

# Enhancing Literacy:

## Linking Practical Skills with Growth Opportunities in Morocco

Nearly 40 percent of citizens aged 15 years and older in Morocco cannot read or write, according to the 2008-2009 Annual Report on Literacy and Non-Formal Education. In March 2009, the Agency of Partnership for Progress (APP), the entity implementing Morocco's \$697.5 Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact, expanded the program's scope to tackle this challenge and enhance functional literacy. The functional literacy activity promotes economic growth by strengthening the basic Arabic literacy capacity and professional skills of approximately 69,000 illiterate men, women, and youth in the three primary sectors benefitting from Morocco's compact: agriculture, traditional artisanship, and small-scale fisheries. This multi-sector cooperative effort to boost functional literacy will equip beneficiaries with practical literacy skills that will help provide Morocco with the human resources necessary to generate economic growth as part of the poverty reduction grant.



*Moroccan women will benefit from the MCC-funded functional literacy activity which will strengthen the basic Arabic literacy capacity and professional skills of approximately 69,000 illiterate men, women, and youth.*

Unlike traditional literacy programs, the APP-led curriculum goes beyond teaching basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills; it will reinforce these capabilities with lessons on health, citizenship, entrepreneurship, and professional skills. The Rabat office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will design the new functional literacy manuals and teachers' guides, in collaboration with Morocco's Ministry of National Education's Literacy Department. This cooperative approach will generate a curriculum which balances best practices and lessons learned from existing programs in Morocco with the innovative approaches currently at the forefront of international education efforts.

As a result, Moroccans working in sectors supported by MCC's compact will benefit. The training will increase the professional qualifications of those active in the agricultural sector, allowing them to increase their incomes and take advantage of additional job opportunities – including those outside their sector – to stabilize their incomes year-round. Rural women will receive training with a special emphasis on developing their own income-generating activities. Within the traditional artisan sector, functional literacy training will equip artisans, including women, with the skills needed to overcome obstacles, including those related to production resources, methods, and tools, which often contribute to pollution. The training will also promote good management practices and workplace ethics. Within the small-scale fishing sector, the training will allow fishers to qualify for employment on coastal fishing boats and acquire additional vocational skills. These new opportunities will contribute to more sustainable fishing practices and yields, increasing the fishers' incomes.

Ultimately, the functional literacy curriculum will prepare men, women, and youth to be more marketable for employers and capable of leveraging their skills to generate income. Participants in the literacy program will benefit from links to the MCC-funded Enterprise Support and Financial Services Project. Such opportunities will allow graduates to access seed capital, practice their entrepreneurial skills, and begin generating additional income quickly.

The first literacy classes are expected to begin in December 2009, and will be taught by agricultural and fisheries vocational training centers, literacy trainers working in sector-specific programs, and local civil society organizations. Throughout the first 18-month training cycle, UNESCO will tailor the curriculum to meet beneficiaries' needs. In the program's later stages, when the emphasis shifts from basic literacy to functional employability skills, sector experts from local professional guilds will be invited to present.

This approach will teach practical skills, empower beneficiaries to pursue new economic opportunities, and fuel the growth that will drive the success of Morocco's compact.