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# Situational Analysis for GCED Curriculum Development & Integration (CDI) Project in Morocco

GCED CDI PROJECT  
ROUND 5

# Situational Analysis for GCED Curriculum Development & Integration (CDI) Project in Morocco (2025 Edition)

## Publisher



The **Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU)** is a UNESCO Category 2 Centre established in 2000 according to the Agreement between UNESCO and the Government of the Republic of Korea, with the mandate to promote Education for International Understanding (EIU) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) toward a Culture of Peace. APCEIU has been at the forefront of promoting GCED and thereby supporting UNESCO Member states to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 4.7 in particular.

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This situational analysis was commissioned by APCEIU as a background paper to inform key issues and strategies for its **GCED Curriculum Development and Integration Project (GCED CDI)** in Morocco (2024-2026). It was developed by combining two reports — the *Need Assessment Report of GCED in Morocco* (2023) and the *Report on the Current Status of Citizenship Education within the Pioneer School Program in Morocco* (2024) — to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the current context for GCED integration in Morocco.

### **Global Citizenship Education Curriculum Development and Integration Project (GCED CDI)**

In the face of the global challenges of the 21st century, the need for global citizenship education became ever more evident and increasing, eventually leading to the integration of GCED into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4.7) in 2015. To effectively respond to such growing needs, APCEIU launched the GCED Curriculum Development and Integration Project (GCED CDI) in 2016, with the support of the government of the Republic of Korea. Designed as a three-year project for each round, the GCED CDI aims to support the participating countries with mainstreaming GCED into their educational system, specifically by embedding GCED into their curricular materials and/or enhancing the capacity to integrate GCED into curricular implementation. Starting from the 1st Round (Cambodia, Mongolia, Uganda, and Colombia, 2016-2018), APCEIU completed the 2nd Round (Kenya, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, 2019-2021), the 3rd Round (Georgia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Rwanda, 2021-2023), and the 4th Round (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Ghana, and Malaysia, 2022-2024) of the Project and is currently operating the 5th Round (Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, and Thailand, 2024-2026) and the 6th Round (Fiji and Uzbekistan, 2025-2027).

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# Report 1

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Needs Assessment of Global Citizenship  
Education (GCED) in Morocco



## Abstract

The main objectives of this assessment report are to map Morocco's priority areas of focus in education where GCED can be integrated, analyze how GCED can be effectively integrated while contributing to the quality enhancement of the identified priority areas. The assessment report will also suggest some expected project outcomes, recommendations, and implementation strategies in regards to APCEIU's GCED CDI Project.

## 1. Demographic and political context

The Kingdom of Morocco lies across the northwest coast of Africa and has a coastline on the North Atlantic Ocean as well as the Mediterranean Sea, encompassing 710,850 square kilometers. Its rich culture is an intermixture of Arab, Berber, European and African influences, but the majority of Morocco's population identify themselves as Berber and Arab.

The country's official religion is Islam, which "is constantly instrumental to various political and social goals. Nearly all Moroccans are Sunni Muslims but there are still a small number of Moroccan Jews (0.2 %) and groups of Christians (1.1%) and Shi'a Muslims (numbering around 5,000 each), which are mostly foreign residents." (BTI, 2016)

According to the sixth General Census of Population and Housing (RGPH 2014), the legal population of Morocco reached 33,848,242 in September 2014, including 33,762,036 citizens and 86,206 foreign residents. The 2014 census also declares that the number of households reached 7,313,806 and that 20,432,439 people live in urban areas, 13,415,803 in rural areas, representing an urbanization rate of 60.3% in 2014 against 55.1% in 2004. Based on World Meter elaboration of the latest United Nations data, the current population of Morocco is 37,948,395 as of Monday, October 16, 2023.

At the political level, several political changes have influenced Moroccan society since 2011. Driven by the situation in the Arab world, the Kingdom managed to undertake, in a determined and inclusive way, its own process of democratic changes and conducted a very positive approach of the Arab Spring, leading to constitutional reform. Overwhelmingly approved by a national referendum, the constitutional reform of July 1, 2011, enshrined several key changes in Morocco's political system. The reforms strengthened the rule of



law by broadening the legislative powers of Parliament and by mandating an independent judiciary. They also made Amazigh an official language in Morocco, alongside Arabic and the Arab Hassani language of the Saharawi tribes. In addition, Article 31 of the Constitution declares the right of citizens to access to water and to a healthy environment.

## 2. Moroccan educational system context

In Morocco, basic education, between ages 6 and 15, is free and compulsory. It requires nine years of schooling, divided into two levels: six years of elementary school and three years of lower secondary school (middle school). Even though education is free of charge, many children, especially girls in rural areas, still do not attend school or they drop out at an early age. Four levels comprise the Moroccan education system, including pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The system is under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Preschool and Sport and public schools are entirely funded by the State. To improve the quality of education in Morocco, the government has undertaken several reforms, including the National Charter for Education and Training (NCET), the Strategic Vision and the Road Map. According to a presentation delivered by the Minister of Education, Preschool and Sport before the members of the Parliament on October 18, 2023, Morocco has a total of 7,931,841 pupils enrolled in primary and secondary education. Of these pupils, about 3,817,473 are enrolled in public primary education. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics notes that in 2012 approximately 26% of youth have no formal education and 23% of youth have attained at most incomplete primary education, meaning that in total 49% of 15-24-year olds have not completed primary education in Morocco.

## 3. GCED international context

Recently GCED has attracted considerable attention across the globe. In September 2012, the United Nations Secretary General launched the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) signalling a shift in the role and purpose of education. The initiative includes GCE as one of the priorities.

*"We must foster global citizenship. Education is about more than literacy and numeracy. It is also about citizenry. Education must fully assume its essential role*

*in helping people to forge more just, peaceful and tolerant societies.” (Ban Ki Moon, 2012)*

According to the 2014 UNESCO report, Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

*“inspires action, partnerships, dialogue and cooperation through formal and non-formal education; GCE applies a multifaceted approach employing concepts, methodologies and theories from related fields, including human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development and education for international understanding. It promotes an ethos of curiosity, solidarity and shared responsibility.” (UNESCO, 2014, p.15)*

To help educators and NGOs understand and implement GCED, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe published some guidelines in many languages including English, French and Arabic. The purpose of the guidelines is to enable “people to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for securing a just, sustainable world in which everyone has the right to fulfil his/her potential”. (North-South Centre, 2008, P.20).

#### **4. Assessment context in Morocco**

Since the beginning of the nineties, Morocco has undertaken a series of structural and institutional democratic changes that have led to constitutional reforms and new governments. Although Moroccan youth accounts for almost a third of Morocco’s population according to recent statistics, their “participation in civic life is very low” and “most of their time is spent on unstructured personal activities”. (World Bank, 2012, p. x). Hence, GCED has become an important factor for active participation within the broader community. “The recognition that citizenship education involves “real-life” beyond school walls explains why various NGOs are actively involved in this process, not only as providers of citizenship experiences for young people, but also as interfaces between schools and communities” (Ribeiro et al., 2012, P. 34). In addition, these NGOs are playing a key role in partnering with the Ministry of Education to provide GCED “at all levels of education, using formal, non-formal and informal methodologies, complementing school provision and fostering citizen’s active participation in a democratic society.” (Ribeiro et al., 2012, P. 41). As there has been growing interest in GCED in Morocco, educational reforms, namely the ‘National Charter for Education and Training’(NCET), the ‘Strategic Vision 2015-2030’ and the Road Map 2022-2026 have outlined the guidelines for GCED including the collective



and individual rights and responsibilities as well as universal values such as peace, human rights and democracy.

## 5. Assessment methods

- Review of Ministry of Education reforms namely the National Charter for Education and Training, the Strategic Vision: 2015-2030 and other policy documents
- Interviews with two educators, two Ministry of Education officials and two NGO leaders.

## 6. Review of educational reforms and policy documents

### 6.1 The National Charter for Education and Training

The 1999 NCET was followed ten years later by an “Emergency Plan” to accelerate the implementation of the reform during the following years”. According to NCET, the Moroccan system of education is supported by pillars of common principles upon which all teaching and learning are built. First and foremost, of these are the values and principles of Islamic faith. In this regard, the State endeavours to form a “virtuous citizen, as a model of rectitude, moderation and tolerance, and who is open to science and knowledge, and endowed with the spirit of initiative, creativity and entrepreneurship” (Charter, 1999).

On these foundations, education cultivates the values of citizenship that allow for everyone to fully participate in public and private life, in perfect knowledge of the rights and duties of themselves and their fellow citizens. Education focuses also on developing a spirit of dialogue and the skills to engage in dialogue. It fosters acceptance of difference, and advances towards democratic practice in the context of the state of law. Another principle of the Moroccan education system is a dynamic interaction between the cultural heritage of Morocco and the great universal principles of human rights and the respect of dignity including the protection of environment and sustainable development.



## 6.2 National Strategy for Environment Protection and Sustainable Development

In 1995, the Kingdom of Morocco launched the National Strategy for Environment Protection and Sustainable Development, followed by a National Action Plan for the Environment in 2002. In 2009, the Kingdom also created a National Charter of Environment and Sustainable Development. According to the national Journeys report released in 2013, Morocco “has taken a number of initiatives and actions to address the complex and interlinked issues of sustainable development. The country has made a major effort in order to reconcile the demands of economic and human development with the need to protect natural resources and the environment.”

## 6.3 The Strategic Vision (2015-2030)

In July 2015, the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research released the 2015-2030 Strategic Vision under the theme: *“Towards a School of Equality, Quality and Promotion”*. According to this vision, the Moroccan school has given priority to education for values, human rights and citizenship education since the adoption of a national program to promote citizenship, human rights, equality and tolerance. However, the acts of “un-civic conduct, such as exam cheating, violence, environment damage and vandalism, continue to spread inside and outside the schools of education and training”

The Strategic Vision recommends making education for democratic values, active citizenship, and the promotion of equality a strategic option to be implemented through the four interventions below:

1. Integrating these values into the school curriculum,
2. Promoting democratic practices via community service and voluntary work,
3. Launching new training workshops on citizenship education,
4. Strengthening the partnerships between the schools and their stakeholders.

In the preamble, the Higher Council states that this Vision is “based on constitutional constants of the Moroccan Nation: The Islamic religion, territorial integrity, constitutional monarchy, democratic choice, unified Moroccan identity in the diversity of its different components, openness to the world, values of moderation and tolerance, a balanced



correlation between the sense of belonging to a Muslim nation while maintaining a dialogue with different cultures and civilizations.” According to the Vision, the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders need support in order to adequately promote scientific research and areas of human, cultural and environmental development and to ensure the sustainable development of the country.

## **6.4 The New Development Model**

The New Development Model: Releasing Energies and Regaining Trust to accelerate the march of progress and prosperity for all was released in April 2021. This general report talked about the importance of citizenship education stating that it “teaches the rules governing life in society and cultivates a sense of belonging to the nation. In order to promote the spirit of the collective good and to strengthen the sense of belonging to the national community and of respect for its symbols, schools must attach greater importance to group activities within all disciplines as well as within the framework of community projects aimed at the general interest (social, cultural, sports, ecological).” (New Development Model, 2021, p. 107). In addition, the report indicated that the schools must also increasingly give students a voice to provide them with opportunities to “express themselves, converse and learn the rules of dialogue and collective debate.”

Despite the recent reforms, major challenges remain. According to the 2019 UNICEF report, 44% of 4-5-year-olds are not in preschool; quality of education is still a major concern affecting learning outcomes and retention; almost two third of children with disabilities are not in school, including in primary education; access and school drop-out are still an issue in rural areas, and mostly for girls. As a result, in 2022, the Ministry of Education, Preschool and Sport launched the Road Map reform.

## **6.5 The Road Map for Educational Reform (2023-2026)**

In June 2022, the Ministry of National Education, Preschool and Sports presented the Road Map for Educational Reform (2023-2026) whose main goal is to effectively improve the quality education in public schools through shifting from a reform focused on inputs and processes to the one focused on the impact within classrooms. This roadmap was discussed with over 100,000 participants, including 33,493 students, 21,837 teachers,

20,666 families, and 1,766 educational institutions. Consultations with participants took place through various channels, including 6,270 focus groups, 83 territorial meetings, 243 thematic workshops, and 22,000 responses to questionnaires. The Road Map outlined three strategic objectives including promoting openness and citizenship education and twelve commitments that revolve around three components of the education system: the student, the teacher, and the school.

## **7. Ministry of Education priority areas**

The Road Map reform has identified three main priority areas of focus in education:

- 1. Ensuring the quality of learning**
- 2. Promoting openness and citizenship education**
- 3. Achieving compulsory education**

In this section, the three priority areas will be discussed and the possibility of integrating GCED will be analysed.

According to the Road Map, to achieve quality learning, “the school should allow learners to acquire knowledge and skills that will help them succeed in their academic and professional career.” To promote openness and citizenship education, the school is the best space where children acquire national and universal values, the meaning citizenship, and the spirit of curiosity and self-confidence. To achieve compulsory education, the school should guarantee that children benefit from a school curriculum until the age of 16 years regardless of social origin and location.

The Road Map has identified the year 2026 as a deadline to achieve these three priority areas reflected in enhancing the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, by doubling the percentage of students who understand basic subjects on a primary school level, and consolidating the values of citizenship, by doubling the percentage of students benefiting from extra-curricular school activities, and reducing school drop out by 30%, in order to give a strong impetus to compulsory education.

To achieve these goals, the Road Map revolves around 12 commitments for a quality public school for all, organized according to three strategic axes of intervention, and distributed



as follows: Five commitments related to the student, three to the teacher and four to the school.

Among the five key commitments related to students: The Ministry of Education is planning to implement programs and textbooks that promote the acquisition of fundamental skills and language mastery. The Ministry notes that efforts have been made in recent years to revise primary school programs, but secondary school programs have not yet been updated. To identify the fundamental skills to be prioritized, school programs need to be broken down into specific learning objectives at the end of each educational cycle.

To improve this, the Ministry aims to create a national reference manual for each subject and school level by the end of 2026 using a rigorous methodology to ensure its pedagogical effectiveness. It also plans to provide digital resources for students to enhance their learning and proposes a revised approach to foreign language instruction, focusing on practice to improve written and oral language skills, with rigorous student placement methods. Another commitment related to students is the Ministry's desire to provide guidance toward new pathways tailored to individual profiles to increase the chances of success.

In this context, it is timely to integrate GCED while revising the curricular and textbooks. In addition, the timeline provided for the Road Map goes hand in hand with the timeline for Global Citizenship Education Curriculum Development and Integration Project for Morocco for the 5<sup>th</sup> Round (2024-2026). It seems that this is a marvelous opportunity to introduce GCED across most subject areas including Social Studies, Arabic, French and English languages, Sciences of the Life and Earth and Sport. Moreover, there is a need to include more extra-curricular activities in order to allow learners to shift from learning about GCED to practicing and making it happen in real life situations. Furthermore, learners should be guided and encouraged to "understand how global policy and international developments influence local realities, but also how actions at the local level can impact the global. Values such as peace, justice and equality are the basis of encouragements." (Popovic, K, p.12). In this way, quality leaning in Morocco can be enhanced.

As for the three commitments related to the teacher, the Road Map has stated them as follows:

1. Excellent and solid training that is oriented towards practice to allow teachers to adopt an efficient and caring pedagogy
2. Improved working conditions to meet the need of teachers and further strengthen their impact on the students
3. Rewarding management system to encourage the efforts of the teachers.

In fact, if these commitments are implemented in the appropriate way, the impact will be very positive on the teachers' performance and the learners' outcomes. Adequate preservice training and continuous professional development based on interactive methods of teaching and learning GCED will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the teaching and learning process.

When teachers are convinced of their careers, well trained to perform their tasks appropriately, and are rewarded by their leadership, they will be able to excel at their job by providing their students with learning opportunities that are based on mutual and professional relationships. At this stage, socio- emotional skills can take place easily, which may pave the ground for "the creation of "star" classes for high-achieving students and "talent" pathways for students with athletic or artistic potential" as indicated in the Road Map.

In terms of the commitments that are related to schools, the Road Map aims to improve the conditions and equipment of schools in order to enhance students and teachers' motivation, thereby supporting learning and reducing the rate of school dropout that goes up to 300,000 students every year. According to the Road Map, by 2026, all primary and secondary school classrooms will have digital projection equipment to make use of pedagogically effective resources. Multimedia rooms will be modernized and expanded in secondary schools.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education will encourage extracurricular and sports activities that contribute to students' personal development by enhancing their cross-cutting skills, such as sociability, creativity, curiosity, a taste for effort, self-confidence, cooperation, and effective communication. To achieve this, access to sports will be expanded for all students through physical education in school programs, the development of sports and cultural activities, increased inter-school tournaments, and the sharing of sports facilities.



Therefore, there is a need to integrate innovative educational methods and approaches to learning and teaching. This cannot be achieved unless we offer capacity building, preservice training and continuous professional development. By introducing GCED within extra curriculum activities, students will be involved in the learning process and feel responsible and active. Furthermore, they will be able to discuss current issues like climate change, social justice, human rights and democracy. Through GCED programs, students, youth groups and NGOs may have the opportunity to use cooperative learning to select a local or international issue of their concern, research the problem and identify options to address the problem. Through such activities, students will be empowered to think on their own and to go beyond any formal curriculum to demonstrate citizenship in action. In addition, the list of benefits may include acquisition of critical thinking, research methodology, respect for the opinions of others, team work, self-confidence and group solidarity.

## **8. Interviews with Ministry of Education officials, NGO leaders and educators**

The data presented in this section have been gathered from interviews with two Ministry of Education officials, two NGO leaders and two educators with more than 15 years of administrative and teaching experience. The two educators were in charge of teaching social studies (History and Geography) and citizenship education. The two NGO leaders have been leading their institutions for over 10 years of training NGOs members in sustainable development and citizenship education. The two Ministry of Education officials support the Director of the Curriculum Department at the Ministry of Education. They are also in charge of curriculum development and textbook design in addition to other assigned tasks such as teacher training and supervising teachers. The data are organized according to the following research questions:

- To what extent are teachers in Morocco well trained to implement GCED programs and prepare students to be active global citizens?
- How can NGOs and the other stakeholders of the Ministry of Education contribute to promoting GCED?

- What are the impediments and challenges that both teachers and NGOs encounter to implement GCED?

***Are teachers in Morocco well trained to implement GCED programs?***

At first, all the interviewees were asked if the Moroccan teachers are well trained to implement GCED and to prepare their learners to be global citizens. Although they agreed on the fact that most teachers are familiar with the GCED terms, they confirmed that most teachers have not had any preservice training in this field. Interestingly, the participants admitted that teachers follow the textbooks and the guide books' instructions that are provided by the textbooks' designers. The two Ministry officials stated that professional NGOs operating in the field of Education such as the Moroccan Association of Teachers of English and the Association of the Sciences of Life and Earth have been contributing a lot in collaboration with the Ministry to organize workshops on sustainable development and promoting GCED.

When asked how a teacher with no prior training can prepare students to be global citizens, the participants indicated that Moroccan teachers are badly in need of professional development in this area that should be a priority of focus as stated in the Road Map reform. The two NGO leaders confirmed that only a few NGOs are aware of the concepts of GCED. Therefore, as one leader said "GCED has become a must, so the Ministry and NGOs should work together to develop programs that promote the concepts of GCED". One educator expressed his point of view as follows: "Most schools and teachers are struggling with finishing Math, Reading, Social Studies and other subject areas and may not have the time to focus on citizenship education. I totally disagree with is. I believe that there should be more extracurricular activities in order to integrate GCED"

A Ministry of Education official noted that the role of the supervisor is of paramount importance in terms of professional development. According to him, supervisors should integrate GCED in their annual action plan that is submitted to the educational authorities at the regional and central level.



### ***How can NGOs and the other stakeholders of the Ministry of Education contribute to promoting GCED?***

When asked about the role of NGOs and the stakeholders of the Ministry of Education to promote GCED, the two Ministry officials indicated that they usually meet with the educational NGOs in order to discuss the best ways to work together to implement quality education activities including citizenship education. In addition, they mentioned the important role played by the Students' Parents' Association. Moreover, they indicated that the Ministry usually issues memos, pedagogical instruction, textbooks contain components of citizenship education in social studies, the languages subjects namely Arabic, French and English deals with global GCED issue such as global warming, climate change, peace, coexistence, universal values, democracy and human rights. According to the Ministry, the role of NGOs is crucial in terms of collaborating with the Ministry of Education. All interviewees stressed the importance of the collaboration between the Ministry and NGOs in terms of organizing meetings, workshops and roundtables. However, One NGO leader explained that "the Ministry's curriculum and textbooks are not enough. They need to be supplemented by extracurricular activities such as students' excursions". The other leaders mentioned how NGOs have been able to host international events such as the 12<sup>th</sup> World congress on Civic Education that was held in Morocco in 2008 and hosted by the Moroccan Center for Civic Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for Education. One educator proposed holding collaborative events in GCED between the Ministry and NGOs. All interviewees indicated that NGOs should be actively involved in this process, not only as service providers of GCED, but also as facilitators that are able to connect the classroom with the community.

### ***Challenges that both teachers and NGOs encounter to implement GCED?***

When participants were asked about the challenges they encounter to implement GCED, they all agreed on the lack of training and the need for capacity building for teachers and NGOs members.

In addition, Since GCED has become crucial to build a democratic society in Morocco, NGOs provide a good environment to assist youth and NGOs members learn the human values of democracy and human rights and to prepare them to be involved in community issues. However, the NGO leaders mentioned that the shortage of funding impacts negatively their



implementation. Other challenges include lack of leadership on GCED, limited or even no space for extracurricular activities, lack of practical activities and best practices.

## 9. Discussion of findings and recommendations

After the documents' review and mapping the priority areas where GCED can be integrated and analysis of the findings that emerged from interviews, this section will suggest the following expected project outcomes, recommendations, and implementation strategies in regards to APCEIU's GCED CDI Project.

1. Teachers' capacities strengthened to be able to integrate GCED into teaching and learning. To achieve this outcome, teacher training colleges in Morocco should consider GCED as a requirement in preservice training in order to produce future teachers who are equipped with necessary tools as how to deal with GCED inside and outside the classroom situation. Therefore, teacher trainers are to be aware of the importance of promoting GCED across all of the subject areas in order to educate global citizens who are active and responsible in their community and open to other cultures.
2. Enhanced teacher development to be able to develop in the learners the knowledge, skills and values of GCED. To do so, school supervisors should be able to train and guide practitioners towards interactive and innovative methods of teaching and learning GCED.
3. Revised new textbooks to be able to involve concepts such as empathy, mutual understanding, peace, intercultural dialogues. This cannot be achieved unless the Ministry of Education stakeholders work together with the curriculum department in order to coordinate efforts to integrate and promote GCED.
4. Focused and improved GCED training for school leaders and MOE administrators. The main objective is to reduce the wide gap between the goals of national education programs and their actual implementation in schools and communities.
5. Increased public policy dialogues on GCED among the NGOs, educational experts, GCED specialists, researchers and policy makers at the Ministry of Education.



The purpose is to work towards effective implementation of GCED by encouraging analysis and critical thinking rather than describing and informing, which are still dominating in the classroom practices.

6. Established partnerships and networks between the schools and NGOs that provide GCED. This can help ensure transparency, and sustain projects that disseminate universal values such as human rights, peace, religious diversity, pluralism and inclusiveness.
7. Grown status of GCED in national strategies among all of the partners. The main objective is to develop a national implementation program that includes train the trainers' workshops, GCED awareness campaigns, methods and approaches to teach, learn and implement related activities in addition to monitoring and evaluation plans.

## Conclusion

Morocco's deep interest in GCED stems from a political, social and educational context that has been characterized by a series of education reform milestones, namely the principles of the NCET, Strategic Vision and the Road Map. All of these documents stress the integration of GCED in the school curriculum. Therefore, schools are the best environment to help learn human values such as democracy, peace, justice, equality, rights and responsibilities, empathy and openness.

The present assessment report has mapped three priority areas of focus where GCED can be integrated namely ensuring the quality of learning, promoting openness and civic education in addition to achieving compulsory education. It also examined the status of citizenship education in Morocco and explored how GCED is being perceived in the Ministry of Education's educational documents.

Based on the review of the Ministry of Education's major reforms in education and other policy documents and following interviews with the Ministry of Education officials, educators and NGO leaders, it seems that there is a gap and inconsistency between what is stated in the documents and the actual implementation of GCED in the classroom and outside the classroom situations. Hence, it is important and imperative to find and develop

mechanisms and tools to fill this gap in order to achieve the goals and visions stated in the policy and curriculum documents.

The main findings of the assessment indicated that there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacities of teachers and learners in terms of implementing the GCED and engage NGOs whose role has become vital in this field. Furthermore, integrating GCED in preservice training and professional development has become a must. Therefore, the 2023-2026 Road Map reform may constitute a good platform for integrating GCED since one of its main strategic objectives is promoting openness and citizenship education.

The assessment report has also made a number of recommendations including capacity building, reviewing curricular to integrate GCED, developing a national implementation program, establishing partnerships and network to sustain GCED activities in addition to organizing awareness campaigns to promote GCED.



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- [https://morocco-emba.jp/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Morocco\\_2011.pdf](https://morocco-emba.jp/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Morocco_2011.pdf) (Morocco Constitution 2011)
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# Report 2

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The Current Status of Citizenship Education  
within the Pioneer School Program in Morocco





## Part 1. Summary

### Abstract

The main objective of the report is to discuss the Morocco's Ministry of National Education, Preschool, and Sport (MEPS)'s Pioneer School Program (PSP) that aims at strengthening citizenship education within select schools. This report will analyze this initiative, examining how it can serve as an effective platform for embedding global citizenship education (GCED) principles and enhancing the educational experience for Moroccan students. The analysis will assess the current status of citizenship education within the PSP, identify areas where GCED concepts can be integrated and recommend strategic outcomes and practical implementation strategies that align with both Moroccan education reform and APCEIU's GCED objectives.

### Background

To improve the quality of education in Morocco, the Ministry of Education has undertaken several reforms, including the National Charter for Education and Training, the Strategic Vision (2015-2030) and the Road Map. Despite the recent reforms and the efforts deployed by the Ministry and its partners, reports from international evaluation surveys (TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA) reveal the persistence of the problem of the quality of Moroccan education. According to the results of the TIMSS-2019 evaluation, the scores of Moroccan pupils are still below the international average. In addition, in May 2024, Morocco's Economic, Social and Environmental Council reported that around 1,5 Million are NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) youth.



## Documents' review and analysis

The MEPS' 2022-2026 Road Map reform that has led to PSP along with its implementation are discussed. Framework memoranda and policy documents in addition to the extracurricular memorandum along with some PSP teachers' guides are reviewed and analyzed.

## Pioneer School Program (PSP)

The pioneer schools in Morocco are a new educational experiment aimed at creating a qualitative shift in public education. They apply modern educational and pedagogical curricula, focusing on developing students' skills and preparing them to face contemporary challenges, benefiting from the latest technologies and educational tools. According to the Framework Memorandum, the primary aims of this initiative include enhancing foundational learning quality, developing students' knowledge, skills, and emotional capacities, and reducing dropout risks. The PSP was designed as an integrated framework that ensures synergy across the three pillars of the 2022-2026 roadmap. The project includes four structured components, implemented simultaneously as a package to improve students' mastery of foundational skills.

## Objectives of the PSP

PSP aims to bring about a radical change in the education system in Morocco, striving to achieve a set of educational, social, and economic goals that contribute to building a generation of qualified citizens capable of keeping pace with contemporary challenges. As stated in the Framework Memorandum, PSP is part of the ongoing implementation of updates to the primary education curriculum and aims to achieve the PSP objectives.

## Implementation mechanisms: Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)

"Teaching at the Right Level," abbreviated as TaRL, is one of the key pedagogical approaches used in pioneer schools. This approach focuses on assessing each student's level in core subjects, such as Arabic and mathematics, and providing appropriate support and instruction based on their actual level. The TaRL approach helps address the issue of varying student levels within a single class, ensuring each learner receives the appropriate education needed to advance in their learning journey and reach their fullest potential.

## **Citizenship education within extra-curriculum activities**

As stated in the MEPS' extra-curricular activities memorandum, to achieve the objectives, all stakeholders involved in the Pioneer Middle Schools Program should be mobilized to make extracurricular activities an effective gateway to the desired transformation in the pioneer schools. Potential areas managed through partnerships with major associations under central agreements include Environment (Young Journalists for the Environment Program) and Citizenship (APT2C Program).

## **Findings and recommendations**

It has been revealed that there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacities of teachers and learners in terms of implementing the GCED and engage NGOs whose role has become vital in this field. Furthermore, integrating GCED in preservice training and professional development has become a must. Therefore, the 2022-2026 Road Map reform may constitute a good platform for integrating GCED since one of its main strategic objectives is promoting openness and citizenship education. The report has also made a number of recommendations that include capacity building, setting up and activating citizenship education school clubs, establishing partnerships and networks to sustain GCED activities in addition to involving NGOs in the public policy dialogues.

## **Conclusion**

This report has tried to discuss the MEPS's PSP and analyze this initiative, examining how it can serve as an effective platform for embedding GCED principles and enhancing the educational experience for Moroccan students. The analysis has assessed the current status of citizenship education within the extra-curricular activities in PSP, identified some areas where its concepts can be integrated and recommended strategic outcomes and practical implementation strategies that align with both Moroccan education reform and APCEIU's GCED objectives.



## Part 2. Full Report

### Abstract

The main objective of the report is to discuss Morocco's Ministry of National Education, Preschool, and Sport (MEPS)'s Pioneer School Program (PSP) that aims at strengthening citizenship education within select schools. This report will analyze this initiative, examining how it can serve as an effective platform for embedding global citizenship education (GCED) principles and enhancing the educational experience for Moroccan students. The analysis will assess the current status of citizenship education within the Pioneer School Program, identify areas where GCED concepts can be integrated and recommend strategic outcomes and practical implementation strategies that align with both Moroccan education reform and APCEIU's GCED objectives.

### 1. Demographic and political context

The Kingdom of Morocco lies across the northwest coast of Africa and has a coastline on the North Atlantic Ocean as well as the Mediterranean Sea, encompassing 710,850 square kilometres. Its rich culture is an intermixture of Arab, Berber, European and African influences, but the majority of Morocco's population identify themselves as Berber and Arab.

The country's official religion is Islam, which "is constantly instrumental to various political and social goals. Nearly all Moroccans are Sunni Muslims but there are still a small number of Moroccan Jews (0.2 %) and groups of Christians (1.1%) and Shi'a Muslims (numbering around 5,000 each), which are mostly foreign residents." (BTI, 2016)

According to the High Commission for Planning (HCP), the population of Morocco grew to 36.82 million by September 2024, including 86,206 foreign residents. The preliminary results of Morocco's seventh census also revealed that the number of households reached

9.27 million and that the urbanization rate grew to 62.8 against 60.3% in 2014 and 55.1% in 2014.

At the political level, several political changes have influenced Moroccan society since 2011. Driven by the situation in the Arab world, the Kingdom managed to undertake, in a determined and inclusive way, its own process of democratic changes and conducted a very positive approach of the Arab Spring, leading to constitutional reform. Overwhelmingly approved by a national referendum, the constitutional reform of July 1, 2011, enshrined several key changes in Morocco's political system. The reforms strengthened the rule of law by broadening the legislative powers of Parliament and by mandating an independent judiciary. They also made Amazigh an official language in Morocco, alongside Arabic and the Arab Hassani language of the Saharawi tribes.

## **2. Assessment context in Morocco**

Since the beginning of the nineties, Morocco has undertaken a series of structural and institutional democratic changes that have led to constitutional reforms and new governments. Although Moroccan youth accounts for almost a third of Morocco's population according to recent statistics, their "participation in civic life is very low", and "most of their time is spent on unstructured personal activities". (World Bank, 2012, p. x). Hence, GCED has become an essential factor for active participation within the broader community. "The recognition that citizenship education involves "real-life" beyond school walls explains why various NGOs are actively involved in this process, not only as providers of citizenship experiences for young people but also as interfaces between schools and communities" (Ribeiro et al., 2012, P. 34). In addition, these NGOs are playing a key role in partnering with the Ministry of Education to provide GCED "at all levels of education, using formal, non-formal and informal methodologies, complementing school provision and fostering citizen's active participation in a democratic society." (Ribeiro et al., 2012, P. 41). As there has been growing interest in GCED in Morocco, educational reforms, namely the 'National Charter for Education and Training'(NCET), the 'Strategic Vision 2015-2030' and the Road Map 2022-2026 have outlined the guidelines for GCED including the collective and individual rights and responsibilities as well as universal values such as peace, human rights and democracy.



### 3. Moroccan educational system context

In Morocco, basic education between ages 6 and 15 is free and compulsory. It requires nine years of schooling, divided into two levels: six years of elementary school and three years of lower secondary school (middle school). Even though education is free of charge, many children, especially girls in rural areas, still do not attend school, or they drop out at an early age. Four levels comprise the Moroccan education system, including pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The system is under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Preschool and Sport and public schools are entirely funded by the State. According to a MEPS's presentation before the Commission of Education, Culture and Communication at the Parliament on November 1, 2024, Morocco has a total of 8,112,592 pupils enrolled in primary and secondary education. Of these pupils, 1,136,894 are enrolled in private schools.

To improve the quality of education in Morocco, the government has undertaken several reforms, including the NCET, the Strategic Vision (2015-2030) and the Road Map. Despite the recent reforms and the efforts deployed by the Ministry and its partners, reports from international evaluation surveys (TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA) reveal the persistence of the problem of the quality of Moroccan education. According to the results of the TIMSS-2019 evaluation, the scores of Moroccan pupils are still below the international average. In addition, in May 2024, Morocco's Economic, Social and Environmental Council reported that around 1,5 Million are NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) youth.

### 4. Assessment method

In this report, the MEPS 2023–2026 Road Map reform that has led to the Pioneer School Program (PSP) will be reviewed and analyzed. The implementation of the PSP will also be discussed, including the MEPS' framework memoranda and policy documents in addition to the extracurricular memorandum, along with some PSP teachers' guides.

## 5. The Road Map reform

### 5.1. The Road Map for Educational Reform (2022-2026)

In June 2022, the MEPS presented the Road Map for Educational Reform (2022-2026) whose main goal is to effectively improve the quality education in public schools through shifting from a reform focused on inputs and processes to the one focused on the impact within classrooms. This roadmap was discussed with over 100,000 participants, including 33,493 students, 21,837 teachers, 20,666 families, and 1,766 educational institutions. Consultations with participants took place through various channels, including 6,270 focus groups, 83 territorial meetings, 243 thematic workshops, and 22,000 responses to questionnaires. The Road Map outlined three strategic objectives including promoting openness and citizenship education and twelve commitments that revolve around three components of the education system: the student, the teacher, and the school.

The Road Map reform has identified three main priority areas of focus in education:

1. Ensuring the quality of learning
2. Promoting openness and citizenship education
3. Achieving compulsory education

According to the Road Map, to achieve quality learning, “the school should allow learners to acquire knowledge and skills that will help them succeed in their academic and professional career.” To promote openness and citizenship education, the school is the best space where children acquire national and universal values, the meaning citizenship, and the spirit of curiosity and self-confidence. To achieve compulsory education, the school should guarantee that children benefit from a school curriculum until the age of 16 years regardless of social origin and location. The Road Map has identified the year 2026 as a deadline to achieve these three priority areas reflected in enhancing the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, by doubling the percentage of students who understand basic subjects on a primary school level, and consolidating the values of citizenship, by doubling the percentage of students benefiting from extra-curricular school activities, and reducing school drop out by 30%, in order to give a strong impetus to compulsory education.



To achieve these goals, the Road Map revolves around 12 commitments for a quality public school for all, organized according to three strategic axes of intervention, and distributed as follows: Five commitments related to the student, three to the teacher and four to the school.

Among the five key commitments related to students: The Ministry of Education is planning to implement programs and textbooks that promote the acquisition of fundamental skills and language mastery. The Ministry notes that efforts have been made in recent years to revise primary school programs, but secondary school programs have not yet been updated. To identify the fundamental skills to be prioritized, school programs need to be broken down into specific learning objectives at the end of each educational cycle.

To improve this, the Ministry aims to create a national reference manual for each subject and school level by the end of 2026 using a rigorous methodology to ensure its pedagogical effectiveness. It also plans to provide digital resources for students to enhance their learning and proposes a revised approach to foreign language instruction, focusing on practice to improve written and oral language skills, with rigorous student placement methods. Another commitment related to students is the Ministry's desire to provide guidance toward new pathways tailored to individual profiles to increase the chances of success.

As for the three commitments related to the teacher, the Road Map has stated them as follows:

1. Excellent and solid training that is oriented towards practice to allow teachers to adopt an efficient and caring pedagogy
2. Improved working conditions to meet the need of teachers and further strengthen their impact on the students
3. Rewarding management system to encourage the efforts of the teachers.

In terms of the commitments that are related to schools, the Road Map aims to improve the conditions and equipment of schools in order to enhance students and teachers' motivation, thereby supporting learning and reducing the rate of school dropout that goes up to 300,000 students every year. According to the Road Map, by 2026, all primary and secondary school classrooms will have digital projection equipment to make use of



pedagogically effective resources. Multimedia rooms will be modernized and expanded in secondary schools.

Furthermore, the MEPS will encourage extracurricular and sports activities that contribute to students' personal development by enhancing their cross-cutting skills, such as sociability, creativity, curiosity, a taste for effort, self-confidence, cooperation, and effective communication. To achieve this, access to sports will be expanded for all students through physical education in school programs, the development of sports and cultural activities, increased inter-school tournaments, and the sharing of sports facilities.

## **5.2 PSP to implement the Road Map**

On June 20, 2024, the Government Council approved the Decree related to the implementation of the PSP. For the academic year 2023-2024, Morocco has 626 pioneer schools in elementary education. According to a press release published in Arabic on Friday September 6, 2024 on the MEPS's website, the PSP will be expanded by 2,000 additional institutions each year, covering 1.3 million students, representing 30% of primary school students, and involving around 45,000 trained and engaged teachers. A pilot phase for the secondary education level is launched based on the voluntary participation of educational teams. To pilot the "Pioneering Middle Schools" model, 232 middle schools across various regions have been selected, representing 10% of middle schools, around 200,000 students, 7,000 engaged teachers, and 800 supervisors covering most specialties. On November 20, 2024, the Minister of Education announced at the Children's Parliament that the PSP will be generalized by 2028.

### ***What is the Pioneer School?***

The pioneer schools in Morocco are a new educational experiment aimed at creating a qualitative shift in public education. They apply modern educational and pedagogical curricula, focusing on developing students' skills and preparing them to face contemporary challenges, benefiting from the latest technologies and educational tools. According to the Framework Memorandum issued by the MEPS on May 18, 2023, the primary aims of this initiative include enhancing foundational learning quality, developing students' knowledge, skills, and emotional capacities, and reducing dropout risks. The PSP was designed as



an integrated framework that ensures synergy across the three pillars of the 2022-2026 roadmap. The project includes four structured components, implemented simultaneously as a package to improve students' mastery of foundational skills:

- **Component 1: Remedial** – Encompasses the execution of educational support activities in primary education using the “Teaching at the Right Level” (TaRL) approach. This includes integrated support within school hours alongside additional educational support outside school hours as needed.
- **Component 2: Preventive** – Institutionalizes effective classroom practices during the initial resource provisioning phase.
- **Component 3: Educational-Organizational** – Focuses on specialized teaching to maximize learning time and benefit from teachers' interests and competencies (an optional component).
- **Component 4: Managerial-Physical** – Involves enhancing the school's internal and external environment to make it more attractive and conducive to productivity.

### *Objectives of the PSP*

PSP aims to bring about a radical change in the education system in Morocco, striving to achieve a set of educational, social, and economic goals that contribute to building a generation of qualified citizens capable of keeping pace with contemporary challenges. As stated in the Framework Memorandum, PSP is part of the ongoing implementation of updates to the primary education curriculum and aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Implementing the contents of the educational reform roadmap (2022-2026) according to the principle of gradualism, focusing on its three main areas;
- Implementing reform projects within an integrated approach that ensures through its integration the enhancement of the quality of learning;
- Adopting a participatory approach to build an effective public educational institution that meets the expectations of students, their families, the educational staff, and various partners;

- Enhancing the professional capacities of the educational staff through recent and high-quality certification training that combines theoretical training and practical field experience;
- Relying on close support to refine the professional skills of the educational staff and to value the best practices;
- Enabling Students to Acquire Basic Learning Skills: Using scientifically validated pedagogical approaches.
- Provision of Necessary Material and Educational Resources: Facilitating educators' work by equipping educational institutions with essential tools and resources for optimal implementation of reform projects.
- Motivating Educational and Administrative Staff: Recognizing efforts and embracing successful initiatives to inspire the workforce.

According to middle school Framework memorandum issued by the MEPS on March 18, 2024, the "Pioneer Middle Schools" program is structured around four key pillars:

1. Developing, supporting, and implementing the integrated school project.
2. Providing preventive, supportive, and individualized assistance to students.
3. Supporting teachers with effective pedagogical practices.
4. Promoting students' personal development through extracurricular and sports activities.

Furthermore, the design, preparation, and implementation of the "Pioneer Middle Schools" program are grounded in the following pillars:

- Experimentation and innovation based on international best practices and research findings.
- Monitoring and impact assessment.
- Mobilizing and supporting school principals, teaching staff, and all other stakeholders.



As part of its innovation efforts, the Ministry may introduce adjustments in these institutions, especially regarding educational organization, curriculum content, guidance pathways, and student evaluation methods.

### ***Participation in the “Pioneer Middle Schools” Program***

In its initial phase, the “Pioneer Middle Schools” program is launched in 232 public secondary middle schools, starting in the 2024–2025 school year. The process proceeds as follows:

The Regional Academies for Education and Training (AREF), in coordination with Provincial directorates, identify a list of middle schools proposed for participation in the first phase of the program, based on the following criteria:

- a. High rates of school dropout.
- b. Schools with suitable physical infrastructure, or those scheduled for rehabilitation and equipping.
- c. Active engagement and commitment from school principals and teaching teams.

The list of targeted schools is finalized based on recommendations from the AREF, Provincial directorates, and consultations with the school principals of the selected middle schools.

Starting in March 2024, middle schools seeking the “Pioneer Middle School” designation develop an integrated school project, which serves as a foundational step toward achieving the program’s commitments and objectives.

## **6. Implementation mechanisms**

### ***Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)***

“Teaching at the Right Level,” abbreviated as TaRL, is one of the key pedagogical approaches used in pioneer schools. This approach focuses on assessing each student’s level in core subjects, such as Arabic and mathematics, and providing appropriate support and instruction based on their actual level. TaRL is implemented through the following

steps:

- **Diagnosis and Evaluation:** Diagnostic tests are conducted to determine each student's level in core subjects. These tests help identify each student's strengths and weaknesses and determine the appropriate level of instruction needed.
- **Grouping by Level:** After the diagnosis, students are grouped into small classes based on their academic performance, rather than age or grade, allowing instruction at each student's level.
- **Customized Instruction:** Each learner receives personalized instruction tailored to meet their individual needs, allowing them to progress at their own pace. A variety of teaching methods and educational resources are used to achieve this.
- **Continuous Assessment:** The student's progress is continuously evaluated to ensure understanding and achievement of learning goals. Instruction and teaching methods are adjusted based on assessment results.

The TaRL approach helps address the issue of varying student levels within a single class, ensuring each learner receives the appropriate education needed to advance in their learning journey and reach their fullest potential. TaRL has been “effective as a remedial procedure especially in Arabic as it is the native language in Morocco”.

## 7. PSP Stakeholders and their Roles

On March 18, 2024, the Morocco government and the French Development Agency signed a financing agreement for 134.7 million Euros divided into two components: a public policy funding of 130 M Euros and 4.7 M Euros as a grant to support the implementation of the Road map reform.

To optimally implement the PSP, central, regional, provincial, and local teams are formed, composed of specialists in education and administration. Their role will be to facilitate field monitoring, collect data on progress, and assess impact.

### *At the Central Level*

The PSP is housed in the Curriculum Directorate, with a central team responsible for



its management. This team includes members from the central reform support unit, representatives from other central directorates related to the project, and several school supervisors involved in the PSP. Their responsibilities include:

- Taking all necessary measures for the national-level implementation of the project.
- Coordinating the efforts of various national-level stakeholders.
- Overseeing field operations related to monitoring and assessing impact.

### ***At the Regional Level***

The regional team, operating under the supervision of the AREF's director, comprises:

- The Head of the Educational Affairs Department oversees the general supervision of all measures related to Pioneer Schools within the territory of the AREF.
- The Regional Project Monitoring Officer, tasked with field monitoring of Pioneer Schools, collecting data on their status, and tracking impact.
- Heads of departments directly related to the project, responsible for establishing all necessary measures according to their specializations.
- The regional supervisor assigned to coordinate the project's regional implementation and lead the team of inspectors overseeing field execution.

The AREF is considered to be the project holder integrating it into its strategic plans and programs as a priority and foundation for its educational and training vision under the 2022-2026 Roadmap.

To achieve this, each AREF will:

- Form a project steering committee chaired by the AREF's director, including the provincial directors, department heads, and other resource persons as needed, meeting regularly to review project progress and make necessary decisions.
- Assign members to the regional project monitoring team.
- Prepare a regional strategic plan to support the project's development and dissemination.

- Identify relevant public primary schools for each phase of project implementation.
- Develop a localized vision for the project within its jurisdiction.
- Coordinate regional teams for project leadership across regional directorates.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for training educational staff in targeted institutions, specifying the number of beneficiaries, training centers, formats, and periods.
- Establish annual and phased tracking plans for project stages, including reports on progress, especially regarding institutional preparation, training, project experimentation, and evaluation, as well as assessing each institution's progress in achieving lead standards.
- Take all necessary and immediate measures to ensure continuous implementation of the project, preventing any potential setbacks from hindering objectives.
- Provide the necessary educational materials and equipment for project execution.

### ***At the Provincial Level***

The provincial team, supervised by the AREF's director, includes:

- The Head of the Educational Institutions Supervision and Guidance Department or the Head of the Educational Affairs Department (when necessary), responsible for overseeing Pioneer Schools within the provincial directorate.
- Heads of other departments directly involved in the project, each responsible for establishing measures within their specializations.
- The provincial team of trained inspectors for field support in Pioneer Schools, responsible for monitoring and tracking the project's implementation at field level.
- A coordinator chosen from among the directors of Pioneer Schools, responsible for coordinating efforts among directors within the provincial directorate and facilitating knowledge-sharing and experience exchange.

In this context, the Provincial Directorate undertakes the following tasks:

- Implementing the Regional Strategic Plan: Ensuring institution development in accordance with a detailed schedule.



- Annual Provincial Plan for Educator Training: Creating an annual provincial plan to implement the regional plan related to training programs for educational staff at designated institutions.
- Monitoring Project Phases and Reporting: Following the various stages of project implementation and preparing reports on the progress of different activities, particularly concerning institution development, training, and project piloting, as well as monitoring each institution's progress in meeting the "Pioneer School" criteria. These reports are submitted to the Director of the AREF.
- Taking Necessary Measures for Project Continuity: Ensuring uninterrupted implementation and project progress to prevent any setbacks that might hinder the achievement of desired objectives.
- Approving and Updating Institutional Projects: Continuously approving and updating institutional projects according to established procedures.
- Regular Monitoring and Support for Project Components: Tracking the implementation of various components of the integrated institutional project regularly and providing appropriate support to overcome challenges beyond the capacity of the institution's educational team.
- Conducting Periodic Evaluations of Institutional Standards Achievement: Performing periodic assessments of progress toward meeting the criteria of "Pioneer School" status at each stage, with administrative and educational interventions as needed.
- Gathering Data on Institutional Needs: Collecting information on the material and educational requirements of each institution based on "Pioneer School" standards.
- Preparing Detailed Profiles for Each Institution: Creating technical profiles for each institution, offering a clear description of all levels of intervention required for institution enhancement at each stage.



### ***At the School Level***

The local team for the PSP comprises:

**School Director:** Acting as the leader, facilitator, and coordinator of project measures at the school level, responsible for:

- Tracking the implementation of the project's four components according to the official program.
- Coordinating the work of the school's educational team.
- Facilitating the participation of various project stakeholders.
- Preparing periodic reports on project activities and identifying implementation challenges.
- School-level Coordinator Teacher: Responsible for coordinating among teachers in implementing approved pedagogical approaches in classroom practices, supporting institutional development, and activating school life activities.

**Pioneer School Teachers:** Their responsibilities under the Pioneer School framework include:

- Implementing the pedagogical approaches covered in the training sessions.
- Overseeing activities related to objective assessments of student performance and tracking outcomes.
- Contributing to the activation of school life activities.
- Participating in scheduled institutional support activities outside of designated teaching hours.



## 8. Citizenship education within the extracurricular activities in middle schools

Within the framework of implementing the provisions of the “2022-2026 Roadmap for Quality Public Schools” reform, MEPS issued a memorandum concerning the implementation of extracurricular Activities in PSP on September 25, 2024. This initiative aims to strengthen students’ openness and citizenship education by enhancing and diversifying extracurricular activities in Pioneer Middle Schools, improving their quality to align with students’ skills and interests, and providing greater opportunities for them to develop their abilities. It also seeks to expand the number of beneficiaries to reach half of the student population by 2026. As part of these efforts, Pioneer Middle Schools launch and implement the extracurricular activities component, starting with the 2024-2025 school year.

Extracurricular activities of quality are one of the four main pillars of the Pioneer Middle Schools Program. These activities aim to foster the success of students, develop their autonomy, and cultivate new skills both within and outside the school environment.

### *Objectives and Principles*

The MEPS has adopted the 2022-2026 Roadmap for educational reform to establish a modern, vibrant, and dynamic Moroccan school. This is achieved by implementing the Pioneer Middle Schools Program, an integrated and structured initiative based on innovative approaches. These focus on transforming the student experience from passive reception to active participation in educational practices, encouraging self-development, sharpening critical thinking, and fostering intelligence, creativity, and innovation.

As stated in the memorandum, to achieve these objectives, all stakeholders involved in the Pioneer Middle Schools Program should be mobilized to make extracurricular activities an effective gateway to the desired transformation in these schools, based on the following ten principles:

- 1. Institutionalization of Activities:** Extracurricular activities are integrated into students’ weekly schedules for two hours per week at designated and secure times.
- 2. Partnerships:** Curricula and content for extracurricular activities are developed centrally in collaboration with the Ministry’s expert partners.

- 3. Precise Scheduling:** A detailed schedule is established for each session, specifying the activities and objectives for each session individually.
- 4. Quality of Content and Facilitation:** Activity guides for students and facilitators are developed, including print and digital materials provided by specialized civil society partners under the Ministry's supervision. Facilitators of workshops will also receive training on content, scheduling, facilitation techniques, and workshop management.
- 5. Development of New Skills for Students:** Extracurricular activities aim to build cross-cutting skills such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, initiative, and citizenship, as well as psychosocial skills like self-confidence, effective communication, emotional management, and conflict resolution.
- 6. Measuring Impact on Students:** Facilitators will track students' acquisition of cross-cutting and psychosocial skills based on the targeted skills in each area of extracurricular activities.
- 7. Recognition of Participation and Excellence:** Students' participation and progress in acquiring targeted skills will be valued and reflected in their academic results.
- 8. Student Motivation:** Students will be encouraged through individual or group projects undertaken during extracurricular workshops.
- 9. Detailed Monitoring:** A thorough follow-up will ensure the implementation of the detailed program for extracurricular activities and students' regular participation, in line with quality standards.
- 10. Enriching School Life:** This includes establishing educational clubs, launching initiatives and events at the school level, and participating in regional, national, and international events within networking frameworks.



### *Program Structure for Extracurricular Activities proposed by the MEPS*

Potential Areas for Activities	<p><b>New Areas Managed in Partnership with Key National Associations:</b>  Drama;  Improvisation;  Audiovisual Arts;  Scientific Exploration;  Entrepreneurial Culture;</p> <p><b>Areas managed through partnerships with major associations under central agreements:</b>  Environment (Young Journalists for the Environment Program);  Citizenship (APT2C Program) *</p> <p><b>Areas linked to specialized non-generalized subjects:</b>  Music Education;  Visual Arts;  Family Education.</p>
Facilitators	<p><b>Volunteer teachers</b> from the institution, either within their regular schedule or through compensated additional hours (a supervisor is designated for each institution and field).</p> <p><b>Facilitators from nearby centers for artistic and literary development</b>, working within their schedule or compensated additional hours.</p> <p><b>External participants from partner local associations</b>, provided they have undergone regional training and meet strict quality standards.</p>
Scheduling	Two hours per academic level are allocated for extracurricular activities in Pioneer Middle Schools, preferably in the afternoon. These hours are incorporated into both student timetables and teacher schedules.
Target Audience	The goal is to engage <b>two-thirds of the students</b> at each institution in extracurricular activities.

*\* The main objective of APT2C project "Supporting the promotion of tolerance, civic-mindedness and citizenship in schools and the prevention of risky behavior" is to strengthen the role of school life in promoting a more tolerant society by spreading the values of civic-mindedness and citizenship among young people. APT2C is the result of a partnership agreement between the Morocco Ministry of National Education, implementing partner, the Rabita Mohammadia des Oulémas (The Mohammedian League of Scholars), technical partner, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that was signed in March 2018.*

Based on the four middle school extracurricular modules I have reviewed; the following are the skills to be developed in the learners in the PSP:

## **Social emotional skills**

### Personal skills

- I trust my skills and competencies
- I am motivated and I do my best to achieve my objectives

### Dealing with the other

- I can work with a team and make decisions
- I can take part in a discussion and express my point of view

### My civic conduct and citizen

- I understand my rights and duties inside and outside my school
- I respect the rights of the other inside and outside my school
- I do my homework at school and at home

## **Transversal Skills**

### Critical thinking

- I collect data on local, national and global issues
- I analyze data and justify

### Creativity

- I express myself through social media and art
- I use my imagination to produce a piece of art
- I propose different innovative and suitable solutions for environmental and social issues

### General knowledge

- I improve my skills in art and science
- I improve knowledge in national and global history
- I improve my knowledge about other countries and cultures



## 9. Analysis and discussion

It seems that the PSP is a promising and ambitious program that needs to be enhanced by the school's partners including NGOs, parents and community members. According to a statement made Mohammed VI University after an assessment, PSP 'has had significant effects on learning, with an improvement of 0.9 standard deviation across all subjects' in particular on French, Arabic and Mathematics."

However, there are two main related factors that make the PSP implementation problematic. The first issue is that some of the recommendations are *structural* and thus vague in terms of what could inspire pupils, and what they could understand concretely about the reform itself. Second, and related, for the Roadmap reform to succeed the strategy must essentially build knowledge, commitment and capacity around the reform ideas. In other words, the reform ideas and capacity should combine to develop *ownership and commitment*. This is not a simple matter of endorsement but essentially involves the *joint determination* of shaping and re-shaping ideas through action in partnership.

In addition to these two factors, it seems that the citizenship education component is not given a priority inside and outside the classroom settings. This is probably due to the teachers' workload and the restricted time allotted to the extra-curricular activities.

Therefore, there is a need to integrate innovative educational methods and approaches to learning and teaching. This cannot be achieved unless we offer capacity building, preservice training and continuous professional development. By introducing GCED within extra curriculum activities, students will be involved in the learning process and feel responsible and active. Furthermore, they will be able to discuss current issues like climate change, social justice, human rights and democracy. Through GCED programs, students, youth groups and NGOs may have the opportunity to use cooperative learning to discuss and debate local and global issue of their concern.

Practical activities may include the following:

- Encourage project-based learning that focuses on authentic and real-life issues such as community service projects, human rights and environmental sustainability.

- Integrate debate clubs into the school clubs to activate the extra-activities memoranda issued by MEPS. The main purpose is to develop in the learners team work, critical thinking and public speaking.
- Help create the connection between the pioneer school and the community through volunteering and community service such as organizing cleanliness campaigns, helping the poor and taking care of the neighborhood.
- Support environmental awareness activities that may focus on recycling programs, reducing waste and conserving natural resources such as water.

These activities among others can help students develop a sense of civic engagement and responsibility with the aim of creating active, effective and responsible citizens who are committed to contributing to the values of global citizenship education.

## 10. Recommendations

Based on the documents' review and analysis of the findings that emerged from the PSP Framework Memoranda and following the announcement of the Minister of Education regarding the PSP's generalization across the twelve existing AREFs by 2028, this section suggests the following strategic outcomes and practical implementation strategies that align with both Moroccan education reform and APCEIU's GCED objectives.

1. Teachers, administrators and NGOs' capacities strengthened to be able to integrate GCED within the extracurricular activities conducted in the Pioneers Schools. To achieve this outcome, teacher training colleges (CRMEFs) and universities in Morocco should consider GCED as a component in preservice training.
2. Teacher professional development enhanced to be able to develop in the learners the knowledge, skills and values of GCED. To do so, school supervisors should be able to train and guide practitioners towards interactive and innovative methods of teaching and learning GCED in PSP settings.
3. Citizenship school clubs set up and activated in every pioneer school in order to create a space for discussing local and global issues and concepts such as human rights, democracy, climate change and intercultural dialogue.



4. Making the best use of some of the existing citizenship education projects such as the APT2C project “Supporting the promotion of tolerance, civic-mindedness and citizenship in schools and the prevention of risky behavior” that is implemented by MEPS and funded by UNDP.
5. Support the MEPS to increase public policy dialogues on GCED among the NGOs, educational experts, GCED specialists, researchers and MEPS’ stakeholders. The purpose is to work towards effective implementation of GCED by encouraging analysis and critical thinking rather than describing and informing, which are still dominating in the classroom practices.
6. Support the AREFs and provincial directorate to establish partnerships and networks between their schools and NGOs that provide GCED. The purpose is to connect the school with its community in order to create an interaction on local and global issues between the citizen and the authorities.
7. Help to balance individual growth with collective development, employability with active citizenship. The best education systems of the future will intentionally cultivate individual and collective growth, as well as employability and active citizenship, in equal measure.



## Conclusion

PSP is a core operational mechanism within the 2022–2026 Roadmap, targeting public elementary and secondary middle schools to bring about the desired qualitative transformation. This program aims to establish a dynamic led by school stakeholders, supported by central, regional, and provincial teams. PSP seeks to reduce school dropout rates, increase student success rates, and promote personal growth by providing optimal physical conditions and a supportive environment for all.

This report has tried to discuss the MEPS's PSP and analyze this initiative, examining how it can serve as an effective platform for embedding GCED's principles and enhancing the educational experience for Moroccan students. The analysis has assessed the current status of citizenship education within the extra-curricular activities in PSP, identified some areas where its concepts can be integrated and recommended strategic outcomes and practical implementation strategies that align with both Moroccan education reform and APCEIU's GCED objectives.

It has been revealed that there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacities of teachers and learners in terms of implementing the GCED and engage NGOs whose role has become vital in this field. Furthermore, integrating GCED in preservice training and professional development has become a must. Therefore, the 2022-2026 Road Map reform may constitute a good platform for integrating GCED since one of its main strategic objectives is promoting openness and citizenship education.

The assessment report has also made a number of recommendations that include capacity building, setting up and activating citizenship education school clubs, and establishing partnerships and networks to sustain GCED activities in addition to involving NGOs in the public policy dialogues.

The findings of this study also suggest that it is vital to engage in qualitative research based on interviews with students, educators, and NGOs in order to obtain a better understanding of how to integrate GCED into PSP.



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## Web links

- <https://www.men.gov.ma/Fr/Pages/CNEF.aspx> (National Charter for Education and Training)
- <https://www.finances.gov.ma/en/Pages/detail-actualite.aspx?fiche=6825> (Roadmap agreement signing)
- [https://www.google.com/search?sca\\_esv=edbcade7e6a2d00e&rlz=1C1GCEA\\_enMA932MA932&q=High+Commission+of+Planning+Morocco+population&nirf=High+Commissariat+of+Planning+Morocco+population&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewi3rfTNwPqJAXWNU6QEHU3xCKgQ8BYoAXoECA4QAq&biw=1280&bih=559&dpr=1.5](https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=edbcade7e6a2d00e&rlz=1C1GCEA_enMA932MA932&q=High+Commission+of+Planning+Morocco+population&nirf=High+Commissariat+of+Planning+Morocco+population&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewi3rfTNwPqJAXWNU6QEHU3xCKgQ8BYoAXoECA4QAq&biw=1280&bih=559&dpr=1.5) (High Commission of Planning)
- <https://www.barlamantoday.com/2024/05/09/cese-research-finds-1-5-million-neet-youth-in-morocco/> (NEET in Morocco)
- <https://www.csefrs.ma/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Re%CC%81sume%CC%81-vision-Anglais.pdf> (Strategic Vision 2015-2030)
- <https://www.madrastna.ma/fr-FR/pages/feuille-de-route> (Road Map Reform 2022-2026)
- <https://www.unicef.org/media/90651/file/Morocco-2019-COAR.pdf> (UNICEF country report Morocco 2019)
- [https://morocco-emba.jp/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Morocco\\_2011.pdf](https://morocco-emba.jp/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Morocco_2011.pdf) (Morocco Constitution 2011)
- <https://www.mecs-press.org/ijeme/ijeme-v13-n3/IJEME-V13-N3-1.pdf> (Tarl approach)
- <https://www.men.gov.ma/Ar/Documents/23-022%20.pdf> (Framework Memorandum to implement PSP)
- [https://www.men.gov.ma/Ar/Documents/Notes\\_MENPS/Note\\_1382418032024.pdf](https://www.men.gov.ma/Ar/Documents/Notes_MENPS/Note_1382418032024.pdf) (Middle School Framework Memorandum)



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