companies. ANEM staff also expressed interest in collaborating, and could provide critical support in ensuring recruitment and job placement. ANEM's offer to share information on career center services during its *wilaya*-wide employment caravan this year is an opportunity that should not be missed. In private sector outreach, capitalize on Bacha's network, especially support from FCE and CCI, to consolidate the advisory committee and structure internship and job placement agreements. Remain open to new partnerships as the project advances, in order to take advantage of new opportunities that will surely emerge.

9. **Define long-term business model.** Beyond the initial budget development exercise, the sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Given the low income levels of many prospective trainees in the region, consider making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students' commitment. Bacha could lobby FCE, its members, or other private companies to subsidize training costs in the future, perhaps in exchange for preferential recruitment access.



BLIDA OVERVIEW

As one of Algeria's smallest *wilayas* by area, Blida nonetheless occupies an important place in the national economy. With fertile soil and temperate weather, Blida has historically been an important agricultural center, but a wave of industrialization in the decades since independence has transformed the region's economy without moving it totally away from its agricultural origins. Today Blida is home to some of Algeria's largest food production and processing companies, and is an important producer of plastics, construction materials, paper, consumer appliances, and many other goods. Thanks to its central location and close proximity to the capital, Algiers, Blida is also an essential transit point for many goods. Its strong private sector—closely coordinated thanks to an important regional business association—makes the region a more economically dynamic and diverse one than many in Algeria.

Prospects for young job-seekers are consequently also better than in most regions, though they face significant challenges all the same. Employers lament youths' lack of technical know-how to contribute to industry, as well as limited "soft skills" and language capacity. While Blida's dynamic private sector actors are already piloting new initiatives to boost young people's skills, in partnership with local universities and vocational training centers, much work remains to be done. World Learning's selected local partner school, Institut INSIM Blida¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment during four visits to Blida between February and June 2016 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the "Analysis Framework" document.

In the course of these visits, staff conducted in-person interviews in individual or small-group formats with the following local employers:

- INSIM Blida
- Club of Entrepreneurs and Industrialists of the Mitidja (CEIMI)
- SIM, food processing conglomerate
- GarniFlex plastics company

¹ INSIM Blida: facebook.com/InstitutInternationalDeManagementInsimBlida

- SM Quality, construction firm
- FCE (*Forum des Chefs d'Entreprises*)
- IECO, packing producer

Over six weeks in February and March, World Learning and INSIM also published an online survey and collected responses from youth around Algeria to gauge their educational background, professional skill sets, career aspirations, and training needs, among other themes. Among over 700 responses nationwide, 52 came from the Blida region.

On April 6, World Learning also accompanied INSIM to the sixth annual Mitidja Expo (MITEX), staffing a booth to share information on the career center and meet business owners from across the region and collected surveys from them to gauge their recruitment needs. A roundtable discussion with business leaders on June 21 allowed World Learning to collect additional perspectives and explore trends of particular interest.

Findings from desk research, interviews, and surveys comprise the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Blida is Algeria's fourth-smallest *wilaya* by area, yet is among the ten largest *wilayas* by population, with 1.12 million people as of 2012.¹ Located adjacent to Algiers, on the Mitidja Plain lying inland from the capital and its coast, Blida anchors the center of Algeria's national railway network and newly completed East-West Highway, and is consequently an important transit point for goods from across the country. The fertile Mitidja Plain has historically been an important region for agricultural production, and Blida today is a major food producer and processor. In recent decades, industrial buildup has fostered rapid economic growth, making Blida a national leader in production of plastics, paper, packaging, and more. To a greater extent than most regions, Blida's economy is dominated by a vibrant private sector replete with small and medium enterprises; private-sector-driven business associations like the *Forum des Chefs d'Entreprises* (FCE) and regional Club of Entrepreneurs and Industrialists of the Mitidja (CEIMI) are consequently much more influential and visible than the public Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI).

The National Statistics Office, regional government, and specialized agencies at the national and regional levels offer little publicly available data on the labor market in Blida. According to a report from the National Agency for Intermediation and Property Regulation (ANIREF), in 2012 Blida's unemployment rate was 11.6%, with a 41.9% labor force participation rate², but no information was found on youth unemployment specifically. Available data also do not provide a breakdown of employment by economic

¹ "Rubrique Monographie Wilaya: Wilaya de Blida", ANIREF, 2013.

² ANIREF.

sector. An analysis of the number of businesses registered with Algeria's National Commercial Registry Center (CNRC) as of 2014 provides only a very approximate picture of which sectors predominate in the region's economy:¹

Sector	Registered businesses	% of total
Industrial production	2,206	31.2%
Artisanal production	55	0.8%
Bulk commerce	795	11.3%
Import-Export	1,742	24.7%
Retail commerce	451	6.4%
Services	1,812	25.7%
TOTAL	7,061	100.0%

Particular characteristics of different economic sectors are as follows:

Agriculture: The relatively flat terrain and fertile soil of the Mitidja Plain, coupled with ample water resources, make Blida an ideal region for agriculture, and the area has historically served as a bedrock of the country's food production. The variety of soil types—from iron-rich to clay-based to silty—makes it possible to grow a diverse array of crops. Animal husbandry for meat and dairy production are also common. Usage of the *wilaya's* arable land breaks down as follows:²

Agricultural Land Use	Area (ha.)	%
Tree crops (citrus, etc.)	31,009	46%
Herbaceous crops (cereals, vegetables, animal feed, legumes)	19,331	29%
Land left fallow (crop rotation)	4,565	7%
Vine crops (grapes for table wine)	1,569	2%
<i>Subtotal: Cultivated land</i>	<i>56,474</i>	<i>84%</i>
Grazing land and transport routes	9,958	15%
Unused arable land	1,042	2%
Total	67,474	100%

Food processing conglomerate SIM and other major producers are increasingly exploring vertical integration to expand their control over raw materials production, but to date most agricultural follows

¹ "Répartition des sociétés existantes au 31/12/2014 par secteur d'activité", CNRC, 2015.

² "Invest in Algeria: *Wilaya* de Blida", ANDI, 2015.

artisanal models rather than agribusiness models. Despite the sector's importance, between 2002 and 2014 less than 1% of total public and private investment recorded in Blida by the National Agency for Investment Development (ANDI) ANDI was made in agriculture.¹

Commerce: Blida's role as a food and industrial producer and major transit point for goods from across Algeria make commerce an important part of the region's economy. Commerce and sales functions are also closely integrated with the economy of neighboring Algiers. Besides being a major consumption market, the capital provides Blida its nearest air and seaports, facilitating its role as an important hub for the large volumes of imports and exports that flow to and from Blida.

Administration: While young people benefiting from the YEP project will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector will not be a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in Blida—and across Algeria—but is heavily oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand as budget cuts continue in the coming years.

Industry: Since a government-led industrialization push in the 1970s, industry has become the main driver of Blida's economic growth, and today the region is recognized as an industrial leader in Algeria. According to ANIREF, by 2012 some 17,000 workers were employed in industry, working for 4,258 different employers. Of these, only 1,700 workers (about 10% of the sector total) are employed by the public sector, which has scaled back from 22 factories in the region in 1999 to eight in 2012, mostly through privatization sales. These include factories producing textiles, cigarette filters, chewing tobacco, furniture, aluminum framing, cement, and other products.² The dominant private sector employs 90% of the region's industrial workers and is active in a broad array of sub-sectors. ANIREF provides a breakdown of these firms and their workforces as of 2012:

<i>Industrial sector</i>	<i>Producers</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>%</i>
Food processing (cheese, semolina, flour milling, drinks, baking, sweets, cookies, dairy)	1,766	42%	7,064	46%
Industrial services (business services, petroleum processing, commercial services)	1,141	27%	2,282	15%
Metalwork and electric (foundry, electronic appliances, industrial equipment, aluminum framing)	381	9%	2,286	15%
Chemicals and plastics (chemical products, cosmetics, plastic packaging, plastic molding, maintenance products)	292	7%	1,460	10%
Textiles, shoes, leather (clothing, socks, cloth, leather bags, mattresses)	355	8%	1,065	7%

¹ ANDI.

² ANIREF.

Construction materials, glass (cinderblocks, tiles, cement, mirrors, windows, ceramics, sanitation products)	181	4%	724	5%
Printing, paper, wood, tobacco (carpentry, furnishing, wood cartons and boxes, paper production)	134	3%	402	3%
	4,250	100%	15,283	100%

Industry in Blida is concentrated within three main industrial zones (Ben Boulaid, Ben Boulaid extension, and Ouled Yaïch) totaling nearly 200 hectares, and six industrial activity zones totaling 61 hectares, among other areas.¹ The CEO of at least one industrial firm mentioned the challenge of finding adequate space to expand industrial production, lamenting that industrial zones are not plentiful enough or well situated, and thus constrain growth and, with it, hiring.

Industry attracted the lion's share—some 73%—of all public and private investment reported in the region between 2002 and 2014, according to ANDI, illustrating the sector's recent high rate of growth.² Based on sector actors' descriptions, that rate appears not to have slowed significantly since the economic downturn sparked by the oil price drop in late 2014.

Services: Accounting, legal, and administrative assistance, transport, and other auxiliary services that support the agricultural sector and especially the growing industrial sector have grown apace in recent years, and have strong potential to continue to expand employment. Transport saw 8.3% of investment between 2002 and 2014, while other services saw 3.6%.³

A service sub-sector that has not fared well in recent years but that seems poised for future growth is tourism. Blida's 14 existing hotels have been overstretched as business travel has rapidly expanded demand in the region. Additionally, Blida is home to the scenic Chrea mountain region (and with it one of Algeria's only ski slopes), the Hammam Melouane hot springs, and the Gorges de Chiffa natural area—all sites with strong potential for domestic tourism, if the political will to develop it emerges.⁴ While tourism investment in recent decades has been particularly low, several new hotels are under construction and will need to begin recruiting staff soon.

Building and Public Works: Substantial industrial buildup and infrastructure development—including the East-West Highway, new bus stations, and more—in recent years have been accompanied by strong growth in the construction sector. Future growth will require continued expansion of those sectors; while industry appears likely to continue on a strong trajectory, public sector cutbacks may impact the construction sector, dampening its employment potential.

QUANTITY GAPS

¹ ANIREF.

² ANDI.

³ ANDI.

⁴ ["Blida: Le Tourisme et le Transport Vont Mal", El Watan, 04 January 2016.](#)

Offers currently listed on prominent online job portals indicate openings in a variety of sectors and functions, with strong demand in sales and marketing, followed by management, IT, administration and human resources, and medical, among others.¹

In discussions with employers, however, precise gaps emerged, particularly mid-level jobs requiring technical skills, which employers say are the most difficult to recruit for. As one interviewee told World Learning, “We don’t need engineers anymore. That era is over. Now we need workers—technicians, electricians, maintenance personnel, carpenters. Companies here don’t need HR directors, engineers, managers, and the like; they need workers.” A representative from the food industry corroborated this assessment: “The recruitment problems are really on the technical side, like maintenance. True, there is some lack at the level of management, but the need is much smaller. For every two or three openings we have in top management, we need hundreds of technical profiles.” A respondent from a construction firm blamed this gap in the current workforce on the national youth loan agency, ANSEJ, and similar programs that he says drain the employment market of the low- and mid-level workers who occupied such technical posts in previous generations.

Testimonials from employers interviewed at the MITEX expo confirmed these accounts. There, World Learning heard of strong need for lathe operators, milling machine operators, machinists, sales personnel, maintenance technicians, grain millers, electrical technicians, and drivers. An interviewee also noted strong unmet demand for specialists in industrial maintenance. Other business leaders noted the lack of personnel available in the growing hospitality industry, where employers struggle to find competent cooks, caterers, receptionists, and concierges amid a boom in hotel demand and construction.

QUALITY GAPS

Rather than a gap in theoretical knowledge, employers note a lack of practical skills and, in some cases, soft skills among young job applicants.

According to one informant, the preparation offered by the Ministry of Vocational Training is overly theoretical. “They train today for the sake of training, not for actual utility,” he lamented, “We need useful training.” A construction employee agreed, and cited a historical example (sadly now defunct) of a practical teaching environment that was effective: the Blida milling school, housed from 1976 to 1986 within a public grain milling enterprise. “They would use current workers as the trainers, because those people had field experience that the pedagogues lacked.” SIM is working to develop other practical training models, including through a recent initiative to train high school grads via accelerated internships and a new convention with the University of Blida for training in agro-processing fields.

Several business leaders also mentioned young job-seekers’ limited “soft skills” as an impediment to their recruitment. A fellow employee told World Learning, “It’s not about ‘*savoir-faire*’ [how to do], it’s about ‘*savoir-être*’ [how to be]. Youth can cite all the diplomas they want but if they don’t know how to present

¹ Based on WL analysis of current openings on aggregator site www.optioncarriere.dz at March 2016.

themselves they can't go far." Others cite lack of motivation or initiative among job-seekers, or note that youth fail to see the value of stable, long-term work—and sometimes leave a job they have just started for a less secure one with a higher salary. One has noted that in his experience this problem was more prevalent among young men, who often have a wider array of employment options due to cultural norms, safety concerns, and other factors. He and others also added an important caveat regarding soft skills, however: while they are essential for people-focused jobs like sales, they are far less valuable for employers seeking to hire for highly technical positions.

An administrator also notes that young job seekers today are in greater need of guidance in launching their careers. "A young person doesn't get orientation until maybe high school," he told World Learning. "If he passes his BEM [junior high school graduation test, which determines academic options at high school level] what should he do? Generations and circumstances have changed, and parents can no longer provide the same guidance." Youth, he concluded, are in need of career orientation.

Language was another gap cited by several employers, particularly in light of the increasing importance of English and the continued dominance of French in Blida's business community. Several lamented that, despite these needs in the market, many young job seekers are only comfortable speaking Algerian Arabic, limiting their ability to interact with international clients and partners.

COMMUNICATION GAPS

Employers report using Emploitic, OuedKniss, Cvite, and other online job boards for recruitment, particularly for high-skills positions. Blida is among the more common locations listed on such sites.

CEIMI officials reported that they are in the process of developing a new recruitment mechanism as part of a Mediterranean regional partnership, but did not divulge further details.

In World Learning's national survey of job search habits among youth, 90% of respondents in Blida reported being active on Facebook—the highest of any region. Some 37% preferred French to Arabic dialects or English for online communication—also the highest of any region. But English was the most widely requested training topic, highlighting its growing value for young job-seekers eager to succeed in a national economy increasingly connected to the global one.

OTHER FACTORS

Blida's sole university was divided in 2014 to comprise University of Blida 1 (Saad Dahlab), offering all architectural, medicine, and scientific fields on the original university site, and University of Blida 2 (Ali Lounici), offering humanities, languages, law, and social sciences. Over 50,000 in total were enrolled at the two universities in 2014-15. The Blida universities are among the most progressive and open to coordination with outside partners. In 2015, Saad Dahlab University signed an accord with SIM, Benamor,

and other leading agricultural processing firms and CEIMI members, and continues to seek to expand its external cooperation.¹

The Ministry of Vocational Training maintains a robust network of training centers in the Blida region, comprised of:

- 4 National Specialized Vocational Training Institute (INSFP) providing “superior technician” certifications in administration and management, agricultural processing, water and environment, agriculture, industry, and graphic arts;
- 10 Vocational Training and Apprenticeships Centers (CFPA) providing basic- to mid-level trainings in arts and graphic design, traditional artisanship, woodworking, construction, mechanics and metalwork, leatherwork, electrical work, tailoring and textiles, IT, engine maintenance, hotels and tourism, and administrative and management services.

In total, these establishments can accommodate 6,050 students, including 1,260 boarders.² One employer with close ties to the Ministry noted that in Blida there is an ongoing shift away from the more theoretical “residential” training format toward the more hands-on “apprenticeship” training. For the last four years, agro-processor SIM has an agreement with the Ministry to accept apprentices from the vocational training system. “We don’t ultimately recruit all the apprentices, but a majority of them,” a construction employee states, who expressed overall satisfaction with the project.

Alongside government-sponsored vocational training, CEIMI is demonstrating increased interest in preparing a next generation of workers for the region. In February 2016 they signed an accord with the Ministry of Vocational Training to permit them to launch a plastics school, the graduates of which will be welcomed for practical internships at 25 regional companies.³ A training representative told World Learning that CEIMI is now examining the feasibility of opening a woodworking training center.

While Blida might appear to be among the private-sector-driven northern *wilayas* where employers strongly prefer established work-arounds rather than recruitment via the National Employment Agency (ANEM), some business leaders suggest that this is not the case. A high percentage of family-run, conservatively managed small businesses was proposed as a rationale, since such businesses may be interested in capitalizing on the fiscal benefits inherent in recruiting through ANEM. This information could not be verified with ANEM or other major employers.

Employers are nearly unanimous in Blida in citing a strong preference for trainees with practical on-the-job experience. “Progressive immersion in the professional environment is essential” for young job-seekers according to one interviewee told World Learning. “If you first meet the student six months before his graduation from university, he won’t know anything. But if you get him at the beginning, you can show him your systems of administration, how to work in a human environment, then all the different steps of

¹ [“Signature d’une convention entre Sim et l’université”, Liberté, 21 February 2015.](#)

² [Ministry of Vocational Training: Sites Web des directions de wilayas.](#)

³ [“Les patrons de la Mitidja lancent une école de plasturgie à Blida”, TSA Algérie, 01 February 2016.](#)

production. Then you can let him tell you what interests him.” An additional respondent says local companies prefer to provide on-the-job training, “Once we get the youth in-house, it’s ok. We have masters who can provide apprenticeship training, so we can mold them like clay.” In a February 2016 visit to Blida, vocational training minister Mohamed Mebarki delivered several speeches noting his ministry’s commitment to expanding opportunities for practical learning.¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Led by its strong industrial sector, the economy of Blida offers greater employment prospects for local youth than most regions of Algeria. Motivated young people with good technical training can contribute to further growth in the industrial, agricultural, and commercial sectors, as well as in the service and tourism sectors that are likely to expand considerably in the coming years. The large number of small-and-medium enterprises driving Blida’s economy are desperate to find competent young talent, making the region fertile ground for skilled young job seekers.

1. *Prioritize development of local business network and relationships.* Blida’s business community is strong yet tight-knit and difficult for outsiders to penetrate. But as in other regions, during the assessment process World Learning met employers who expressed a strong desire to recruit YEP project trainees and to help with the project. Given INSIM Blida’s limited connections to the local business community, it is especially important to follow up on these possibilities; business outreach should be a key priority in launching the career center. Private sector business associations CEIMI and FCE can be strong channels for such outreach; their invitations for further discussion (along with those from individual companies met during the assessment process) are opportunities that should not be missed. Capitalize on these openings to explain the project’s potential advantages for businesses, describe precise needs, reinforce the advisory committee, and build relationships that can lead to internship and job placement partnerships.
2. *Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers* in line with suggestions of local business leaders, including themes like professional presentation and workplace culture, career planning, leadership, professional communications, writing, personal development, networking, etc.
3. *Offer technical training for young job seekers in industrial maintenance, technical craftsmanship and machine operation, sales and commerce, industrial maintenance and security, IT, and other fields* based on needs expressed by businesses. While MBI’s strengths lie more in management, employers stated clearly that management-level openings are satisfied, while the real difficulty lies in finding technically qualified workers.
4. *Offer add-on trainings in key subjects* that can help project graduates meet all needs of employers. These include:

¹ [“Formation professionnelle à Blida : l’apprentissage de plus en plus prisé”, Le Courrier d’Algérie, 02 February 2016.](#)

- a. English and French languages: In particular, examine feasibility of offering specific “English for Business” and “Technical French” classes to boost job-seekers’ CVs.
 - b. Computer skills: Basic computer use, internet search, e-mail, Microsoft Office suite, and related applications for office and sales workers.
5. *Offer career counseling* through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech’s Tamheed¹ platform) in order to provide clear guidance to young people that can help them plan their careers and identify their corresponding training needs.
6. *Provide trainees with practical internships in local businesses.* Employers in Blida are eager to recruit workers with practical work experience, and have demonstrated their willingness to help young trainees gain that experience through internships. The “*alternance*” model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout the week, is one possible way for youth to add a practical side to their theoretical knowledge. Structured agreements can allow for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement. SIM and other employers have already expressed interest in such arrangements, and even in internships that would integrate additional training at the work site, another potential model worth exploring further.
7. *Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.* Work with INSIM Blida team to decide how counseling, training, internship, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account students’ availability. Explore how to “package” the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand it to attract new students and build name recognition within the regional business community.
8. *Define long-term business model.* Beyond the initial budget development and course planning exercises, examine the long-term future of career center services. Consider initially making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students’ commitment. With improved local business ties, there is a strong possibility that INSIM could also tap private companies to subsidize training costs in the future.

¹ Tamheed is an online psychometric assessment test designed by Qatar-based Silatech to provide youth with access to quality career advising services and resources. In Algeria, the test is available in Arabic, French, and English via the Djazair Ta3mal portal: djazair.ta3mal.com.



EL OUED OVERVIEW

The region of El Oued, also known as Oued Souf, takes its name from El Oued city, its largest urban center, which is called “the city of a thousand domes” after the architectural feature commonly employed to ward off the region’s intense desert heat. Located in eastern Algeria, along the Tunisian border, El Oued is covered almost entirely in sand dunes and muddy *chott* depressions. Despite the unforgiving conditions, local residents have long practiced artisanal agricultural—primarily date production—and the introduction of new techniques in recent decades has prompted an agricultural boom. Commerce remains the region’s second-biggest sector by overall employment, though manufacturing is developing rapidly in El Oued city and other towns, and the region’s tourism potential is beginning to attract attention and investment.

Unemployment is slightly below the national average, but much of El Oued’s population is young and will soon enter the workforce, creating new pressures and opportunities in the years ahead. Today, several specialties and sub-sectors show strong recruitment potential, including receptionists, commercial sales agents, industrial workers, and hospitality personnel. Substantial gaps also exist between job-seekers’ qualifications and employers’ requirements, particularly in terms of experience and soft skills.

World Learning’s selected local partner school, Souf Academy¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In accordance with the methodology outlined in the “Analysis Framework” document, World Learning project staff conducted desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, and undertook the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in El Oued from January 28 to 31, 2017.

On January 29 and 30, World Learning staff made site visits to several local business and institutions, meeting the following organizations and companies

- National Employment Agency (ANEM), El Oued local bureau;
- TPL packaging and hardware supply factory;
- [Wouroud Group](#), perfumes and packaging manufacturer
- Gouri Park, amusement park project;
- [Gazelle d’Or](#), hotel and resort;

¹ www.soufacademy.com

- [El Oued Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) (CCI).

To allow for collection of a wider range of perspectives in a shorter timeframe, on January 30 World Learning and Souf Academy convened a roundtable discussion with the following local employers:

- Ibn Hayane health clinic;
- [Gazelle d'Or](#);
- TPL factory;
- Gouri Park;
- [AGB Bank](#)'s El Oued branch;
- Labo Elmajd, medical laboratory;
- Saadoune, construction firm;
- [Saharan Hydraulic Company](#) (*Société Sahraouia d'Hydraulique, SSH*);
- Private insurance company;
- [El Oued CCI](#);
- Wouroud Group perfume manufacturer;
- Agricultural products exporter;
- Agro Vert Systems, agricultural equipment supplier;

Findings from desk research, site visits, and the focus group comprise the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Agriculture and trade have been the primary pillars of the El Oued region's economy for centuries, and remain so today even as diversification ushers in new opportunities. At an important crossroads between Tunisia and Algeria's northern and southern regions, El Oued is well situated as a trading post. Residents have long defied the region's harsh desert climate to produce high-quality crops to trade with northern neighbors for grains and other products. They did so through traditional agricultural methods, especially date farming in *ghout* depressions, dug between sand dunes to shield them from the harsh elements. Modernization of agricultural techniques—including the introduction of machine-dug wells and pivot irrigation—has helped diversify production in recent decades, facilitating the region's development and growth. Mineral extraction and industry are now important sectors, and local leaders express high hopes for tourism in the future. Development has driven a population boom in El Oued city and other urban centers in recent years; 60% of the *wilaya*'s population was under 30 at end-2015, and a full third enrolled in some level of the education system.¹ Unemployment was slightly lower (9.4%) and labor force participation (33.5%) slightly higher than the respective national figures for the same period.² While this suggests that El Oued has one of the more robust labor markets in Algeria, maintaining those indicators as the youth bulge enters the workforce will present challenges.

¹ ["Monographie 2015", Direction de programmation et de suivi du budget \(DPSB\), Wilaya El Oued, September 2016](#), p15.

² Compare DPSB p63 to ["Le taux de chômage en baisse à 9,9% en avril 2016", APS, 30 July 2016](#).

The most recent available statistics (from El Oued's regional planning and budget office) provide the following sectoral breakdown for the region's active workforce, as of end-2015:¹

- Agriculture: 51.9%
- Commerce: 19.1%
- Building and public works: 12.0%
- Industry: 8.0%
- Services: 7.1%
- Administration: 4.8%
- Other: 3.2%

Particular findings for each of these sectors are as follows:

Agriculture: Despite inhospitable conditions, farming has been the backbone of El Oued's economy for generations. Rainfall is extremely limited (just 13mm, or 0.5 inches, fell in 2015²) so farmers rely on subterranean reservoirs for planting. The transition in recent decades from artisanal wells to modern, mechanized techniques—especially pivot irrigation—has facilitated access to these groundwater reserves, fostering both greater date production and expansion into new crops. For example, from the mid-1990s to today, land dedicated to potato farming grew from 200 hectares to 33,000 hectares thanks to advances in available irrigation technology.³ Today potatoes rival dates as El Oued's most well-known export; in 2015 the region provided 1.2 million tons, or a quarter of Algeria's entire production.⁴ The region's wealthiest resident, Djillali Mehri, has also furthered this trend, piloting a successful agri-business model that others have followed. With his Daouia farming project, since 1990 Mehri has introduced technological innovations (including drip irrigation and hybrid seeds) to produce new crops like olives, fruits, and nuts.

The Algerian government has facilitated this transition (in a bid to decrease its dependence on food imports) by offering land parcels and investment financing to farmers in El Oued and other southern *wilayas*.⁵ By last year, crop production occupied 90,000 ha. (347 square miles) in El Oued—representing 2% of the region's land area—of which 81,300 ha. required irrigation.⁶ Forty% of active cropland in El Oued is still dedicated to date production, but potatoes, grains, onions, garlic, tobacco, tomatoes, and melons are also produced in increasing quantities.⁷ Sheep and goats are the primary livestock.

¹ DPSB, p63.

² DPSB, p5.

³ Compare DPSB p50 to [“El-Oued : le nouvel Eldorado de l’agriculture saharienne”, Liberté, 19 May 2013.](#)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ [“Décryptage/Le Sud, futur eldorado pour l’agriculture algérienne ?”, Algérie Focus, 31 January 2016.](#)

⁶ DPSB, p42.

⁷ DPSB, p5.

Unlike in many other regions, young people are not shunning the agricultural sector. State youth loan provider ANSEJ regularly provides investment for farming projects¹, particularly related to high-tech desert agriculture, which may have less stigma attached to it, as compared to traditional agricultural methods.

Commerce: El Oued has long served as a regional trading hub. South of El Oued, no highways connect Algeria and Tunisia, making it the primary transit point for all merchandise traveling overland between Tunisia and southern Algeria. Cultural and commercial connections with Tunisia are strong. El Oued is also a transit point for domestic goods traveling between northern cities like Tebessa and Annaba, and southern oases at Touggourt and Ouargla. While commerce constitutes an important part of El Oued's economy, employers note many deficiencies in the sector's labor market, as detailed below.

Building and Public Works: El Oued traditionally has had a tiny urban footprint and basic network of roads, as well as a train line. But the population's growth by 50% in the past two decades has rapidly increased demand for residential and commercial property as well as public infrastructure. Entire neighborhoods of El Oued city have been built from nothing in the past few years, and major highways widened. But while employment in this sector remains substantial, it actually retracted slightly (-0.6%) during 2014 and 2015, likely due to a slowdown in government projects—a reminder that the sector's employment potential is susceptible to cyclical swings. El Oued holds important potential as a solar energy generation site, and installation and maintenance work in that sub-sector could present a major growth area in years to come.

Industry: Although it has never been a significant industrial hub, El Oued is home to a growing number of producers of everything from perfumes and cosmetics to plastics and furnishings to hardware and building supplies. Many raw materials for construction materials—including gypsum, limestone, clay, and sand—are readily available in the *wilaya* in great quantity. The region holds a single industrial zone with 23 parcels, located at Guemar, just north of El Oued city. Its location adjacent to Tunisia makes El Oued an ideal site for export production of many goods for this neighboring market. Artisanal production of woven textiles and other traditional goods, though once an important local activity, has little commercial market today, especially amid limited tourism.

Services: Slightly more than a third of El Oued's registered businesses operate in the services sector, many of them small enterprises offering design, printing, consulting, and other support to larger firms in the region. One service sub-sector that generates significant discussion despite its tiny size is tourism. While El Oued's natural beauty presents an obvious draw, the region has never been a destination of note; until last year, it had only three classified hotels and two guesthouses, totaling just under 600 beds and employing some 120 staff. In mid-2016, however, local business baron Djillali Mehri opened his long-awaited Gazelle d'Or complex, comprising a luxury hotel of the same name and a sister hotel, La Coupole, with a total of nearly 500 beds. Both hotels appear largely unoccupied, and it is unclear that there is sufficient demand to make such a project profitable. Wealthy visitors from the Persian Gulf are known to visit El Oued to hunt gazelle and other wildlife, but otherwise the region offers few draws that would

¹ DPSB, p66.

distinguish it from neighboring areas. Security concerns near Algeria's eastern border in recent years may also depress demand.

Administration: While young people benefiting from YEP will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector is not a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in El Oued—and across Algeria—but is oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand in the future. A hiring freeze across much of the public sector was set in late 2014, causing public sector employment in El Oued to shrink over the following two years. Austerity measures may necessitate further paring down of the civil service.

QUANTITY GAPS

Discussions with economic actors in El Oued revealed several shortfalls in the number of recruits available in several very specific fields. One representative of a local agency noted strong demand for health workers, guards and drivers, and especially receptionists (both for hotels and for companies). “Receptionist is a job nobody wants to hold, not even in the public sector,” he said. “They don’t understand its value, and think it’s a degrading position compared to people who work ‘real’ office jobs.” Human resource staff of the Gazelle d’Or hotel complex confirmed that the lack of qualified receptionists has obliged them to recruit outside the *wilaya*. An interviewee from a healthcare facility concurred that his most pressing need is for competent reception staff. “Our first competitor here in this region is Tunisia,” he said, “and they have receptionists who know how to work with clients and communicate and judge people when they walk in the door or call. They have professional approaches. But ours are just told ‘You’re a receptionist, you can say the following info, and that’s all.’ But no, a receptionist is a professional. It’s a complicated job.” Ideally, he added that he would like to have a receptionist with at least a minimum of medical knowledge.

One respondent from the hotel industry noted that “There is no orientation for young people” toward the hospitality field. Consequently, locals lack the necessary training and experience, and his hotel calls almost exclusively on professionals from Kabylie and other northern regions to fill restaurant, reception, and house-keeping positions.

He also noted difficulty in finding qualified commercial and advertising professionals. Despite El Oued’s reputation as a commercial hub, multiple business owners noted challenges in finding qualified sales agents. As one factory owner told World Learning staff, “We just don’t have good sales agents in El Oued. Even if 80% of the work we do is selling, and [elsewhere] there are professionals trained in this, we do it ourselves. Sometimes we give the products to our chauffeurs with a document to sign, rather than to professionals who know the technology and can help expand sales.”

Industrial workers are another area where there appears to be untapped—and growing—demand. An employee in the trade sector pointed to industry as a sector with substantial need for high- and low-skilled workers. One interviewee from a local factory has seen rapid growth since opening his factory on the outskirts of El Oued city in 2012. He is now making plans to expand to a 24-hour production cycle, which

will require tripling his staff of machinists and repairmen. Senior officers at a manufacturing company indicated that, because of difficulty finding qualified young recruits, they tend to retrain and repurpose existing workers when new posts arise.

QUALITY GAPS

Among local candidates and new recruits, business owners in El Oued note a wide range of shortcomings in qualifications and skills. Regarding commercial sales, for example, a local business owner told World Learning, “We don’t really have a modern sales approach here, a well-studied method.” Others lamented candidates’ lack of practical experience, particularly as machinists, health and safety specialists, or other posts in the industrial field. Still others highlight the need for recruits—whether for receptionist positions or even security guards—who can speak foreign languages in order to interact with international clients.

But many business owners also expressed a strong desire to recruit employees with robust soft skills. An informant from a local bank said, “It does nothing to train someone in the technical side if he doesn’t have a professional culture. Give me someone who’s got that culture, and it’s fine. I don’t care about the technical side. There’s money, there’s training centers, I can train someone in anything in six months. Give me someone with a brain and professional mindset and I can take care of the rest.” Another employee from the healthcare sector cited the need for recruits with “Time management, punctuality, professional conscience... people who work their 8 hours and try to advance your business. When they’re sitting in the cafe I’m losing money.” Others cited the ability to work effectively in teams, ambition and work ethic, and the ability to learn effectively from more experienced employees.

An interviewee from the manufacturing sector said his firm “actually prefers to take young people—to recruit someone who will stay with us for the future, rather than someone who’s [older] but who’s going to tell me in five years that he’s retiring.” At the same time, many expressed frustration with the turnover rates among young employees, and encouraged the career center to stress to new recruits the importance of serving as dependable employees. A manufacturing employee recounted stories to World Learning of mass defections, frequent departures ostensibly to fulfill national military service, and poaching by state companies: “Many workers want to work for the state, even if we give them good conditions and good salary.” Another added, “We can give them everything under the sun, then right away they’ll go to Sonelgaz [Algeria’s national gas and electricity company].”

But one entrepreneur offered a suggestion that the career center is well-placed to realize: “Adapt the trainings toward ‘personal training’ more so than technical. Help them understand that work is a blessing, that it’s important to respect it... there needs to be better understanding of the value of work.”

COMMUNICATION GAPS

Communications gaps between job-seekers and employers in the recruitment process arose infrequently in El Oued. One factory owner noted that in the industrial sector, factories tend to be small, family-run affairs who recruit relatives according to a “tribal” mentality, rather than seeking competent candidates on the open labor market.

But most discussion of this topic revolved around national employment agency ANEM. Following the presentation of the career center, one recruiter in the focus group session said, “We have to use ANEM, it’s the rules. So how can I get someone via them who was trained by you? I’m asking because... it looks like you have removed 50% of our search process for us, which is great.”

According to the *wilaya*’s planning and budget office, in 2015 ANEM managed to place 72% of registered job seekers from El Oued city, but only 32.5% across the entire *wilaya*. The same source notes that 35% of the region’s job seekers have a diploma, but diploma holders were only placed at a rate of 9.4%, highlighting the difficulty for white-collar workers to find suitable employment. The performance of the El Oued city office, said a representative, places it second nationwide and first in the south in ANEM’s internal performance ranking. (Others corroborated this success, while suggesting that it is a sure sign of corruption within the process, whereby ANEM officials allow companies and job-seekers to come to them with readymade matches.) Even in El Oued city, the unemployment problem is growing more acute; He says his office places 400-500 people in jobs each month, but sees between 1,400-1,800 sign up for placement. Some local employers who spoke to World Learning are unsatisfied with the agency’s services. A respondent complained that, out of 69 applicants that ANEM proposed for his factory’s last recruitment, just three were “barely” qualified.

The career center team has requested that ANEM provide its database of local job seekers in order to contact them about free career services, though he appeared cautious about engaging with the initiative.

OTHER FACTORS

El Oued is home to the Hamma Lakhdar university, which contains eight faculties offering courses in a range of natural and human sciences and arts fields. In 2015-16, the last year for which data were available, 19,000 students were enrolled, despite the university’s officially listed capacity of 17,350.¹ This overcrowding (likely a symptom of the region’s substantial youth bulge) does not extend to graduate studies; only 123 grad students were enrolled last year, again suggesting limited returns to post-grad studies in the region’s labor market.

In El Oued, the vocational training ministry maintains a network of three national specialized institutes (INSFP), 17 vocational training and apprenticeship centers (CFPA), and three CFPA annexes.² According to a listing updated in February 2017, these establishments offer nearly 3,200 places in a range of vocational trainings:³

Vocational training offers by category <i>(Multiple specializations are offered within each training category.)</i>	Initial qualifying training <i>(3-6 months)</i>	Qualifying training <i>(1-6 months)</i>	Diploma training <i>(6-30 months)</i>
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¹ DPSB, p37.

² dfp.mfep.gov.dz

³ Ibid.

Tailoring, clothing production	0	300	341
Other services (hairdressing, cooking)	0	225	387
Building and public works	25	0	490
Electric, electronics, energy	0	25	365
Information technology	0	150	231
Administration and management	0	0	360
Agriculture	25	0	270
Hotel, restaurant, tourism	0	200	54
Traditional artisanry	0	50	194
Metallic construction	0	0	166
Motor and engine maintenance	0	0	151
Woodworking and furniture making	0	0	52
Food processing industries	0	0	39
Mechanical and steel construction	0	0	32
Water and environment	0	0	32
Leatherwork	0	0	10
Audiovisual	0	0	10
Totals	50	950	3,190

While the vocational training system covers a broad range of categories, not all trainings offered are relevant to today's job market. Despite the large numbers of youth working to start businesses in desert agriculture, for example, offerings in this sector are relatively modest. And amid evident demand for qualified recruits in the hospitality sector, just four of 254 openings in the "hotel, restaurant, tourism" category are for hotel reception and none are for management. (All the others are for various types of cooking.)

The region's active chamber of commerce and industry does also offer a few limited trainings in exporting, customs management, solar panel installation, and technical English. But according to CCI officials, these were launched primarily as a means of fundraising for the chamber, amid members' resistance to paying dues.

A final factor of the labor market that came to light and that the career center should consider is business owners' poor planning of their recruitment needs. The owner of a sports and recreation facility told World Learning in late January that he hoped to open his park by May, but that he was working to finish construction before hiring any of the personnel that would staff the rides, ticket kiosks, shops, restaurants, and administration. He also had yet to procure the IT system that would be needed to manage the park's many points of sale in real-time. He had no answer to how he would eventually fix any of the rides, which were being installed by a technician from Setif who he said was the only qualified one in Algeria. In a second example, a respondent relies exclusively on a single worker in his 60s to calibrate the operation of

most of his industrial machines, but has not yet paired him with a junior apprentice or several who could learn from him and carry on the factory's operations once he retires. This short-sighted management style has implications for the career center's interactions with local businesses, as described below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers** to respond to strong demand from local business leaders. Emphasize modules on professional culture, while also offering existing modules on career planning, leadership, networking, professional communication, personal development, and more. Base on standard “Soft Skills” curriculum developed for the project, with modifications where needed.
2. **Offer career counseling** through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech's Tamheed¹ platform) in order to provide clear guidance to young people to ensure they find themselves in a suitable career, rather than one they dislike and will leave after a short period. This orientation will help them to better plan their careers and identify their corresponding training needs.
3. **Develop technical training offerings for young job seekers in reception, commercial sales,** and other high-demand niches that may be identified in coordination with World Learning and local employers. Training for receptionists should include both the administrative and customer service sides of the job, as well as foreign language skills or others as needed. For receptionist and sales trainings, consider partnering with Microsoft to use low-cost “Digital Literacy” and/or “Imagine Academy” packages.
4. **Consider potential technical trainings in collaboration with leading firms.** While launching technical trainings with the most immediate high-demand areas, Souf Academy should hold additional discussions with key local employers who expressed interest in more tailored options. Given managers' short-sighted management style, career center staff should be very proactive in regularly checking on such possibilities. Training restaurant and housekeeping personnel for Gazelle d'Or, machine technicians for TPL, or kiosk and restaurant staff for Gouri Amusement Park could establish valuable pipelines for connecting skilled youth with stable employment at leading local companies. But before investing in these trainings, Souf Academy staff should solicit more firm commitments from these potential partners and review with World Learning.
5. **Consider potential technical trainings in agriculture field.** Agriculture's importance in the local economy of El Oued and its increasing use of technology may expand demand for training from young would-be farmers. While it is not immediately clear which trainings they would most need to succeed in the field, Souf Academy should be open to meeting such an eventual demand, given the sector's primary place in the regional labor market.

¹ Tamheed is an online psychometric assessment test designed by Qatar-based Silatech to provide youth with access to quality career advising services and resources. In Algeria, World Learning collaborates with Silatech to offer Arabic, French, and English versions of the test and train counselors.

6. **Organize “alternance” internships with local enterprises.** As in other regions, employers in El Oued express interest in recruiting workers with practical experience and willingness to help young trainees gain that experience through internships. The “*alternance*” model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout the work week, is an ideal way for youth to combine classroom and workplace learning. Agreements can provide for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement.
7. **Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.** World Learning and Souf Academy should collaborate to determine how training, counseling, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students in various fields to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account students’ availability. Also explore how to “package” the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand them to attract new students, build name recognition within the regional business community, and thus ensure sustainability and eventual commercial viability.
8. **Consolidate private business network and solidify CCI ties.** Business leaders with whom World Learning and Souf Academy staff met expressed strong desire to contribute to the project’s success and recruit competent graduates. Capitalize on this interest by consolidating the advisory committee and structuring internship and job placement agreements wherever possible. Finalize the proposed memorandum with the CCI, join the CCI as a dues-paying member, and otherwise reinforce this relationship, which will open many doors in the regional business community.
9. **Continue to seek collaboration with ANEM.** ANEM, as a state-run agency of limited utility and doubtful efficacy, is understandably nervous about the career center’s creation. But center staff should remain proactive in their outreach, seeking to reassure ANEM staff that career services can only be a plus for those awaiting job placement from the agency. Effective collaboration with ANEM staff—who seem inherently flexible and understanding—could substantially facilitate participant recruitment, job placement, and more. Consider approaching *wilaya*-level officers and offering to train ANEM participants even outside El Oued city if it will boost local officials’ faith in the career center and its goodwill.
10. **Define long-term business model.** Beyond the initial budget development exercise, the sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Given the low income levels of many prospective trainees in the region, consider making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students’ commitment. Souf Academy could lobby Mehri Group or other leading companies to subsidize training costs in the future, perhaps in exchange for preferential recruitment access.



ORAN OVERVIEW

Located on the Mediterranean coast in northwest Algeria, the Oran region shares its name with its principal urban center. Known locally as “El Bahia” (“The Radiant”), Oran city has lost some of its aesthetic charm to neglect in recent decades but, as Algeria’s second city, remains a central player in the national economy. A former colony of nearby Spain, Oran remains distinct among Algerian cities for its openness, and today feels noticeably more connected to the outside world than Constantine, Setif, or even the capital, Algiers. Oran is a key refining and distribution point for Algeria’s vast oil and gas stocks and a major commercial port and trading hub. Manufacturing and hospitality also play important roles in the region’s economy. A building boom is underway across the Oran metropolitan area as it prepares to host the 2021 Mediterranean Games.

While its economy is noticeably more diverse and dynamic than that of many other regions of Algeria, Oran still has high degrees of poverty and youth unemployment. Migrants from across the region and the entire African continent come to Oran city in hopes of work, presenting challenges for local job-seekers. Employers cite a lack of qualified hospitality workers and of skilled laborers for the industrial and construction sectors as being among the principal challenges to economic development.

In this context, World Learning’s selected local partner school, Association Sidi El Houari’s (SDH) Construction School¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in Oran from February 4 to 7, 2017 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the “Analysis Framework” document.

To allow for collection of a wide range of perspectives in a short timeframe, World Learning and SDH organized a roundtable discussion on February 5 with key local businesses and socio-economic organizations:

- [Groupe Hasnaoui, construction conglomerate;](#)
- [Knauf Algeria, construction materials manufacturer;](#)
- [Oran Business Incubator;](#)
- [Gold Vision, events management firm;](#)

¹ www.sdhoran.dz

- [Social Development Agency](#) (ADS) local bureau;
- [Jurex Itek](#), consulting and training bureau;
- [Edson Algeria](#), audiovisual equipment supplier;
- [Oran Center for Small and Medium Enterprise Facilitation](#);
- [Unilever Algeria](#);
- [Proximity Solidarity Cell](#);
- [R20-Med](#), environmental association;
- [Oran regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry \(CCI\)](#).

On February 6 and 7, World Learning staff made site visits to several local business and institutions and held in-depth discussions with the following organizations

- [CCI Oran](#);
- [GIRYAD](#) housing complex;
- [R20-Med](#);
- [Fransabank](#).

Findings from desk research and discussions comprise the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

The region of Oran is one of Algeria's most important—and visibly productive—economic poles, serving as the capital of the western region and a prime industrial and commercial hub. About half of the region's nearly 2 million residents are concentrated in the city of Oran, which is Algeria's second-largest city after Algiers. It is home to a major gas refinery at Arzew, along with multiple manufacturing sites. The region also serves as key transit hub for people and goods, with two major international ports and an international airport, as well as rail and road connections to the rest of Algeria. In 2021, Oran will host the Mediterranean Games for the first time. In anticipation of the arrival of some 6,500 athletes¹, plus thousands of spectators and others, an ongoing boom in hotel and facilities construction is rapidly expanding the region's already extensive hospitality infrastructure and injecting new dynamism into the overall economy.

The most recent available statistics (from the National Investment Development Agency, ANDI) list Oran's unemployment rate as of 2012 at 10.1%, but the many competing pressures acting on the region's economy in subsequent years make this figure of little use in assessing today's labor market.² Youth from the wider region frequently move to Oran city to seek work, causing the employment market to grow and contract considerably in response to economic conditions, and complicating efforts to measure key

¹ ["Comment Oran va profiter des Jeux Méditerranéens de 2021 \(Enquête\)", HuffPost Maghreb, 12 September 2015.](#)

² "Monographie de wilaya: Oran", National Investment Development Agency (ANDI), 2013.

indicators. ANDI provides the following sectoral breakdown for the Oran region's active workforce, as of 2013:

- Building and public works: 36%
- Commerce: 18%
- Transport and communication: 9%
- Hospitality: 8%
- Industry (6%)
- Other services (6%)
- Other (17%)

While these statistics are regrettably outdated, they provide at least an approximate baseline for understanding the relative importance of each sector in the region's current labor market. Particular findings for each of these sectors are as follows:

Building and Public Works: The city of Oran has evidently been spared from the slowdown in public infrastructure spending that followed the 2014 oil price collapse across much of Algeria. Today, cranes and construction sites still span its skyline. With the 2021 Mediterranean Games fast approaching, authorities are undertaking a wave of construction; a new airport terminal, tramway extension, and Olympic village and stadium complex are currently underway. A steady hotel boom had already expanded the *wilaya's* capacity from 500 beds in 2000 to 15,000 by 2015, and officials estimate that ongoing projects alone could push it to 40,000 in the next few years.¹ Construction of commercial and residential properties is also exploding. Since 2005, the *wilaya's* residential capacity has grown by over 50%, from 238,000 to 364,000 units.²

But the construction boom has not benefited all. Amid a wave of modern building, many lament that Oran has neglected its traditional and historical sites. Neighborhoods like Sidi El Houari—Oran's historic *casbah*, built centuries ago by the Spanish and Ottomans—is utterly neglected, and the city's French-built downtown appears dilapidated and shabby compared to other major cities like Algiers or Constantine. The construction boom is also largely confined to Oran city, with outlying towns seeing far less development and investment. Even in Oran city, many jobless youth sit idle while Chinese construction workers erect the Olympic stadium. Youth who do enter the construction trade without qualifying skills are obliged to compete with the many sub-Saharan migrants who inhabit the region, depressing wages.

Commerce: Oran is the principal commercial hub of the western region, hosting the national or regional offices of many import-export and trading firms. It has both a high concentration of industrial production facilities and infrastructure linking it to the rest of Algeria and to the Mediterranean region. Grains (mostly imported wheat) constitute the largest portion of the tonnage passing through Oran's main port, followed

¹ ["Près de 1.300 projets touristiques sont en cours pour promouvoir la destination Algérie", HuffPost Maghreb, 19 February 2016.](#)

² ["Une dynamique de développement marquée par des projets structurants importants", APS, 18 April 2017.](#)

by steel and other metal products, animal feed, cement components, woods, hydrocarbons, raw sugar, and various merchandise.¹

Transport and communication: With the most developed infrastructure network of any region outside the capital, Oran employs a considerable number of workers in the transportation sector. The port at Oran city is Algeria's second largest by volume after Algiers, and the nearby port of Arzew is the country's largest hydrocarbons terminal by volume. Along with sea ferries, the Es-Senia International Airport connects Oran to destinations around the Mediterranean region, and is currently under expansion. Three train stations link the region to Algeria's extensive rail network, and see over 2 million passengers and 3 million tons of goods pass through annually.² The East-West Highway also links Oran to major population centers across the Algerian coast. Buses and a tramway (opened in 2010, and now under expansion) operate in Oran city. Workers in this sector and in much of the telecommunications sector typically hold coveted public sector posts.

Hospitality: More so than any other city in Algeria, Oran's hospitality infrastructure resembles that of other international destinations, both in its scale and diversity. Whereas hotels in Algiers, Constantine, Setif, and elsewhere in Algeria struggle to meet demand and offer service in line with international standards, Oran's hotels are plentiful and also familiar to international visitors, with multiple international brand groups (including Sheraton, Accor, Marriott-Starwood, Intercontinental, and Carlson Rezidor) having opened properties in Oran city in recent years. Driven by private investors, business hotel and beach resort development continues, including in the *wilaya's* 15 touristic expansion zones (ZETs), which the state reserves exclusively for tourism projects.³ But while investment may be in abundance, the weakness in Oran's hotel and restaurant sector—as in Algeria's more broadly—has long been its personnel, as discussed below.

Industry: The industrial sector is more developed in Oran than in most other regions of Algeria. A major hydrocarbons refinery (owned by state oil company Sonatrach) at Arzew has anchored that town for decades, and also allowed for the build-up of energy intensive industries like production of steel and other construction materials. Other factories generate petrochemical products, energy, plastics, textiles, foodstuffs, wood and paper products, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, household items and furnishings, and more.⁴ Oran is also home to two major desalination plants. The state dominates the industrial sector, but private investment is growing of late. The commune of Oued Tlelat welcomed a Renault car assembly plant in 2014⁵, and will soon inaugurate a sugar refinery in the Tafaoui industrial park.⁶ In total, Oran counts five industrial zones totaling 3,218 hectares (12.4 square miles) and 1,926 reserved industrial activity zones totaling 502 ha. (1.9 square miles).⁷

¹ ["Tonnage par type de marchandise, 2015", Entreprise Portuaire d'Oran, 2015.](#)

² ANDI 2013.

³ "Monographie de Wilaya: Oran", National Agency for Intermediation and Property Regulation (ANIREF), 2013.

⁴ ANDI 2013.

⁵ ["Algeria inaugurates new Renault plant in Oran", Associated Press, 10 November 2014.](#)

⁶ ["Sellal inaugurates industrial sugar refining complex in Tafaoui", APS, 19 April 2017.](#)

⁷ ANIREF 2013.

Alongside this traditional industrial development, Oran is also leading Algeria's efforts to catch up to global trends on environmentally friendly technologies, consumption habits, and production methods. R20 Med, the Mediterranean regional seat of the R20 environmental coalition, was installed in Oran in 2013, and the group works closely with consumers, industry, and academia to expand the green economy, presenting interesting opportunities for growth and new fields of employment.

Other Services: As a regional business hub, Oran frequently plays host to conferences, expositions, and salons, making event organizing and management an important subfield year-round. Other important services include technology and web services, legal and commercial assistance, and more.

Other: In contrast to nearly every other region of Algeria, agriculture is not a major driver of Oran's economy. The *wilaya* is small—just 2,100 km², of which a sixth is taken up by *sebkha* saline depressions and fifth by forest—and less fertile than the inland plains.¹ Just 90 km², or 4% of the *wilaya*'s land, is dedicated to farming (including citrus, grapes, vegetables, and small-scale animal husbandry for local consumption). Fishing on the Mediterranean from Oran and Arzew ports is an important sub-sector. The public administration is also a significant employer. But while young people benefiting from YEP will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector is not a specific priority of the project. The public administration is oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand in the future, particularly given a hiring freeze in place across much of the public sector since late 2014.

QUANTITY GAPS

In such a large and diverse economy, evolutions among different sectors invariably lead to shortages and excesses of workers in certain fields. For example, an interviewee highlighted “a huge shortage in tourism and hospitality”, where hotel developers face serious challenges in identifying sufficient numbers of staff with any training or experience in the hospitality sector.

But in Oran, the most acute needs emerging today are in medium- and low-skills jobs, rather than professional sectors. As one business owner told World Learning, “The universities continue to train psychologists who can't find work after graduation, and meanwhile we can't find a painter or plumber anywhere.” Abed confirmed that skilled labor is employers' greatest need across all sectors. Another CCI officer said that to make up the “flagrant lack” of qualified labor, employers in Oran are assuming great expense to bring in skilled and unskilled laborers from China, Egypt, Syria, and sub-Saharan Africa to fill posts in industrial and construction projects.

A respondent from the banking sector told World Learning that among his bank's local corporate clients, “We see companies growing fast. One client in the commercial sector has grown from 2 to 20 employees, and now wants to produce directly instead of just importing his product, and do so with automatic machines.” But human resources shortages block some from producing locally, he says: “There are so many investors who have all the means you can imagine, and ideas too, but because of a lack of personnel they prefer to import finished products.”

¹ “[Présentation de la wilaya](#)”, *Wilaya d'Oran*, 4 April 2016; and ANDI 2013.

A plaster and construction materials supplier, which has a major manufacturing center in Oran, is among the companies struggling to find enough qualified personnel. A manager told World Learning that his firm is preparing to expand its plaster production from 2 million to 10 million tons per year. “But there is a real lack of labor,” he said. “We want you to send us good people because we are really growing explosively; we’re in full expansion and the demand is much greater than the supply of workers.” The company’s need for skilled labor has grown so severe that they have explored opening training centers in cooperation with Algeria’s vocational ministry, as detailed below.

QUALITY GAPS

Multiple business leaders with whom World Learning spoke also cited shortcomings in workers’ technical qualifications and interpersonal skills as obstacles. Several noted that job-seekers’ CVs and interview skills rarely meet acceptable standards. Others lamented that once recruited, new employees often prove not to have the skills they claimed. As an employee from an event planning firm stated, “We’re suffering. People put whatever they want on their CV then when they get into the workplace we see something completely different. We would rather know at the start what their real capacity is, not just what diplomas they hold.” Several actors, for example, complained that sales people may know the products they are selling, but have never been trained in effective marketing or communication techniques.

To compensate for the shortage of requisite skills, many employers in Oran reported being obliged to assume the costs of training workers. For example a luxury housing development manager described the extensive investment she and her staff make in developing and implementing training programs for security guards, maintenance technicians, and HSE (health, safety, environment) supervisors. “I need know-how,” she told World Learning and SDH staff. “If you told me you could give me two people per month as security guards with high school education and groundskeepers with gardening experience then I would love it. Give me a list so I can recruit from your school.”

Some employers also noted that many young recruits lack appropriate professional conduct. An interviewee cited one of his corporate clients, who recently paid €50,000 to upgrade his machines from manual to automatic operation, after realizing that his workers were taking such frequent and long cigarette breaks that they were causing major production delays and profit losses. Workers at all levels need orientation to the professional world, said an interviewee from housing: “There are lots of university graduates on the job market, but once they’re in the professional environment they don’t adapt well.”

COMMUNICATION GAPS

The mechanics of connecting job-seekers to appropriate opportunities is a challenge in Oran, as elsewhere in Algeria. Online job boards like Emploitic advertise many positions, but legally recruitment is still required to pass through the public National Employment Agency (ANEM). According to the SDH team’s research, most businesses in the region do follow this directive, despite ANEM’s bureaucratic inefficiencies. (When SDH staff approached the local ANEM director, he remarked that the career center sounded like “yet another competitor”, a reminder of the agency’s sensitivities and the need for careful outreach.)

SDH staff also described the region's many employment fairs as "disastrous" for participating youth. "Companies don't take it seriously," one career counselor said, "and just send anyone to man their stands and collect CVs."

For graduates of its construction school, SDH prefers to facilitate apprenticeships that allow them to gain a foothold within a company. A banking employee also favors this method for recruiting staff for his bank: "People who work here at the bank often did internships here first, maybe for a month in their third year of university. Then [after graduation] they come to work with us on a pre-employment contract. Most banks follow this approach. Banking is a real trade—I don't need people who went to Harvard but don't exercise professional secrecy." For him and other employers, internships present an opportunity to evaluate a potential recruit's capacities before investing in a full recruitment, "They must be polite, educated, professional and respectful of confidentiality. Discretion and confidence are everything in this business."

OTHER FACTORS

Oran has a high density of higher education institutions that serve youth from the entire western region. Tens of thousands of students study each year at the University of Oran 1, University of Oran 2, University of Science and Technology of Oran (USTO), and the region's multiple specialized institutes in polytechnic sciences, management, IT and commerce, human resources, economics, and more.

In Oran, the vocational training ministry also maintains a network of five national specialized institutes (INSFP) and 19 vocational training and apprenticeship centers (CFPA).¹ According to a listing updated in February 2017, these establishments offer nearly 5,500 places in a range of vocational trainings:²

Vocational training offers by category <i>Multiple specializations are offered within each training category.</i>	Initial qualifying training <i>(3-6 months)</i>	Qualifying training <i>(1-6 months)</i>	Diploma training <i>(6-30 months)</i>
Services	125	305	390
Hotel, restaurant, tourism	35	305	425
Administration and management	0	60	655
Agriculture	310	60	280
Tailoring, clothing production	0	205	390
Information technology	35	330	190
Motor and engine maintenance	0	0	360
Traditional artisanry	30	135	240
Electric, electronics, energy	0	0	250

¹ dfp.mfep.gov.dz

² Ibid.

Building and public works	30	0	210
Woodworking and furniture making	0	0	115
Metallic construction	0	0	85
Water and environment	0	0	60
Totals	565	1,400	3,650

While Oran’s vocational training system covers a diverse set of categories, not all trainings offered appear relevant to the current needs of the region’s job market. Amid a building boom, no trainings are offered in the ministry’s standard category of mechanical and steel construction. Similarly, the trainings include none in the petroleum industry, food processing industry, or chemical industry categories, despite the key place these industries hold in the region’s economy.

Numerous other institutions deliver professional training in Oran. The CCI offers paid courses in accounting, architecture and planning, customs management, and foreign languages.¹ CCI president Abed told World Learning that the chamber has also recently acquired a new building in downtown Oran that will serve as a hotel and restaurant management school, managed in partnership with a French school. Environmental association R20 Med has partnered with the National Polytechnic School to begin offering a Master’s in Green Economy certification. Even some private companies are investing in training; Knauf plaster manufacturer created six centers for training laborers. The vocational training ministry had agreed to help support the project and build 12 additional sites, but did not follow through. Today only three of Knauf’s training centers are operational, including one in Oran. According to SDH staff, these serve partly to prepare laborers to work for Knauf, but primarily to train construction workers to use Knauf products as a means of building demand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers** to respond to strong demand from local business leaders. Emphasize modules on professional culture, while also offering existing modules on career planning, leadership, networking, professional communication, personal development, and more. Base on standard “Soft Skills” curriculum developed for the project, with modifications where needed. To help SDH adapt to the profile of likely trainees, World Learning may need to help to review the pedagogical approach and tools in order to accommodate illiterate trainees and/or trainees with little formal education or classroom experience.
2. **Offer career counseling** through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech’s Tamheed platform) in order to provide clear guidance to young people to ensure they find themselves in a suitable career, rather than one they dislike and will leave after a short period. This orientation will help them to better plan their careers and identify their corresponding training needs.

¹ cci-oran.dz

3. **Develop technical training offerings for young job seekers in construction and skilled labor trades**, and other high-demand niches that may be identified in coordination with World Learning and local employers. This focused approach fits well with SDH's existing strengths and experience—in the form of the Construction School—and the labor market's needs, and diminishes the possibility that the SDH team would become overstretched trying to satisfy the many demands that do exist in the Oran region. Trainings in carpentry, stonework, smithing, etc. need not be multi-year “*diplomante*” trainings, but can be simpler “*qualifiante*” ones targeted to current needs of the construction sector.
4. **Offer add-on trainings in key subjects** that can help project graduates meet all needs of employers. These could include:
 - a. Basic HSE: This can serve as a useful certificate to supplement qualified labor trainings. Include basic first aid, workplace safety, and similar.
 - b. Foreign languages: Basic knowledge of key phrases and technical vocabulary in French, English, or Spanish could distinguish SDH grads from others.
5. **Provide “alternance” internships for trainees**. Many local employers may be willing to help young trainees gain experience through internships. The “*alternance*” model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout the week, is an ideal way for youth to link their classroom and workplace knowledge. Agreements can provide for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement.
6. **Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes**. World Learning and SDH should collaborate to determine how training, counseling, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students in various fields to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account students' availability. Also explore how to “package” the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand them to attract new students, build further name recognition within the regional business community, and thus ensure sustainability.
7. **Consolidate private business network and reinforce CCI link**. Some business leaders have an interest in contributing to the project's success by serving on the advisory committee, hosting internships and job placements, and recruiting competent graduates. To avoid wasted effort, the CDC should focus its outreach efforts on developing partnerships with these. But amid Oran's vast economic landscape, further work is needed to concentrate outreach toward the kinds of firms that are likely to hire SDH graduates. The Oran CCI can be a valuable partner in this effort, and SDH should do everything possible to reinforce the institutional relationship with the chamber. If possible, the signature of a formal memorandum with the CCI would go far in solidifying this relationship, which can open many doors in the regional business community.
8. **Define long-term business model**. Beyond the initial budget development exercise, the sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Given the low income levels of prospective trainees in the region, consider making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students' commitment. SDH could approach any of the

region's large construction firms to subsidize training costs in the future, perhaps in exchange for preferential recruitment access.

9. **Maintain focus to achieve maximum impact.** Perhaps the greatest risk the SDH team faces in launching an exciting new career center in a region as dynamic as Oran is that they will become overstretched, and therefore ineffective. The SDH team should start with what it does well (the Construction School, complemented by basic career services) and slowly expand from that point in response to significant demand. This will require resisting the temptation to rapidly accumulate new external partnerships, new training themes, new client populations, or new career center services whenever these do not directly address employer needs and improve outcomes for the disadvantaged youth the project seeks to serve. Consistently delivering a very high quality of service to local youth—even if it is done in one or several small niches—is the best way SDH can add long-term value to the local labor market through this project.



OUARGLA OVERVIEW

As the primary pole of Algeria's vital hydrocarbons industry, the *wilaya* of Ouargla is a centerpiece of the national economy. But years of focusing on resource extraction, rather than on local economic development, has eroded other once-productive sectors and left Ouargla with a highly visible unemployment problem. Employers in the region, as elsewhere, complain that candidates are plentiful but that qualified ones are extremely rare. Many companies do not have the means to provide on-the-job training, and would welcome a pool of qualified job-seekers from which to draw.

Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) is a key sub-sector of the hydrocarbons industry and one in which employers report considerable difficulty in finding qualified personnel. Demand has also increased since many companies reinforced workplace safety and site security measures in recent years, particularly following the 2013 Ain Amenas attacks. Young job seekers equipped with soft skills, technical training in health and safety, and auxiliary skills like English and basic computer skills should be able to find immediate employment with Algerian and international oil and auxiliary services firms operating in the area. In the long run, those skills could be adapted to serve industry, agro-business, or other economic sectors, ensuring that project graduates have strong employment prospects even as the region's economy evolves over the coming decades.

World Learning's selected local partner school, Laroui Environmental & Safety School¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in Ouargla from January 5 to 11, 2016 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the "Analysis Framework" document. In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted in-person interviews with the following institutions and companies:

- Laroui Environmental & Safety School (ESS);
- El Hamel Traving, construction firm;
- Ouargla Merchants Union;

¹ Laroui ESS: www.larouihse.com

- Sonatrach Hassi Messaoud;
- Flash Services, manpower provider;
- Tassili, drilling company

Over six weeks, World Learning and Laroui School also published an online survey and collected responses from youth around Algeria to gauge their educational background, professional skill sets, career aspirations, and training needs, among other themes. Among over 700 responses nationwide, 63 came from the Ouargla region. World Learning also assisted local MEPI sub-grantee BusinessWise to organize a focus group with over 20 local youth in Ouargla on January 7, as part of the firm's State Department-funded study of obstacles to youth employment in the Algerian labor market.

Findings from desk research, discussions, and surveys comprise the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

The Ouargla region is the historic epicenter of Algeria's oil and gas industries, and suffers acutely from one of the national economy's central challenges—production is concentrated in an industry that demands relatively few human resources, and thus offers few jobs. Demonstrations in urban areas by unemployed youth have become commonplace in recent years, and even flared into violence and vandalism in some cases. (Peaceful but intense protests took place in February 2016, during the assessment period, and saw unemployed youths stitch their own lips closed, launch a hunger strike, and self-mutilate on the street in front of the regional government office in Ouargla.¹)

The National Statistics Office, regional government, and specialized national and regional agencies offer no publicly available employment data specific to the *wilaya*, making it difficult to assess its particular characteristics in comparison to national averages. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that the Ouargla region has a youth unemployment rate at least as high as the national average, which was reported at 29.9% for 16-24 year olds as of September 2015, including 26.7% for men and 45.3% for women.²

The most recent available statistics from the National Investment Development Agency (ANDI) provide the following sectoral breakdown for the Ouargla region's active workforce, as of 2013:³

- Administration and Services 53.4%
- Agriculture 16.5%
- Building and public works 16.0%
- Industry 14.1%

¹ ["L'insupportable condition des chômeurs d'Ouargla", Liberté, 23 Feb 2016.](#)

² ["Le taux de chômage en Algérie repart à la hausse", Le Journal de l'Emploi, 11 January 2016.](#)

³ "Monographie: wilaya de Ouargla", ANDI, 2013.

Particularities of these sectors are as follows:

Administration and Services: While young people benefiting from the YEP project will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector will not be a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in Ouargla—and across Algeria—but is heavily oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand in the future.

Hydrocarbon foraging and extraction—along with ancillary services including security, transport, maintenance, health and safety, and environmental management—account for a majority of employment in the service sector, and are concentrated in the oil and gas fields around Hassi Messaoud. Principal employers in the hydrocarbons industry include major international energy firms (e.g. BP, ENI, Anadarko) and support firms (e.g. Schlumberger, Halliburton) as well as local producers (Sonatrach) and service firms (e.g. Tassili Drilling, RedMed). The hydrocarbons sector generally has three levels of workers differentiated by level of training:

- University educated – engineers, supervisors, and managers (the latter if they have people skills);
- Skilled labor – vocational training certificate from CFA, can rise if they have people skills;
- Unskilled labor – high school degree only, but can get specialized positions with other skills.

With some variation depending on the skill level sought, recruiters typically seek:

- Initial diploma
- Communications and language skills
- IT skills (MS Office, databases (Oracle, SAP) and Cisco network management)
- Presentation skills, ability to lead meetings
- Reporting and writing skills
- HSE culture (emergency, first aid, firefighting)
- Personal development – initiative, presentation, job search skills

Also in the service sector, business leaders cited tourism as an area with strong growth potential, and sales as a specialty that needs renewal from a new generation with formal marketing training. They cited numerous quality and quantity mismatches across the service sector, which are detailed below.

Agriculture: Agriculture in the Ouargla region is typically organized around small-scale artisanal farming rather than agro-business. Dates, wheat, and livestock are among the principal products. Experiments have been made in aquaculture in recent years. According to the Chamber of commerce president, however, many primary products for industry and consumption are imported from the north rather than being produced locally. As evidence of the region's strong agricultural potential, he noted that a long growing season and ample sunshine allow for production of two wheat crops per year instead of just one crop as in the north, with proportionally higher crop yields.

Building and public works: Building and public works grew steadily in recent years, thanks to investment in residential construction and public works projects like the Ouargla city tramway (which a Spanish-French partnership has been constructing since 2013) and ongoing upgrades to the city's road network.¹ The sharp drop in oil prices since late 2014, however, places such projects in jeopardy, as government officials have announced that budget austerity measures may hit many public works projects judged non-essential, and a prolonged economic squeeze could even force private building to contract.

Industry: According to ANDI, principal industries in the *wilaya* of Ouargla include production of: construction materials, couscous and other cereal products, dried cement, industrial grade gas, metal framing, metalworks, glass, plastics, PVC piping, ceramic tiles, steel rebar, processed milk, processed dates, and carbonated sodas. But business leaders describe industrial production as limited, mentioning a few factories around Ouargla city, Touggourt, and other isolated locations. Artisanal craftsmen do operate, but the head of the merchants' guild cited problems in product design, marketing, and valuation. FLASH services is preparing to open a chemical factory in Ouargla soon, and anticipates beginning staff recruitment in 2016.

QUANTITY GAPS

In the hydrocarbons sector, limited supply of highly skilled engineers and supervisors in the local market leads many companies to fill senior positions with foreign workers or workers from other *wilayas*.

More specifically, FLASH Services manpower provider reports drilling and exploration services as the area where they have the most challenges in recruiting. Personnel in this domain are difficult to find because they require training in: green engineering and environmental management, health and safety ("Foreign companies are very demanding in this regard"), and/or petrochemical engineering. English is essential at the upper levels, in order to interact with foreign managers. A "well control certification" is also required for well technician posts, and is very difficult to obtain and maintain, as it requires re-certification every two years, at 160,000 DA (approx. US\$1,500) per test, with a long waiting list and demand far in excess of available testing time-slots. A respondent from the environmental sector also cites roughnecks and floormen (basic skilled labor positions) as being in very high demand, along with the well technicians due to the difficulty of staying certified, and because they require a broad-based training to be able to manage all operations happening on the well.

Another interviewee notes, however, that "We are transitioning from an oil economy to a service economy here, over the long term." The needs, he said, will shift toward hotel and restaurant management, tourism (which used to be a sizable industry in the region, before the petroleum industry developed, absorbing most local talent in the process). He notes that in the coming years, new investments planned in the tourism sector (such as the Italian-led Touggourt touristic village project scheduled to launch in mid-2015²) will require several thousand permanent new employees in the region. No training or recruitment mechanisms are currently in place to meet this anticipated demand. He also

¹ ["Le périphérique Sud réceptionné en avril 2016", El Watan, 23 Dec 2015.](#)

² ["Un grand village touristique en voie de lancement à El-Hedjira", APS, 28 Oct 2015.](#)

notes that on-site coordinators, overseers, and managers are consistently in short supply across various sectors, along with IT professionals. FLASH services also mentioned security guards as a perpetual need.

QUALITY GAPS

“It’s not even possible to find competent assistants,” an informant lamented to World Learning, citing his difficulties in recruiting young people with the right organizational, interpersonal, English language, communication, and IT skills to occupy such a post. Also lacking in many cases, he continued, are ambition, discipline, professionalism, and a sense of how to present oneself—how to dress and to speak well. Merchants’ union head noted that customer service skills and a culture of client relations are also sorely needed across many sectors.

High salaries in the hydrocarbons sector make it an attractive prospect for youth in Ouargla; more respondents in World Learning’s online survey indicated a desire to work in this sector than any other. Yet historical circumstances have exacerbated skills gaps in the sector. There, senior engineering and management jobs are typically held by highly trained foreign workers, with local hires occupying lower posts, and only advancing to mid-level positions if they have demonstrated technical competency, management capacity, and foreign language skills (typically English). Some Algerian workers have worked their way up to middle management in the sector by gaining expertise and experience on the job. But many are old enough to have received specialized training at one of several national hydrocarbons training institutes around Algeria—most of which were closed in recent decades, severely limiting the number of local job-seekers with this technical expertise and managerial capacity. An interviewee reports that these veterans, though mostly around retirement age today, are still in high demand, while less qualified younger workers have difficulty finding mid-level employment in the sector.

The FLASH services officer pointed to a lack of specialization in engineers graduating from the university. “They are too scattered, with generic profiles that don’t respond to the specific roles required by the petroleum sector market.” But for one informant from a drilling firm, the university provides technically sufficient engineers, though they lack managerial competencies, like how to manage teams, logistics, etc. They have no on-the-job experience in the real world, which unfortunately means that smart people start at low levels simply because they lack practical experience and training. He cited several essential but often lacking criteria for new recruits: capacity for planning, team management, resource management, time management, vision and initiative, business culture and philosophy, and basic IT skills. A training employee affirmed that computer skills are essential for those in HSE domain.

A human resources employee agreed that management skills are rare in the local market, and a major plus, as are communication skills. He noted that basic understanding of how to use Microsoft Office effectively is important, and that even something as simple as having a driver’s license can be a plus in the local market, where any employee may be asked to drive long distances, and competition for those jobs is tight.

COMMUNICATION GAPS

Communication gaps are apparent, based on the presence of persistent long-term unemployment among youth on the one hand, and employer complaints that they cannot find properly qualified young workers on the other. However, the reasons are not immediately clear, and further study is needed in conjunction with local partners and Souktel.

One particular facet of the hiring process in Ouargla is the strict obligation for all businesses to hire exclusively through the Agence Nationale de l'Emploi (ANEM) by submitting a recruitment dossier and reviewing local candidates proposed by ANEM. (In most *wilayas*, ANEM offers partial benefit and salary coverage as a fiscal incentive for businesses to use its services in recruiting early career job seekers, but permits companies to recruit via other channels and simply register the recruitment with ANEM. In the southern *wilayas*, however, due to the particular sensitivity of employment questions, ANEM is less permissive of these work-around practices.¹) ANEM regulations also limit employers to recruiting within the *wilaya* unless they receive a written exemption, which are hard to obtain and ostensibly issued only in cases when the required capacities are not available in the local labor pool. This requirement presents a serious constraint, according to one respondent: "Recently it has become the primary obstacle in our recruitments. We are obliged to recruit locally, but there aren't enough good, qualified people here." As an example, he described difficulties in recruiting qualified mid-level recruits (i.e. roustabouts) for drilling teams.

Another notes that Sonatrach, a major employer in the *wilaya*, conducts its recruitments primarily via the regional ANEM office, but participates in periodic national recruiting campaigns. In such cases, the local Sonatrach direction communicates a list of unfilled posts to the national office in Algiers, which coordinates bulk hiring. He blames some unemployed job seekers for a lack of initiative.

ANEM's national and regional offices appear to share no information on job openings online. Several unofficial pages (ex. facebook.com/Offres.Hmd, facebook.com/w.ANEM30) post announcements of ANEM openings on Facebook. Online job boards—primarily OuedKniss, followed by Emploitic, Emploi-Partner and others—include Ouargla job listings. Most listings are for skilled technical or clerical positions (including engineers, architects, accountants, administrative workers, sales clerks, doctors), though openings for qualified laborers (mechanics, electricians, metalworkers, lift operators, etc.) also appear.

OTHER FACTORS

The Ministry of Vocational Training currently maintains 19 local institutions (15 CFPA vocational training and apprenticeship centers, 3 INSFP specialized vocational training institutes, and 1 vocational training institute). These have a reported capacity of some 8,000 trainees in trainings ranging from 3 to 36 months, in the subjects of:²

- agriculture,
- traditional artisanry,

¹ "L'ANEM réduit le délai à 5 jours", *l'Eco-News*, 28 Jan 2014.

² ANDI 2013 and Ministry of Vocational Training "Guide Février 2016" for Ouargla.

- wood furnishings,
- building and public works,
- metallic construction,
- metalwork and soldering,
- leatherwork,
- electricity and electro-mechanics,
- tailoring and sewing,
- hotel and restaurant services,
- information technology,
- hydrocarbon industries,
- water and environment,
- mechanics,
- clerical services, and
- miscellaneous trades.

One interviewee asserted that there is a lack of qualified trainers at many public vocational training centers, limiting their capacity.

Over 25,000 students are enrolled at Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla, which offers a range of humanities and engineering diplomas (with a strong focus on STEM fields) at the bachelor's, master's, and doctorate levels.¹ Some companies have signed conventions to take on interns from the university, but many reportedly hesitate to do so in the absence of an oversight and training system that would make the internships mutually beneficial.

An interviewee notes that the company primarily recruits fresh graduates who have completed the required theoretical training, and then provides them with practical training through an extensive in-house professional initiation program (including technical immersion and training in communications, personal development, and technical fields). In addition to Sonatrach, he said Halliburton and other large private firms have such programs. But few other employers in Ouargla appear to offer on-the-job training. An employee from a drilling company said "We offer a few internal trainings based on the needs of particular projects, not systematically and not upon recruitment. Training is costly, because it requires that we pay a professor and it also takes people away from their work. We are only 200-250 employees so it is hard to afford this." He continued, "Private local enterprises like ours can't permit themselves the luxury of losing time and money to train new recruits." He also mentioned difficulty in developing internal training plans, since the personnel qualified enough to develop them have so many day-to-day responsibilities already. Another interviewee raised another challenge: "I don't like to train personnel for my competitors. Some people leave us as soon as they are prepared to work, because they can make \$50 more somewhere else. The salary is all I have to keep my team in place. So we don't offer training to workers."

¹ ["L'université en chiffres", University of Ouargla.](#)

A respondent from construction highlighted another element of labor force instability in the region: the way in which displacement by the oil industry (which typically offers much higher salaries than other sectors in the region) makes it difficult to maintain qualified labor. “Stability is an issue. We lose good people all the time to the army, or they go do an oil project in Hassi Messaoud for 12-18 months, maybe building something for an oil firm. Maybe there’s no long-term future in it, but the money is good in the short term so they leave.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Health and safety is a skill set in high demand in today’s market, offering lucrative opportunities with some of the leading employers in the region—many of them foreign companies working in the hydrocarbons sector. Jobs in this field often provide high salaries and good job security. As the Ouargla region’s economy diversifies in the coming years, youth trained to succeed in health and safety will find their skills readily applicable in other fields as well. For example, the safe practices and emergency response techniques used in the oil sector can be easily transferred to industry or agriculture, English skills and familiarity working with foreigners can translate well to tourism, and managerial and interpersonal skills are valued across the service sector.

1. *Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers* in line with suggestions of local business leaders, including themes like career planning, leadership, professional communications, writing, personal development, networking, professional culture, et al. Base on existing World Learning Algeria “Job Access” curriculum, with modifications.
2. *Offer technical training for young job seekers in HSE field*, given Laroui ESS school’s readiness and experience, and pertinence and applicability of this field in the local economy. Consider two-track approach, as suggested by Laroui, to allow students to get amount of training that is appropriate for their capacities and career ambitions:
 - a. Basic curriculum: Rig Pass, Level 1 Health & Safety, Level 1 First Aid
 - b. Advanced curriculum: Level 2 Health & Safety, Level 2 First Aid, international certification courses.
3. *Offer add-on trainings in key subjects* that can help project graduates meet all needs of employers. These include:
 - a. English languages: Many of Laroui’s HSE training materials are already in English, which will help with technical vocabulary. Also examine feasibility of offering specific “English for Business” or “Technical English” classes.
 - b. Computer skills: Basic computer use, Internet search, Email, Microsoft Office suite, web design, SAP, Oracle, Cisco. Examine feasibility of partnering with Microsoft, Adobe, or other providers to offer trainings, software.
 - c. HSE add-ons: Driver’s license, first aid, others.

4. *Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.* Work with Laroui to decide how career counseling, technical training, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account students' availability. Explore how to "package" the Laroui-World Learning partnership through a single certificate or series of certificates, and how to brand it to attract new students and build name recognition and reputation within the local business community. Laroui's initial proposals to several business owners to train "the ideal rig worker"—with technical skills, HSE certification, English, IT, communications, and interpersonal skills—is an attractive possibility worth exploring and refining further.
5. *Build private business network.* The Chamber of commerce president expressed a clear desire to contribute to the project's success and introduce graduates into local companies. Capitalize on this interest to reinforce the project's access to local business network and expand internship and employment opportunities for graduates. Some companies (e.g. Tassili) already accept interns, but more need to be identified in order to accommodate a full intern and job placement system.
6. *Determine business model.* Budget development exercise will provide an opportunity for Laroui ESS and World Learning to determine the business model for the project's first year, and sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Consider initially making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students' commitment.
7. *Insist on personnel reinforcement.* Laroui's small staff limits the school's capacity, which will need to expand considerably in order to handle the new budget, courses, and auxiliary services to be offered in the new career center. Presence of an accountant and project coordinator would greatly help with project management.
8. *Do not rule out public sector.* ANEM plays a particularly important role in the local labor market, and outreach to them can likely smooth out project implementation and avoid difficulties down the road. Cooperation with vocational training centers in the region may also provide help avoid perceived conflicts and could even provide a source of students for the project (or at least career fair participants) if CFPAs are willing to share contact lists.



SETIF OVERVIEW

The *wilaya* of Setif, centered around the city of the same name, is a key economic pole in the eastern high plateau region. Traversed by the country's main transport arteries (such as the East-West Highway and a principal east-west railroad), Setif is also situated in close proximity to the eastern capital of Constantine, Algeria's second largest port at Bejaia, and other important regional economic centers. While agriculture still employs more people than any single other sector in Setif, commerce and industry are growing rapidly and are widely considered the engines of the region's future growth.

Major government investment in industrial development has led to strong build-up, yet other inputs have lagged behind. As one prominent local business owner told World Learning staff, "We have constructed the factories, but the workers are falling short. It's human resources that are lacking." Discussions with business leaders across a wide variety of sectors, including public and private firms and small and large enterprises, highlight a range of both quantity and quality gaps that hinder recruitment, as well as practical challenges that may keep some job seekers from connecting with openings that match their skill sets. Training in soft skills can suffice to help many technically proficient university and vocational training graduates leverage their talents, while vocational training in several key areas—including sales and commerce, industrial maintenance and security, and others—can give another group the skills needed to succeed in the local job market.

World Learning's selected local partner school, Management Business International Institute - Setif (MBI-Setif)¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in Setif from February 16 to 19, 2016 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the "Analysis Framework" document. Staff conducted in-person interviews with the following organizations:

- MBI-Setif
- Safcer, ceramics company
- Setif Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI);
- Setif regional delegate of Forum des Chefs d'Entreprises (FCE)

¹ MBI Setif: <http://mbisetif.dz>

On February 17, World Learning and MBI organized a roundtable discussion with the following local businesses and agencies to allow for collection of a wider range of perspectives in a shorter timeframe:

- SAF CER
- PharmaInvest Production
- MBI-M'sila
- Innov3D
- SET Setif
- SC AEK
- ENIVAR
- MaproGaz
- National Public Works and Building Establishment (ETPBH)
- Belpagie East/South
- ML Galvano
- ENPC-CALPLAST
- EBACOM
- EPE-ENPEC
- CEERINOR
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI)
- ANEM Setif
- ANEM Algiers

Over six weeks, World Learning and MBI also published an online survey and collected responses from youth around Algeria to gauge their educational background, professional skill sets, career aspirations, and training needs, among other themes. Among over 700 responses nationwide, 174 came from the Setif region.

Findings from desk research, discussions, and surveys comprise the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Setif is the central economic hub of Algeria's eastern high plateaus, and a historical crossroads between important neighboring regions. In addition to Algeria's main east-west rail line, Setif is also linked to other economic centers by the East-West Highway, the recent addition of which only increases Setif's important potential as a commercial and manufacturing hub. In economic terms, Setif is an exceptionally dynamic region, boasting more registered companies than all but two other *wilayas* (the much larger Algiers and Oran) as of 2012.¹ Commerce—largely for domestic consumption but also for export—and industrial manufacturing drive the region's growth today, particularly in urban poles of Setif city and El Eulma. Still

¹ ["Plus de 900.000 entreprises en Algérie", L'Eco News, 02 Aug 2012.](#)

an important agricultural region, Setif also has the country's second greatest number of companies registered in rural areas (after Tizi Ouzou).¹

The National Statistics Office, regional government, and specialized agencies at the national and regional levels offer no publicly available employment data specific to the *wilaya*, making it difficult to assess its particular characteristics in comparison to national averages. However, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the youth unemployment rate in the Setif region is likely not as high as the national average (reported at 29.9% for 16-24 year olds as of September 2015, including 26.7% for men and 45.3% for women).² As one business owner told World Learning staff, "We don't have unemployment here in Setif like they have in other regions, at least not in the city. Young people who want to work can find a job." This and other anecdotal evidence does suggest that outlying areas likely have greater youth unemployment challenges.

The most recent available statistics from the National Investment Development Agency (ANDI) provide the following sectoral breakdown for the Setif region's active workforce, as of 2013:³

- Agriculture 34.8%
- Commerce 26.5%
- Administration 14.8%
- Industry 11.4%
- Services 7.4%
- Building and Public Works 5.1%

Particular findings for each of these sectors are as follows:

Agriculture: The fertile, temperate Setif region has long served as an important agricultural basin for larger urban centers like Algiers, Bejaia, and Constantine. While ANDI classifies 84% of the *wilaya's* land as "mountainous", much of it is cultivable. (The same source notes that, of Setif's 6,550 km² total territory, as of 2013 some 3,610 km², or over half, was used for agricultural purposes.⁴) Cereals, primarily wheat, and animal fodder are key products. Olives and figs are grown in the more mountainous highlands. Cow and sheep herding are also significant, and Setif has been one of the leading *wilayas* in milk production in recent years, though the sector has reportedly suffered from underdevelopment.⁵

Efforts to develop the sector are ongoing, however, including via the Integrated Agribusiness Cluster (*Pôle Agroalimentaire Intégré*, PAI), an initiative launched with World Bank support in 2013 to professionalize the region's dairy industry and agriculture sector more broadly.⁶ Most agricultural activity in Setif, as

¹ Ibid.

² ["Le taux de chômage en Algérie repart à la hausse", Le Journal de l'Emploi, 11 January 2016.](#)

³ "Monographie: *wilaya* de Setif", ANDI, 2013.

⁴ "Monographie: *wilaya* de Setif", ANDI, 2013.

⁵ ["La wilaya de Setif premier producteur de lait frais en Algérie", L'Eco News, 04 March 2013.](#)

⁶ ["Setif à l'heure du système Coopératif Agricole", El Moudjahid, 09 Dec 2013](#) and ["Journée d'étude sur le cluster agroalimentaire de Setif", Dr. Abdel-Madjid Dienane, 06 Apr 2015.](#)

elsewhere in Algeria, has long been organized around small-scale artisanal farming, usually on family-owned farms, though the regional COOPSEL cooperative has provided a degree of organization (and could be a potential partner, along with the PAI, in preparing young people for the agricultural sector)¹. A new venture on the immediate horizon will develop pilot agribusiness operations via a sustainable “integrated farming” model, with investment from Emirati firm Elite Agro. The transition to agribusiness will allow the agricultural sector to continue to hold an important place in the region’s economy, making it important to consider in predicting future labor market demands.

Commerce: Setif offers important employment prospects in the commercial sector, as an important hub for the transit of primary goods from the immediate area and the country’s vast interior toward the northern population centers and seaports, and between those poles themselves. A longtime crossroads, Setif is now even better connected since the completion, in 2015, of the East-West Highway linking it directly to Algiers, Annaba, Bordj Bou Arreridj Constantine, and Oran. Bordj Bou Arreridj, like Setif itself, is a major source of manufactured consumer goods and industrial products. The Setif *wilaya* is also home to El Eulma, a pole reputed nationwide as a key commercial hub (particularly for the informal sector). Setif boasts an international airport (currently closed for renovations). Bejaia, Algeria’s second busiest port by volume², is only 100km from Setif. Perhaps more significantly, the major expansion (launched in March 2016) of the “dry port” at Tixter, in neighboring Bordj Bou Arreridj but just 30km from Setif city, will considerably increase access to the Bejaia seaport, and with it, international markets.³

Besides being a merchandise production and transit hub, Setif is also developing into an important point of sale. The February 2016 opening of the Park Mall in downtown Setif city has raised the regional capital’s already growing profile as a shopping destination (the mall alone has reportedly been welcoming 40,000 shoppers per day in its opening weeks).⁴ The mall alone will bring an estimated 2,000 new jobs to the city as all 90 shops and a Marriott Hotel become operational this year.⁵

Administration: While young people benefiting from the YEP project will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector will not be a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in Setif—and across Algeria—but is heavily oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand in the future.

Industry: Thanks in part to significant facilitation by the government, Setif is today a burgeoning industrial center, boasting 25 designated “zones d’activité” and three larger “zones industrielles”.⁶ An industrial park being prepared since 2013 at Ouled Saber, 10 kilometers east of Setif city, will soon nearly double

¹ [“La COOPSEL de Setif, une coopérative agricole pas comme les autres”, Setif.info, 4 Mar 2013.](#)

² [“Port of Bejaia”, World Port Source.](#)

³ [“La superficie du port sec de Tixter sera portée à 55 hectares”, Maghreb Emergent, 9 Mar 2016.](#)

⁴ [“Au Park Mall, entre acheteurs séduits et de très nombreux flâneurs”, Maghreb Emergent, 25 Feb 2016.](#)

⁵ [“Inauguration du Park Mall de Setif”, Maghreb Emergent, 4 Feb 2016.](#)

⁶ [“Les zones d’activités et industrielles”, ANIREF.](#)

the *wilaya*'s designated industrial real estate.¹ Official estimates suggest, ambitiously, that the park will generate 24,000 new jobs.²

Ample natural resources in the *wilaya* have facilitated the industrial sector's growth. Setif is home to clay and lime deposits (used in cements and other construction compounds), mining of iron, zinc, and lead, and processing of raw products, such as for paper and gravel production.³ Leading sectors of industrial production include plastics, consumer electronics, foodstuffs, and petrochemicals. As of 2013, Setif boasted 2,000 companies in the plastics fields, and the region rivals Blida for the title of Algeria's plastics champion.⁴ Amid growing modernization, traditional production methods persist; in February 2016 the Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts said that 30,000 workers are active in artisanal production in Setif.

Services: A small but well-established service sector supports Setif's important commercial and industrial sectors. As the regional economy modernizes and expands, the service sector's greatest growth area may be tourism. UNESCO World Heritage site Djemila and several hot springs have long brought in a steady, though underexploited, trickle of domestic and foreign tourists, but business tourism will be an even more important driver of growth as visiting professionals raise demand for hotel beds and auxiliary services. As of February 2016, the tourism ministry reports 66 hotel projects currently under development in the *wilaya*, which will bring the region's capacity to over 10,000 beds⁵—and likely increase employment prospects in the sector proportionally.

Building and Public Works: Mineral resource deposits make Setif an important producer of construction materials for other regions, though Setif's local building sector has expanded at pace with other economic sectors, supporting the developing commercial and industrial sectors particularly. Each December, Setif hosts SETIFBAT, an important construction sector expo for the wider eastern-central plains region.

QUANTITY GAPS

Quantity gaps have naturally emerged in Setif's dynamic, growing economy. Business leaders and recruiters cited a number of positions for which they have recently faced challenges in recruiting. Sales was the field that recurred most frequently, particularly the need for qualified salespersons with a technical background ("*technicaux commerciaux*") that would allow them to speak credibly when selling specialized industrial or agricultural equipment. An interviewee from the pharmaceutical industry told World Learning: "We need business developers as a complementary to the technical salespeople. Today it's easier to produce than to sell. We as company leaders often find ourselves as the ones standing at the expositions trying to sell our product, though this is a job that could be done by a specialist who has

¹ "[Parc industriel de Ouled Saber](#)", ANIREF.

² "[Une méga zone industrielle de 700 ha](#)", El Moudjahid, 14 Mar 2013.

³ "[Activités économiques](#)", Setif.com. / "[Monographie économique de la région de Setif](#)", Direction Régionale du Commerce, 02 Sep 2013.

⁴ "[Appel au soutien de l'industrie de transformation du plastique](#)", L'Eco News, 23 Feb 2013.

⁵ "[66 projets hôteliers à Setif porteront l'offre à 10.000 lits](#)", L'Eco News, 05 Feb 2016.

training in this domain, has multiple languages, etc.” His firm, he said, would be willing to guarantee unemployment for up to five new specialists with these skills per year.

Also in the industrial field, business representatives reported particular difficulties in recruiting maintenance engineers and maintenance workers, polymer engineers for the plastics industry, and industrial security specialists. Specific posts across sectors including secretaries, graphic designers, communications officers, and managers were also mentioned. In addition to these areas, FCE representatives cited workforce gaps in various other fields including construction trades, agribusiness, and food processing. The problem is acute, attested an employee from the business sector, “We have businesses so frustrated by the lack of qualified personnel that they are considering changing domains.” He expressed the company’s interest in supporting training of personnel in high-demand fields, citing the recent opening of a plastics school in Blida in partnership with a regional business association: “Setif is the center of plastics in Algeria. Why not do something similar here?”

No business leaders mentioned excess supply of workers in particular fields, though the region’s ongoing transition from reliance on artisanal farming to less labor-intensive agribusiness models could leave the agricultural job market oversaturated in the coming years, particularly for low-skilled workers.

QUALITY GAPS

“We don’t have an unemployment problem so much as we have a problem of ill-adapted training,” a representative told World Learning. He and other business leaders decried the shortcomings of the existing education and training systems in giving young people in Setif the technical skills to contribute to the region’s economy. “There is a lack of technical know-how,” said one business leader. “The university is a machine slow to react to the needs of the private sector,” said another. And another, “We are suffering from the workforce. Even if workers are available, they’re not efficient.” The result, one company representative said, is fewer recruitment opportunities for young job seekers: “We prefer to hire experienced profiles directly, rather than the freshly graduated youth.” One recruiter said that her company even prefers to hire foreign workers over local ones who, again, “are not efficient.”

But alongside their critiques, business representatives in the region pointed to quality gaps with clear solutions, particularly in the areas of soft skills. One plastics company president called for more French language training, which he said was no longer prioritized in the education system, leaving students unable to communicate in either the Algerian business environment or with foreign clients. According to a human resources manager from a construction materials firm, “The young generation is not conscious” of how to conduct themselves professionally, and lacks the proper “clothing and personal presentation.” Another said, “Youth present themselves at job interviews without any preparation and without even proper attire.” A company representative agreed, saying, “We need people who know how to behave in a professional environment.” He added that today’s job-seekers “are reticent, don’t have enough information on the job market, and are poorly oriented.”

COMMUNICATION GAPS

Employers report using Emploitic, OuedKniss, Cvite, and other online job boards for recruitment, particularly for high-skills positions. An analysis of job boards showed a large number of offers in sales and marketing, followed by management, IT, administration and human resources, among others.

Several employers admit to being the source of communication gaps that complicate recruitment processes. The representative of one public sector firm said, “When someone retires, we try to replace them but sometimes we have difficulties in defining and expressing our needs, as well as in planning our recruitments.”

OTHER FACTORS

Over 50,000 students are enrolled at Ferhat Abbas University’s two campuses in Setif, which offer a range of humanities and scientific diplomas at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate levels.¹ UFAS 1 has a wider range of offerings in business, medicine, natural and applied sciences, architecture and engineering, and other STEM fields, while UFAS 2 is more specialized in law, languages, humanities, and social sciences.

The Ministry of Vocational Training currently maintains 30 local institutions (26 CFPA vocational training and apprenticeship centers, 3 INSFP specialized vocational training institutes, and 1 vocational training institute). These have a reported capacity of over 11,000 trainees (including over 1,400 residential trainees) in trainings ranging from 3 to 36 months, in subjects including:²

- Hairstyling,
- Accounting,
- Sewing,
- Cooking,
- Building electrician,
- Industrial electrician,
- Plumbing,
- Masonry,
- Sales clerk,
- Machine maintenance,
- Carpentry,
- Secretarial duties,
- Painting,
- and various other trades.

One human resources manager who spoke with World Learning indicated that “Vocational training center graduates here are better trained than the university graduates.” She ascribed this to the practical nature

¹ www.univ-setif.dz and www.univ-setif2.dz.

² ANDI 2013 and [Ministry of Vocational Training “Guide Février 2016” for Setif](#).

of the training, and the fact that the French *baccalauréat* test steers people into fields of study at university that do not fundamentally interest them, while vocational training offers young people greater freedom to choose their trade. A regional company employee urged the use of “psycho-pedagogical interviews or tests” to help orient students toward training fields adapted to their particular skills and dispositions.

Simple practical considerations also block young people from accessing job opportunities. “Young people in the capital of the *wilaya* can all find work easily,” he said, “But those who live outside have the greatest difficulty—these youth are poor.” Employment prospects in such zones, he noted, are limited as compared to Setif city and other urban zones, and are focused almost exclusively in the agricultural sector.

Several company representatives mentioned the lack of “*alternance*”-style internships (where time in the classroom is alternated with time on the work site) as a major weakness of the university system. “The student’s integration into the world of work should start from the very first year of university through *alternance*,” said one interviewee. He notes that the Chamber has just concluded an agreement with UFAS that will facilitate more practical immersion for students, but says more must be done. Business owners expressed an interest in setting up internship programs with career center participants to allow them to gain experience—and perhaps even be paid through a pre-employment contract—while they complete their theoretical training. After their training, business leaders suggest that youth also need more accompaniment and guidance as they integrate into the workforce full-time.

One respondent described her agency’s efforts to match job-seekers to openings as extremely successful, but did not provide any data on placement rates. She cited the 2008 “Professional integration assistance mechanism” as a successful tool that allows ANEM to place young job seekers and support some initial costs of their recruitment, though such early-employment mechanisms have been criticized by many young workers across Algeria, who say they encourage employers to take them on for an initial two-to-four year period and then drop them once subsidies end.

Employers expressed a clear preference for hiring trained workers rather than providing on-the-job training—not surprising in a region dominated by small-and-medium enterprises. One business owner in the public works sector said that many firms go through the motions of providing training to employees in order to get tax breaks, but that they do not invest seriously in providing high-quality training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Setif region’s dynamic and growing economy offers greater employment prospects for local youth than many regions of Algeria. Well trained and motivated young people can contribute in the expanding industrial and commercial sectors, or in the large agricultural sector as it transitions toward modern agribusiness. In a region driven by private-sector activity, the large number of small-and-medium enterprises eager to find talented recruits augurs well for skilled young job seekers.

1. *Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers* in line with suggestions of local business leaders, including themes like professional presentation and workplace culture, career planning, leadership, professional communications, writing, personal development, networking, etc. Base on existing World Learning Algeria “Job Access” curriculum developed under PEACE project, with modifications.
2. *Offer technical training for young job seekers in sales and commerce, industrial maintenance and security, IT, and other fields* based on needs expressed by businesses. MBI has agreed to pursue further discussions with local businesses to hone the list of technical trainings to be offered under the project.
3. *Offer add-on trainings in key subjects* that can help project graduates meet all needs of employers. These include:
 - a. English and French languages: In particular, examine feasibility of offering specific “English for Business” or “Technical French” classes.
 - b. Computer skills: Basic computer use, Internet search, Email, Microsoft Office suite, web design, SAP, Oracle, Cisco. Examine feasibility of partnering with Microsoft or other providers to offer trainings, software.
4. *Offer career counseling* through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech’s Tamheed¹ platform or similar) in order to provide clear guidance to young people that can help them plan their careers and identify their corresponding training needs.
5. *Provide “alternance” internships for trainees.* Many local businesses in Setif are eager to recruit workers with practical work experience and willing to help young trainees gain that experience through internships. The “*alternance*” model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout the week, is an ideal way for youth to link their classroom and workplace knowledge. It was suggested specifically by MBI and several business owners, indicating that it is a known and accepted format in the Setif region that can be adopted through simple agreements between MBI and local companies. Agreements can provide for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement.
6. *Cover logistical costs to increase and diversity participation.* As FCE and CACI head Seklouli noted, “Transport stipends are essential, or else students only students from the immediate area around the school will come.” MBI should consider stipends for ground transport and potentially meals to allow students from outside Setif city to attend. Doing so can diversify the participant pool, helping to ensure that MBI is expanding the pool of talented young workers rather than just refining the existing urban talent pool.

¹ Tamheed is an online psychometric assessment test designed by Qatar-based Silatech to provide youth with access to quality career advising services and resources. In Algeria, the test is available in Arabic, French, and English via the Djazair Ta3mal portal: djazair.ta3mal.com.

7. *Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.* Work with MBI team to decide how counseling, training, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account students' availability. Explore how to "package" the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand it to attract new students and build name recognition within the regional business community.
8. *Consolidate private business network.* Business leaders with whom World Learning and MBI staff met expressed strong desire to contribute to the project's success and recruit competent graduates into local companies. Capitalize on this interest by consolidating the advisory committee and structuring internship and job placement systems.
9. *Define long-term business model.* Beyond the initial budget development exercise, the sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Consider initially making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students' commitment, recognizing that MBI already offers subsidized or free courses to qualifying students from underprivileged backgrounds. MBI could also tap private companies to subsidize training costs in the future.



TIZI OUZOU OVERVIEW

At the heart of Algeria’s mountainous northern region of Kabylie—famed for its proud Berber population—sits the *wilaya* of Tizi Ouzou. The region is well known as an exporter of qualified employees across Algeria, particularly in the service and hospitality sectors. But even as it sends workers throughout the country, back home Tizi Ouzou has experienced disruptions amid rapid urban growth and an economy transitioning away from rural subsistence farming to more diversified activities. This transition, unfortunately, has not resolved the region’s severe unemployment challenges, which touch youth most acutely.

Discussions with business leaders across a wide variety of sectors, including public and private firms and small and large enterprises, highlight a range of both quantity and quality gaps that hamper recruitment, as well as opportunities in the job market that can help job-seekers to connect with openings that match their skillsets. Training in soft skills can suffice to help some technically proficient university and vocational training graduates leverage their talents, while vocational training in several key areas—including construction and sales, with other additions possible—can give another group the skills needed to succeed in the local job market. Complementary services are also listed in the recommendations.

World Learning’s selected local partner school, the Superior Institute for Training and Communication (INSC)¹, appears well placed to help World Learning train young job seekers in line with the needs of local employers.

PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to desk review of available publications, press sources, and online job boards, World Learning project staff conducted the on-site elements of the labor market assessment in Tizi Ouzou from October 4 to 5, 2017 in accordance with the methodology outlined in the “Analysis Framework” document.

Staff conducted in-person interviews with the following organizations and businesses:

- INSC;
- National Sanitation Office (ONA);
- Glass Numide, glass producer;
- Alioua Groupe, boiler importer and reseller;

¹ INSC : www.insc-algerie.com

- Forum des Chefs d'Entreprises (FCE), Tizi Ouzou regional chapter;
- *Wilaya* of Tizi Ouzou;
- ETRHB Haddad, public works, construction and transport conglomerate;
- ABC Med, pharma producer

On October 5, World Learning and INSC organized a roundtable discussion with the following local businesses and agencies to allow for collection of a wider range of perspectives in a shorter timeframe:

- ANSEJ, public youth loan agency;
- ORAC Taboukert, public poultry factor;
- ANEM, national employment agency;
- Brin d'Eveil nursery school;
- SIAD, auto parts importer

In the days following the on-site meetings with World Learning, INSC staff held additional meetings to collect further insights from employers in the food processing, construction materials, and industrial sectors, as well as the General Union of Trader and Artisans and regional employment office ("*direction de l'emploi*").

Findings from desk research and discussions comprise the basis of the analysis below.

ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

The *wilaya* of Tizi Ouzou, centered around the regional capital city of the same name, is one of the key poles in Kabylie, a singular region along the Mediterranean coast just east of Algiers. Most residents of the region claim Berber ancestry, and Berber is spoken widely both in the home and in public (in marked contrast to most other regions of Algeria, where Arab identity and Arabic language are more dominant, especially in public space). Tizi Ouzou, like greater Kabylie, is extremely mountainous and its population historically scattered in small, isolated communities, hindering political and economic consolidation. In the colonial era, decades of neglect by French authorities—marked periodically by catastrophic famines—left Kabylie severely underdeveloped. Today, many residents claim that the Algerian state has continued this tradition of neglect, alleging ethnic prejudice.

In the 55 years since independence, infrastructure improvements have allowed many Tizi Ouzou residents to transition away from rural mountain livelihoods founded in subsistence agriculture and come together in larger urban areas based on a growing service economy. The urbanization has caused Tizi Ouzou city to grow rapidly; entire new neighborhoods have sprouted up in recent years, and construction sites remain ubiquitous. But opportunities in urban centers have not kept pace with the rural exodus and the hopes that have propelled it, nor with the population growth of established city dwellers. The last available statistics on unemployment for the *wilaya* of Tizi Ouzou, dating to 2008, reveal a jobless rate of 18.3%,

substantially higher than the official national level of 11.3% at the same time.¹ Alternate figures from a separate agency set the region's unemployment rate even higher—at 25.4%, with just a 36% labor force participation rate—for the same year.² Although more recent statistics could not be found, local employers estimated that today the rate remains much higher than the national one (which stood at 12.3% overall and 29.7% for 16-to-24-year-olds as of April 2017, according to the National Statistics Office³). Even an official from national employment agency ANEM, charged with linking job-seekers to opportunities, admitted to World Learning during the on-site assessment meetings that “We’re in a little bit of a crisis” in the region.

Propelled by economic necessity, many Tizi Ouzou natives seek their fortunes elsewhere; they can be found working throughout Algeria, including in the capital, where many resettle, while many others make the lengthy daily commute. Many of those who stay in Tizi Ouzou start their own business, as indicated by the high ownership rates; with just 2.9% of Algeria's population (1.17 million of 39.9 million, as of 2015)⁴, Tizi Ouzou accounts for 4.4% of businesses registered nationwide (nearly 84,000 of 1.91 million)⁵. As of 2012, no *wilaya* had more business registered in rural areas than Tizi Ouzou.⁶

The most recent available statistics, from the National Investment Development Agency (ANDI), provide the following sectoral breakdown for the Tizi Ouzou region's active workforce, as of 2013:⁷

- Commerce, Transport, Services 36.8%
- Administration 35.6%
- Industry 11.9%
- Building and Public Works 10.4%
- Agriculture 5.2%

Although these statistics are regrettably outdated, anecdotal evidence and direct observation would suggest that they likely still present an accurate approximation of the relative importance of each sector in the region's labor market. Particular findings for each of these sectors are as follows:

Commerce, Transport, and Services: Commerce benefits from Tizi Ouzou's proximity to large commercial centers like Algiers and Setif, yet those sites also constrain Tizi Ouzou's commercial potential by easily outcompeting it—local clients can simply drive an hour away and find wider selection and more competitive prices. Infrastructure is also a serious limitation; Tizi Ouzou has seen little of the highway upgrades in which the government has invested elsewhere in the past decade. It also has just two tiny

¹ [“Monographie de wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANDI, 19](#) and [“Activité, Emploi et Chômage”, ONS, 2013](#).

² [“Rubrique Monographie Wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANIREF, 2013](#).

³ [“Unemployment rate rose to over 12% in April 2017”, Algeria Press Service, 12 August 2017](#).

⁴ [“Population”, Wilaya of Tizi Ouzou, consulted October 2017](#).

⁵ [“CNRC: Over 100,000 Commercial Registries Cancelled for Fraud”, Algérie Focus, 8 May 2017](#) and [“Commercial Registry Activity”, Wilaya of Tizi Ouzou, consulted October 2017](#).

⁶ [“Plus de 900.000 entreprises en Algérie”, L'Eco News, 02 August 2012](#).

⁷ [“Monographie de wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANDI, 20](#).

ports at Azzefoun and Tizirt, which are primarily used for fishing, limiting the region's potential as a transport hub. A new passenger train line did open earlier this year, linking the downtowns of Tizi Ouzou and Algiers in just 45 minutes—a major boon for commuters.

The services sub-sector is far more developed. Major national pharmaceutical companies, appliance makers, business services firms, public works companies, and others—many located in the vicinity of Algiers—recruit administrative and sales personnel in Tizi Ouzou. The region is also famous for exporting hospitality workers, who staff hotels across Algeria, bringing significant income back to Tizi Ouzou. Tourism is less developed in the *wilaya* itself; though the government has zoned four “touristic expansion zones” for property development, hotel capacity remains modest and tourists essentially limited to summertime domestic visitors.

Administration: While young people benefiting from the YEP project will certainly be able to apply their skills in the public administration, preparing young people to enter this sector will not be a specific priority of the project. The public administration is an important employer in Tizi Ouzou—and across Algeria—but is heavily oversaturated with demand and far more likely to contract than to expand in the future. A national hiring freeze across much of the public sector was set in late 2014, and austerity measures have continued since. The freeze has hit Tizi Ouzou hard, as the public sector has failed to absorb new entrants, leaving them to compete in a job market that is already heavily oversaturated. “Recruitment has stagnated because of the public budget situation,” Fairouz Amirouche, human resources officer at the National Sanitation Office's Tizi Ouzou branch, told World Learning staff. She noted that public agencies like hers have been barred from hiring new recruits to replace retirees, whose departures have accelerated following passage of a more generous retirement law in 2017.

Industry: Though more modest than its larger neighbors', Tizi Ouzou's industrial sector includes several national-level players and many small producers. International producers are few, and only a handful of state-run industries have production facilities in the region. Tizi Ouzou hosts industrial zones at Oued Aissi and Freha along with 17 smaller industrial “activity zones”, offering a total of 1,600 industrial lots, according to the National Agency for Intermediation and Property Regulation (ANIREF), which oversees designation of special industrial zones.¹ The *wilaya*'s largest producers include state-run appliance manufacturer ENIEM with over 2,000 employees; Draa-Ben-Khedda cotton fabric producer; SPA Electro-Industriel, which manufactures motors, alternators, transformers, and other electrical equipment; and furniture producer Taboukert.² Food processing, construction materials, chemical processing, and pharmaceutical production are also important segments of Tizi Ouzou's industrial sector.

Building and Public Works: This mountainous region offers abundant building materials, including limestone, sandstone, clay, marble, and wood. It has shared in the recent construction boom that has swept Algeria, particularly regarding residential development projects. New suburbs, ex-urbs, and satellite cities have sprung up around Tizi Ouzou city and construction is continuing intensively. Smaller towns have also seen significant construction. One of the prime constraints hindering the sector's activity seems

¹ [“Rubrique Monographie Wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANIREF, 2013.](#)

² [“Monographie de wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANDI, 27.](#)

to be labor, rather than space or materials or other inputs. As explained in detail below, the sector is suffering an acute shortage of qualified workers, which local officials note has pushed up construction prices significantly.

Agriculture: Given the region's rugged terrain—slightly more than half of the *wilaya* is covered in steep mountains—just 33.4% of Tizi Ouzou's land is rated as usable for agriculture by state investment promoter ANDI.¹ Rainfall is also limited, at just 9 cm (3.5 inches) annually on average.² The steep slopes and rocky soil have long permitted artisanal cultivation, focusing on olive and fruit trees production on small hillside plots, as well as beekeeping and animal husbandry. Farmland in Tizi Ouzou is extensively partitioned, with the average parcel measuring just 1.5 hectares (3.7 acres), and private ownership is extensive (96%³ of farmland). Consequently, state-led schemes like those that have brought rapid changes in other regions' agricultural activity are likely unfeasible in Tizi Ouzou. Due to all these factors, few youth see agriculture as a promising sector, and account for its low share of the region's labor force.

QUANTITY GAPS

With its unique mix of dynamic and stagnant economic sectors, it is perhaps expected that Tizi Ouzou's labor market would suffer from certain quantity gaps, and such is the case—particularly in the form of shortfalls in key sectors. Human resources officers in one public utility in Tizi Ouzou complained of a lack of technical agents and especially hydraulic engineers (“We can’t find them anywhere”). An interviewee of an auto parts importer told World Learning that, due to high turnover, her firm is regularly seeking accountants and sales agents (“We’ve recruited 30 already this year to replace departures”). A pharmaceutical firm recruiter cited sales personnel and stock managers—positions that are often in demand because larger pharmaceutical producers in Algiers, Constantine, or Oran snatch up the best ones in Tizi Ouzou for use in larger markets. Others mentioned health sector workers such as nurses, nurse assistants, health technicians.

In some cases, job-seekers are in fact responding to market signals and shifting from surplus fields to ones with shortages. According to a human resources representative “Agricultural engineers are retraining to work as data entry agents in the IT sector, meaning they are accepting a job well below their education level.”

But when World Learning staff asked a respondent who supports local employment which sector suffers the greatest labor shortfall, he (like many other local actors) immediately answered “construction”—a sector toward which few job-seekers seem willing to redirect their searches. According to an interviewee, “There is no shortage of masons or other construction workers, it’s simply a problem of remuneration. There’s plenty of them available to do the work if they are paid well.” But others suggest that it is not merely a question of compensation. “It’s difficult to place people as masons, laborers, even foremen and

¹ [“Monographie de wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANDI, 22.](#)

² [“Monographie de wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANDI, 14.](#)

³ [“Monographie de wilaya: Tizi Ouzou”, ANDI, 22.](#)

engineers,” affirmed a representative of the local ANEM agency. “These are tough fields, so people don’t like to get trained in them. They avoid them.... There’s a reticence on the part of the youth, even if the market is virgin and the salaries are attractive.” Indeed, employers claim that increased compensation has not helped plug the shortfall. A respondent from the real estate industry told World Learning, “Unemployed youth also don’t seek training in manual labor. But the few with university diplomas who reconvert themselves into masons can earn up to 300,000 DA per month”—or US\$2,600 in a country where the minimum wage is US\$160 monthly.

Increased labor costs and continuing shortages are prompting some real estate developers to look elsewhere; in perhaps the most telling example of the state of Tizi Ouzou’s labor market, the regional vocational training authorities have recruited a Chinese company to build the *wilaya*’s newest vocational training institute, due to be completed in December.¹

QUALITY GAPS

Compared to all regions previously surveyed, employers in Tizi Ouzou offered fewer complaints about the quality of education and vocational training that youth receive, concentrating instead on shortcomings in interpersonal skills, motivation, and workplace culture. “In general, in Tizi Ouzou,” said another human resources employee, “there are lots of qualified young people, but they need help getting into the professional world and business world. In interviews they’re so timid. Maybe they have great skills but they don’t know how to present them.” Consequently, during orientation sessions for new recruits, his agency is obliged to deliver “lengthy, expensive” trainings to them in “behavior and interaction with colleagues, stress management, time management, etc.” On a related note, a respondent from regional business office), suggest, “The job interview is a critical piece—they must be taught this.”

Sanitation officials and representatives also both noted the importance of English skills for dealing with international clients and collaborators and reading English-language equipment manuals. The sanitation office has even paid INSC significant sums in recent years to deliver English courses to staff selected to attend trainings abroad.

Perhaps owing to a higher degree of faith in the education and training systems, many employers noted that they regularly hire fresh graduates without experience. An interviewee in the food sector affirmed to World Learning that her factory welcomes graduates without any professional experience, and an informant from the automobile industry noted that, “Commercial agents are one of our common needs. I can take a new graduate if he has a certain charisma, otherwise I usually need people with experience.” She adds that, “For marketing staff, we find people who have the diploma but haven’t touched anything practical.”

World Learning did hear some now-familiar complaints about the vocational training system. A school representative noted that the vocational training program for teachers lasts 36 months, but throughout

¹ [“La DEFP de Tizi Ouzou vise le placement de tous les stagiaires”, *Le Temps d’Algérie*, 26 September 2017.](#)

that period it remains theoretical: “It doesn’t provide any practical experience... but that’s what we look for.” And the university system was also not exempt from criticism; another respondent noted that candidates for advanced administrative positions “can’t write an email, can’t write a correct sentence in French. Unfortunately, it’s very rare now. They can’t express themselves. They write a whole paragraph because they don’t know how to summarize what they’re asking for.”

COMMUNICATION GAPS

Recruitment in Tizi Ouzou appears to differ from the situation in many other *wilayas*. Although passing all recruitment through ANEM is technically required by law in Tizi Ouzou—as everywhere in Algeria—employers note that this is not strictly enforced in the region, giving them the freedom to use other channels. Many seek out alternative mechanisms that provide them greater autonomy in recruitment and training of their staff, such as internships and apprenticeships. (The relative predominance of the private sector over the public, in contrast to other regions, may contribute to this difference alongside the permissiveness around ANEM recruitment.)

One auto parts reseller, for example, makes extensive use of internships, though it is a challenging process. An HR director brought on over 20 interns this year from the university, she told World Learning, and about 10% “really want to learn, are attentive and trying to learn.” The others, she says, simply seek her signoff on their internship certificate, and put in little effort, even going so far as to copy their internship reports from peers. Apprenticeships, which SIAD began offering this year in partnership with the vocational training directorate, provide better results, she says: “Their instructor comes once a week to check up, to ask where the apprentice was placed and how it’s going, and to fill out the evaluation form.”, SIAD offers apprenticeships for human resource managers, data entry agents, auto mechanics, and many other domains.

These models that demand more attention and investment from both employers and job-seekers before a final commitment is made to recruit can allow talented recruits to rise to the top, benefiting both parties. “When we train someone, we don’t let them go,” said one interviewee.

OTHER FACTORS

Young job-seekers in search of training face multiple options in Tizi Ouzou. The largest, Mouloud Mammeri University, is home to over 50,000 students who study at 9 faculties and over a dozen specialized institutes, all split across multiple campuses in and around Tizi Ouzou city.¹ The university offers a full range of specialties across the humanities and sciences (but is best known in Algeria as the epicenter of the 1980 “Berber Spring”, an ideologically-driven protest against perceived oppression of the Berber people).

¹ [“Historique”, Université Mouloud Mammeri, consulted October 2017.](#)

The Ministry of Vocational Training maintains three specialized vocational training institutes (INSFP) and 28 vocational training centers (CFPA) that offer a variety of trainings in the following categories, in residential and apprenticeship modes:

Vocational training offers by category <i>Multiple specializations are offered within each training category.</i>	Initial qualifying training <i>(3-6 months)</i>	Qualifying training <i>(1-6 months)</i>	Diploma training <i>(6-30 months)</i>
Administration and management	0	0	1537
Building and public works	50	15	1232
Hotel, restaurant, tourism	120	310	810
Services	100	20	962
Tailoring, clothing production	165	261	478
Electric, electronics, energy	0	25	766
Traditional artisanry	20	125	605
Metallic construction	0	0	623
Information technology	95	20	424
Motor and engine maintenance	0	0	375
Agriculture	125	50	132
Leatherwork	0	0	120
Woodworking and furniture making	0	0	114
Audiovisual techniques	0	0	95
Mechanical and steel construction	0	0	46
Chemical industry and transformation	0	0	45
Water and environment	15	0	30
Food processing industries	0	0	32
Graphic arts	0	0	20
Totals	690	826	8,446

Representatives of at least one employer, pharmaceutical producer ABC MED, lamented that the firm is obliged to pay taxes that cover the vocational training directorate's costs, despite not benefitting from its work. This is because many employers in Tizi Ouzou prefer to recruit trainees from other institutions, which are numerous.

Tizi Ouzou is home to the National Institute of Hotellerie and Tourism, a specialized paramedical school, and a small agricultural technology school (ITMA), which together accept a total of 1,700 students. The tourism school is particularly well known, both because of the relative lack of comparable options elsewhere in Algeria, and because it is reputed to train mostly local students from Tizi Ouzou who go on to work in the hotels across Algeria, sometimes generating resentment from locals in other regions.

INSC's Hamzi also notes that there are some 80 private schools registered in the *wilaya* of Tizi Ouzou, though only 20 of them are in active operation. One of these is ETRHB Haddad's internal school for training staff who work on its infrastructure construction, maintenance, and materials production projects.

Since establishing itself here in March 2016, the Forum des Chefs d'Entreprises (FCE) has become the *wilaya*'s most visible business association, and boasts 390 member companies across the *wilaya*, according to FCE officials. In May 2017 the FCE signed an agreement with Mouloud Mammeri University to prepare students for business leadership, explore launching new institutes within the university, and train established business leaders.¹ The more longstanding Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Djurdjura (CCI Djurdjura) offers trainings for member companies' staff in limited administrative fields such as accounting, fiscal compliance, and archiving.²

A final other factor noted through the assessment in Tizi Ouzou is the emphasis—perhaps even more than elsewhere in Algeria, where it is already rampant—on entrepreneurship as a viable option for youth despite a near-total lack of guidance and support. An official from state youth loan operator ANSEJ told World Learning that unemployed youth don't even have enough information to know where to obtain the loan—raising questions about how they might have enough information to then run a successful business. “Youth aren't trained to be heads of businesses,” says INSC's Hamzi, speaking as a small business owner herself. But pushing youth toward entrepreneurship can also have consequences for established businesses. “ANSEJ is a political error,” Ben Chaben of Brin d'Eveil school told World Learning. “It means we can't find personnel because everyone is a boss. There's nobody to work. There's more business heads than salaried employees.” ANEM officials also told World Learning that, with “98%” of the *wilaya*'s businesses being micro-enterprises of 1-2 people, few have space to hire employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers** in line with suggestions of local business leaders, including existing modules on career planning, leadership, professional communications, writing, personal development, networking, et al. Consider developing a third set of “soft skills” modules to cover workplace culture, professional expectations, and other post-recruitment themes that local employers currently mentioned they are covering themselves through internal trainings. These trainings will serve as a core service of the career center, given the diversity of technical skills in demand in the Tizi Ouzou market.
2. **Offer career counseling** through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech's Tamheed³ platform) in order to provide clear guidance to young people in launching their careers. Such

¹ [“Convention entre le FCE et l'université Mouloud Mammeri”, APS, 13 May 2017.](#)

² [“Formations”, CCI Djurdjura, consulted October 2017.](#)

³ Tamheed is an online psychometric assessment test designed by Qatar-based Silatech to provide youth with access to quality career advising services and resources. In Algeria, World Learning collaborates with Silatech to train counselors and offer Arabic, French, and English versions of the test.

orientation can help job seekers better focus their job search and identify corresponding training needs.

3. ***Develop technical training offerings to young job-seekers in construction and sales agent jobs as a first priority.*** These fields were among those mentioned most frequently by employers as being in high demand, with significant workforce shortages. An emphasis on recruitment of seasoned trainers with practical experience is highly recommended. Preparing courses in the former discipline will require an expansion of INSC's existing training offerings; school leaders should see the project as an opportunity to expand into promising new areas of expertise while assuming minimal commercial risk. As second priorities, INSC could consider adding secretarial training, stock management, and hotel management, the latter two of which will also require significant preparation as it is outside the school's current offerings.
4. ***Offer add-on trainings in key subjects*** that can help graduates in all fields meet or exceed employers' expectations. One that is evident based on employers' comments would be English and French language training. In particular, examine the feasibility of offering specific "English for Business" or "Professional French" classes.
5. ***Provide "alternance" internships for trainees.*** Many local businesses in Tizi Ouzou are willing to welcome workers without practical work experience and help them gain that experience through internships. The "alternance" model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout each week, is an ideal way for youth to link their classroom and workplace knowledge. Given private sector employers' flexibility in hiring, apprenticeship, and internship models, they may be interested to try signing a simple agreement with INSC for a preliminary round of interns. Ultimately, agreements can provide for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement.
6. ***Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.*** World Learning and INSC teams should collaborate to determine how counseling, training, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow job seekers in various fields to benefit from the services they need. Timing should take into account job seekers' availability. Explore how to "package" the career center services through one or multiple certificates, and how to brand them to attract new trainees, build name recognition within the regional business community, and thus ensure sustainability and eventual commercial viability.
7. ***Capitalize on private business network and public alliances.*** Business leaders with whom World Learning and INSC staff met expressed strong interest in contributing to the project's success and recruiting competent graduates into local companies. ANEM staff was also willing to take part in initial discussions, a promising sign, as that agency could provide critical support in ensuring recruitment and job placement. In private sector outreach, capitalize on and expand INSC's existing network, especially through reinforced ties to the FCE, to consolidate the advisory

committee and structure internship and job placement agreements. Remain open to new partnerships as the project advances, in order to take advantage of opportunities that emerge.

8. **Define long-term business model.** Beyond the initial budget development exercise, the sustainability planning exercise will allow for consideration of long-term adaptation. Given the modest income levels of many prospective trainees in the region, strongly consider making courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students' commitment. INSC could lobby the FCE, CCI Djurdjura, or leading employers such as ENIEM to subsidize training costs in the future, perhaps in exchange for preferential recruitment access.

CONCLUSION AND OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The individual labor market analyses included in this report give a detailed on-the-ground perspective on labor market issues in each of nine Algerian *wilayas*, all of them underserved regions outside the capital: Adrar, Batna, Biskra, Blida, El Oued, Oran, Ouargla, Setif, and Tizi Ouzou. Major areas of findings include labor market indicators, quantity gaps, quality gaps, and communication gaps, as well as other factors impacting youth training and employment. Overall, these analyses have revealed a number of recommendations in common among contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION IN ALGERIA

1. **Offer “soft skills” training for young job seekers** in line with suggestions of local business leaders. Taking into account the employer perspectives in these labor market analyses, and the youth perspectives investigated in a separate YEP research report,¹ these soft skills trainings should include the following intrapersonal, interpersonal, cognitive and functional employability skills.



Intrapersonal

Positive self-concept
Self-motivation
Perseverance
Adaptability
Managing emotions
Goal-orientation
Conscientiousness



Interpersonal

Social skills
Communication skills
Professionalism



Cognitive

Thinking Skills
Planning & Time management



Functional

Language skills
Core IT skills
Career planning
Job search strategies
CVs and online profiles
Job interviews

2. **Offer career counseling** through a structured psychometric test (such as Silatech’s Tamheed² platform) in order to provide clear guidance to young people in launching their careers—a factor that many local business leaders noted was absent. Such orientation can help job seekers better focus their job search and identify corresponding training needs.
3. **Develop technical training offerings for young job seekers** in the specific occupational fields applicable to their contexts. Based on these analyses, the needs vary widely—from truck driving, to hospitality, retail sales, technician-level trainings for construction and industrial labor, and contemporary agricultural technologies, among others. Overall, employers seek more practical trainings that better prepare young people with actual working skills in these fields. Career centers

¹ Honeyman, C.A. 2019. Soft Skills for Youth Employment in Algeria: Qualitative Research Report. World Learning.

² Tamheed is an online psychometric assessment test designed by Qatar-based Silatech to provide youth with access to quality career advising services and resources. In Algeria, World Learning collaborates with Silatech to offer Arabic, French, and English versions of the test and train counselors.

and other training providers will need to continue to stay in contact with employers to receive feedback on the effectiveness of current trainings as well as tracking constantly evolving needs for training in new fields.

4. **Offer add-on trainings in key subjects** that can help project graduates meet all needs of employers.

These include:

- a. Communications: Including public speaking skills, email and professional writing, and basic media relations.
- b. Foreign language: Offer “Professional English”, “Professional French” or other language classes tailored as much as possible to individual fields where such skills are needed. This can be supplemented by Technical English or French courses for technician or labor-level trainees.
- c. Computer skills: Basic computer use, internet search, e-mail, Microsoft Office suite can add value for hospitality workers. Even highly-qualified youth in professions such as engineering and accounting need more training in the relevant professional software.
- d. HSE trainings: This can serve as a useful certificate to supplement qualified labor trainings, including topics such as basic first aid, workplace safety, and environmental issues. Consider a two-track approach to allow students to get amount of training that is appropriate for their capacities and career ambitions:
 - i. Basic curriculum: Rig Pass, Level 1 Health & Safety, Level 1 First Aid
 - ii. Advanced curriculum: Level 2 Health & Safety, Level 2 First Aid, International certification courses.

5. **Provide additional support to CV development.** Given the low rates of internet penetration and computer use in some of the included sites, many job-seekers have never managed to compile their experience into a single typed CV. In other sites, job-seekers create poorly-formatted generic CVs that they submit for all opportunities, without highlighting the specific skills employers are looking for. Career centers can add value and increase some job-seekers’ employability simply by filling this gap, and in places with poor internet connectivity can provide young people with a printed and digital copy on a USB key.

6. **Provide “alternance” internships for trainees.** In several regions, employers expressed interest in recruiting workers with practical experience and willingness to help young trainees gain that experience through internships. The “alternance” model, which intersperses training and internship hours throughout the week, is an ideal way for youth to link their classroom and workplace knowledge. Agreements can provide for recruitment at the end of the internship period, serving as a basis for job placement.

7. **Determine course bundling and packaging for organizational and marketing purposes.** In any future sites, work with local training institutions and youth-serving organizations to decide how counseling, training, and placement services will be structured and sequenced, to allow students to benefit from the services they need. Timing of trainings and other offerings should take into account students’ availability. Explore how to “package” career center services through one or multiple

certificates, and how to brand them to attract new students and build name recognition within the regional business community, thus ensuring sustainability and eventual commercial viability.

8. **Consolidate private business networks.** In some sites, business leaders could be facilitated in joining together to better communicate their needs to training institutes as well as promote youth employment, through advisory committees and more structured arrangements for internship and job placement agreements. Consider expanding partnerships to include the Tourism Directorate, National Unemployment Insurance Agency (CNAC), ANSEJ, ANDI, and other private sector employers.
9. **Continue to seek collaboration with ANEM.** This state-run employment agency varies in its efficacy and flexibility in different parts of Algeria. However, local ANEM staff are often understanding and interested in supporting youth employment. Continuing to build relationships with staff could substantially facilitate participant recruitment, job placement, and more. Consider approaching *wilaya*-level officers and offering to train ANEM participants even outside urban centers if it will boost local officials' faith in the career center and its goodwill.
10. **Define long-term business model for career services.** Given the low income levels of many families in target sites, consider making core courses free—or with symbolic payment if this will encourage students' commitment. Career centers could tap private companies, such as multinational employers, to subsidize training costs in the future. Additionally, career centers can provide value added services that some businesses may be willing to pay for, including priority placement at career fairs, on-site interviews to facilitate easier access to a larger pool of potential recruits, and more customized demand-driven training options, including for current employees who need to improve their skills.

All these options are open for exploration by the new national career center federation, Techghil, created at the initiative of directors of YEP partner training institutes to expand access to career services among youth around the country.