

RESULTS SUMMARY

Cooking up opportunities for Moroccan youth

Author: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023)

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PROJECT	<i>Title:</i>	Youth Inclusion and employment/DAPP Project - The Um Mami Culinary Centre
	<i>Partner:</i>	PlanBørnefonden and Melting Pot Foundation
	<i>Country:</i>	Morocco
	<i>Period:</i>	2022-2027

CHANGE	After attending culinary training courses for unemployed youth, 64% of participants are now employed or interning in Morocco's culinary sector. In 2022, 96 youth attended courses led by Danish chefs from Meyers and local chefs at Um Mami. Students praised the school for providing inspiration, skills, and a network for job market entry. Um Mami focuses on training aspiring cooks and on imparting market-responsive technical and entrepreneurial skills. In this way, the courses sought to contribute to addressing youth unemployment in the country.
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CONTEXT	Around 30% of 15-24 year-olds in Morocco are neither working nor enrolled in education. Young people with high levels of education experience high levels of unemployment, as they often do not possess the skills required by employers. Youth employment is a significant challenge in Morocco, where agriculture can no longer absorb the growing youth population. The ambitions of educated youth drive them to opportunities in the urban areas where service sectors linked to Morocco's growing tourism offer opportunities.
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CONTRIBUTION	The Danish Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP) has been supporting youth in Morocco since 2007. The current phase of the programme focuses on rights and job creation for youth in the Middle East and Northern Africa region. In Morocco, as a contribution to youth employment, PlanBørnefonden - in partnership with the Melting Pot Foundation's UM Mami cooking school in Marakech - focuses on the skills gap in the youth labour force by educating young chefs and supporting the value chain in the culinary sector in Morocco.
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IMAGES	 The Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy visiting Um Mami in 2023. Photo: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	 The Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy visiting Um Mami in 2023. Photo: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

Um Mami was established by the Melting Pot Foundation in 2022 and aspires to create social change through food. The Um Mami cooking school runs eight-week training courses covering basic culinary skills, planning and hygiene, food safety, health and sustainability, as well as entrepreneurial skills. The school further facilitates a one-month internship to strengthen the links between the graduates and potential employers within the sector. In return, the graduates bring their knowledge and innovative ideas to the culinary sector, creating a more attractive and sustainable restaurant scene in Morocco. Through the young graduates' new ideas and influence on restaurants as well as their establishment of new restaurants, the project aspires to create increased demand for green and sustainable foods, thereby positively influencing the food value chain in Morocco.

LESSONS

The following lessons emerged from the initial phase of the Um Mami project: first, strong leadership of the school is required and an extensive network of local partners is essential. The school is increasingly making a name for itself in the Moroccan culinary sector, which opens opportunities for linking young chefs with potential employers. Second, the school secures organisational sustainability by integrating support from DAPP with private fundraising, as well as income generated from the Um Mami restaurant, cooking classes, and tuition fees. Last, diligent assessment of the market opportunities has been an important factor in enabling the achieved results. Morocco has an already established restaurant scene and large influx of tourists with an appetite for culinary experiences, which together make up a viable market and opportunities for expanding and innovating the sector. This has proven necessary to create potential job opportunities for the young chefs.

EVIDENCE

While the project is still in its early phase, the project's claim of creating jobs for youth is supported by the initial results and surveys asking the young graduates about their experiences with the Um Mami cooking school. In the surveys, all students answered that the quality of the training was high and the training material innovative and relevant. Students' skills have been in demand, as 64% of the graduates are employed or doing internships. The Um Mami cooking school has been able to attract well-reputed chefs and engaged teachers and its innovative and sustainable approach to the culinary sector has attracted interest among Moroccan stakeholders. A dialogue format was developed to engage with and push the industry in a more sustainable direction, and the first event focusing on biodiversity took place in January 2023.

DOMAINS

Development strategy priorities:

Democracy and Human Rights

Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability

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Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights

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Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights

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Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights

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Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability

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Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work

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