**IMPROVED ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR MIGRANTS IN MOROCCO**

**Increase educational and social integration opportunities for migrant children**

“I came to Morocco in 2005 from Congo-Brazzaville to get an education. There was a lot of fighting going on back home. Now I work at our migrants’ reception centre. About 15 to 20 migrants come in every day. It’s very difficult for migrants when they arrive but here young people can benefit from find better conditions to access education, as I did.” *Thiphaine, Rabat*

**CONTEXT**

Located on the north-western tip of the African continent, Morocco forms a natural crossroads between central and western Africa and the European Union. Two Spanish exclaves – Ceuta and Melilla – are hosted within the territory of Morocco and Spain is Morocco’s nearest northern neighbour.

For migrants from sub-Saharan African countries, either fleeing conflict-torn homelands or simply searching for greater economic opportunities in the EU, Morocco has become a common stop-off point on the road to a better life. Many do not complete their intended journey, sent back into Morocco at the EU border. These migrants are obliged, if they cannot return home, to live in Morocco where, without the correct documents to legalise their residency in the country, they frequently face exclusion from public services – including healthcare and education –
and are unable to access work. Cut off from normal means by which to integrate into Moroccan life, many eke out a menial existence on the fringes of society.

In the past few years, EuropeAid has funded a number of activities relating to the improvement of general living conditions for migrants in Morocco, including this project which focused on integrating adolescent migrants and young children of migrant parents into Morocco’s state school system or, where this was not possible (for language or legal reasons), to afford them opportunities to attend informal education or vocational education courses.

The project operated against the backdrop of the 2003 law governing the ‘entry and residency of foreign nationals in the Kingdom of Morocco, irregular emigration and immigration’. In September 2013, the country announced the launch of a new migration policy and two months later disclosed plans to regularise the status of up to 40,000 illegal sub-Saharan African immigrants, with immediate priority for 850 immigrants considered asylum-seekers by the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, to benefit from legal residency rights automatically.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To extend access to informal and formal education for migrant children in Morocco

**IMPACT**

- 123 migrant children aged between 4-7 attended informal education classes (focus on basic Arabic for older children); 199 children aged 8-15 attended informal education classes; 33 children enrolled in Moroccan state schools; 44 adolescent migrants enrolled on vocational training courses during the academic years 2010/2011, 2011/2012, 2012/2013.

- Dance, theatre, cartoon drawing, painting, writing, sport workshops held during 2011/2012 for migrant children of all ages

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**“When I first got here from Ivory Coast in 2012 I just hung about doing odd jobs for Moroccans who didn’t mind my race. A man took me along to the Caritas centre. The centre saw that I was willing to learn and I was then sent on a business management course in Salé (just north of Rabat). I’m still on it now. It is a struggle but I want to get a job here. I’d like to say thank you to Caritas for supporting me. I don’t have any contact with home now. I do regret leaving, but I had no choice.” Phartiry, 17**

**“I came to Morocco on my own in 2012 from Mali, where there was a war going on. I am an orphan. I was sent to Caritas by the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR. I’ve been getting training in hairdressing. I don’t want to stay in Morocco though – there are not enough opportunities here.” Mèmè, 16**

**“I arrived in Morocco in 2012. Ivory Coast, my home country, was having a crisis, so I decided to leave. Lots of us do it, but I came alone. I knew no one. I hoped to go further. In the end I joined a Caritas training course in business management. The course has been useful; especially as it’s not easy to find a job here. Now I don’t want to leave Morocco. When I first got here I thought it would be more welcoming, but in reality I live here from day to day never really knowing what’s going to happen. For many, it turns into a game of How Do I Get Out? Everyone tries to do it in their own way. Some risk their lives. What would I like in the future? I’d like to have a better general knowledge.” Kone, 17**