

Training for the Future

SNAPSHOT	
Organization(s)	Accenture
Project Name	Training for the Future
Location	Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, Spain, South Africa, Tunisia
Date(s) of Implementation	2015 – Present
Funding Amount	N/A
Partner(s) / Funder(s)	Education for Employment
Number of Youth Beneficiaries Trained (Phase 1)	Total: 29,438 Women: 17,250 Men: 12,188
Number of Youth Beneficiaries Trained (Phase 2)	Total: 9,478 Women: 4,887 Men: 4,591
Number of Youth Beneficiaries Employed (Phase 3)	Total: 4,673 Women: 2,469 Men: 2,204
Types of Digital Work	Private Sector – ICT Sector Private Sector – Non-ICT Sector
Source of Metrics	Internal monitoring & evaluation

ABOUT TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Youth unemployment is particularly high in Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, Spain, South Africa and Tunisia. This is attributable to several factors, including high population growth rates, slowing GDP growth or severe recessions. The primary cause, however, is a mismatch between the skills taught by the public education systems and those in demand by employers.

Indeed, the private sector is struggling to fill vacancies. A report by employment-services firm Manpower indicates that over one-third of employers worldwide have trouble filling positions, citing a lack of soft, behavioral and technical skills.¹ There are also other mismatches: a disparity between youth expectations and available jobs, and between the number of jobs that require social capital to secure and the less connected young people who seek them.

As part of the company's *Skills to Succeed* corporate citizenship initiative, Accenture has partnered with Education for Employment (EFE), an affiliated network of locally-run non-profit organizations in the Middle East and North Africa. EFE's mission is to create economic opportunities for unemployed youth so they can achieve a brighter future for themselves, their families and their communities. EFE helps young women and men find work, develop their professional skills and build social capital using demand-driven training programs. At the same time, EFE works to improve how educators, employers and families prepare youth for the workforce.

¹ Ryder, Brett (2012). "The Great Mismatch". *The Economist*. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/business/2012/12/08/the-great-mismatch>.

As a strategic partner, Accenture is helping EFE address the skills mismatch using *Emplea+*, a unique online platform that aims to close the gap in both soft and digital skills. The *Emplea+* platform was developed in 2013 in collaboration with Accenture, the Spanish Ministry of Employment and a cross-sector consortium of nonprofit partners and corporations.

FIGURE 1 Students Accessing Training for the Future digital courses (Tunisia, Sfax)



PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

Program Design	Supply-Side Components		Demand-Side Components	
	Training & Skills Development	✓	Improving Access to Finance for SMEs	×
	Employment & Intermediation Services	✓	Capacity Building & Information Provision	✓
	Subsidized Employment	×	Targeted Sector-Specific Approaches	×

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2015, Accenture and EFE launched Training for the Future, an innovative program for youth ages 15 to 25 that aims to:

1. **Improve Employability:** improve the foundational skills levels of 37,000 youth through digital training.
2. **Train for Employment:** equip 10,000 youth with demand-driven in-classroom training.
3. **Place in Employment:** place 6,000 youth in jobs or paid internships in in-demand jobs.

These targets follow a funnel approach, where a subset of beneficiaries in each phase advance to the following phase. Therefore, these targets are not cumulative.

Accenture’s recent research, [New Skills Now: Inclusion in the Digital Economy](#), found that while demand for digital and technical skills is increasing, developing employability skills—such as leadership, analytical thinking, creativity and emotional intelligence—are also necessary for adding critical value to the evolving digital market. As a result, Training for the Future focuses on a combination of soft and digital skills.

Training for the Future focuses on six countries: Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, Spain, South Africa and Tunisia (see Table 1). To implement the program across target geographies, Training for the Future collaborates with a network of twelve EFE nonprofit partners, EFE affiliates in Morocco and Tunisia, and other Accenture nonprofit partners in Spain, Brazil, Argentina and South Africa.² The project is currently in Year 3, the final year of the grant.

TABLE 1 Program Targets by Year and Country³

YEAR	ARGENTINA	BRAZIL	MOROCCO	S. AFRICA	SPAIN	TUNISIA	TOTAL
PHASE 1. IMPROVE EMPLOYABILITY							
Year 1	380	-	300	300	4,000	300	5,320
Year 2	1,690	-	2,090	1,830	6,100	1,730	13,440
Year 3	3,160	760	2,930	3,200	6,100	2,130	18,280
Total	5,230	760	5,320	5,330	16,200	4,160	37,000
PHASE 2. TRAIN FOR EMPLOYMENT							
Year 1	400 ⁴	-	500	400	40	200	1,540
Year 2	260	-	460	480	2,500	220	3,920
Year 3	170	166	435	828	2,689	252	4,540
Total	830	166	1,395	1,708	5,229	672	10,000
PHASE 3. PLACE IN EMPLOYMENT							
Year 1	300	-	384	300	18	150	1,152
Year 2	225	-	354	360	1,147	150	2,236
Year 3	106	126	335	620	1,214	211	2,612
Total	631	126	1,073	1,280	2,379	511	6,000

² The on-the-ground implementing partners in this project are: Fundación Pescar (Argentina); Rede Cidadã (Brazil); Fondation Marocaine de L’Education Pour L’Emploi – EFE Maroc (Morocco); Asociación para el Empleo y la Formación de Personas con Discapacidad – FSC Inserta, Cáritas Española, Cruz Roja, Fundación Tomillo, and Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Spain); Joburg Centre for Software Engineering – JCSE, Mentec Foundation, and Reconstructed Living Lab – RLabs (South Africa); Foundation Education for Employment Tunisie – EFE Tunisie (Tunisia).

³ Please note that each phase follows a funnel approach and therefore are not unique figures. A subset of beneficiaries in each phase goes into the following one.

⁴ The target for Phase 2 is higher than Phase 1 in Argentina because the Emplea+ platform was ready after the launch of the project. Argentina began working on Phase 2 while the Emplea+ platform was finalized for Phase 1.

RECRUITMENT

Beneficiaries are recruited through a variety of channels, including alumni groups, social media and external partnerships with other workforce development organizations (e.g., Ministries of Higher Education, Career Centers). In Morocco, implementing partners established an “ambassadors” program where alumni share their experiences at different events and with EFE Morocco’s more than 125,000 Facebook followers.⁵

ACTIVITIES

PHASE 1: IMPROVE EMPLOYABILITY

In the first phase of Training for the Future, participants complete a one-hour online self-assessment that measures the individual’s proficiency in five core workplace competencies: Self-Confidence, Self-Control, Communication, Compliance Rules and Tasks, and Mathematical Reasoning. These are part of the *Emplea+* platform, which currently includes 20 competencies.

Proficiency is ranked on a scale of 0 to 6, with 0 signifying a major deficit and 6 representing mastery. Upon completing the self-assessment, participants receive a profile of their scores and a personalized training plan based on factors such as level of education and lowest-rated competencies.

Participants then complete an online or blended training to improve their weakest competencies. Students can take courses independently or at partner locations, either via online or blended training.

- **Online training:** A 45 to 60-minute virtual training session that helps participants advance one level higher than their self-assessment scores.
- **Blended training:** Training that combines classroom and virtual elements to help students develop competencies in which they scored above a Level 2.

Scoring standards are the same for both trainings, and program managers have access to global data. To measure the training’s impact on proficiency, participants take a 10-minute assessment upon completion. Implementing partners use these results to ensure that each candidate is developing a skills profile that matches the needs of a target employer. The results are carefully reviewed in face-to-face interviews with the candidate.

PHASE 2: TRAIN FOR EMPLOYMENT

A sub-group of youth who complete Phase 1, Improve Employability, progress to Phase 2, Train for Employment, where they receive classroom and/or job training with companies. Training plans focus on in-demand sectors and are designed to meet the requirements of a specific role. Duration depends on the desired skills and nature of delivery; classroom trainings typically last one to five months.

⁵ Number of followers provided by Education For Employment and based on the [EFE-Maroc Facebook page](#).

PHASE 3: PLACE IN EMPLOYMENT

EFE's network of partners conduct a yearly market analysis to identify the most in-demand job profiles in growing sectors that are accessible to the target population. Accenture, EFE and the implementing partners work in parallel with employers to identify opportunities for candidates. Participating companies are involved in training design and delivery, which supports candidate placement and success, and coaching and mentoring continue into employment.

Participants who remained unemployed for six months following Phase 2 or were not selected for Phase 2 receive additional support from the implementing partner. This includes training, labor mediation, access to job newsletters, invitations to seminars and access to the program's alumni network. Training for the Future does not count employment outcomes stemming from these activities toward its impact metrics.

FIGURE 2 Training for the Future team members celebrating after their graduation ceremony at Accenture's office (Argentina, Buenos Aires)



IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

The program's scope, its geographical, multi-cultural and linguistic diversity, and inexperience on the part of certain implementing partners, have resulted in several challenges:

- **Employers initially skeptical of online training.** By involving employers in training and curriculum development, Training for the Future gained credibility and a deeper understanding of employer needs. Seeing how the program reduces soft-skill and technical knowledge gaps, employers often return for staffing needs or to discuss larger-scale opportunities.
- **Restrictions in telecommunications infrastructure.** Limitations on network infrastructure are a major challenge in some countries, causing accessibility issues and making online platforms difficult to use. Corrective actions have been taken where possible.
- **Limited experience in using online training platforms.** For some local implementers, this was their first experience using an online training platform. To mitigate this learning curve, EFE and

Accenture provided support and shared best practices across the network. The implementing partners subsequently integrated trainer upskilling into their daily operations.

- Continuing to develop the skills curriculum.** Mid-way through program implementation, our partners learned from employers in target sectors that participants needed training in additional competencies. Based on this feedback, we expanded the original five core competencies to include: Ability to Relate, Focus on Results, Initiative and Decision Making, Client Focus, Flexibility, Creativity and Innovation, and Tolerating Frustration. Accenture Spain is developing a digital framework to identify the most in-demand job profiles (26 to date)⁶ in different markets and the responsibilities associated with each profile. This information, combined with an extensive catalogue of competencies and digital courses, will allow *Emplea+* to adapt its training plans to match participants with potential job profiles.
- Maintaining youth engagement.** It can be challenging and expensive to keep young people engaged after training ends. To establish a continuous feedback loop and inform future activities, Training for the Future developed surveys, established shadowing sessions during training and organized focus groups to collect feedback from participants and employers.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Training for the Future has upskilled over 29,000 youth, provided over 9,400 youth with demand-driven in-classroom training and placed over 4,600 youth in jobs.

TABLE 2 Beneficiaries Reached, As of September 2017^{7,8}

BENEFICIARIES REACHED		ARGENTINA	BRAZIL*	MOROCCO	SOUTH AFRICA	SPAIN	TUNISIA	TOTALS
Phase 1. Improve Employability	<i>Target</i>	5,230	760	5,320	5,330	16,200	4,160	37,000
	<i>Actuals</i>	4,723	464	3,955	2,758	14,470	3,068	29,438
	<i>%</i>	90%	61%	74%	52%	89%	74%	80%
Phase 2. Train for Employment	<i>Target</i>	830	166	1,395	1,708	5,229	672	10,000
	<i>Actuals</i>	813	160	1,169	1,229	5,491	616	9,478
	<i>%</i>	98%	96%	84%	72%	105%	92%	95%
Phase 3. Place in Employment	<i>Target</i>	631	126	1,073	1,280	2,379	511	6,000
	<i>Actuals</i>	536	159	871	793	1,848	466	4,673
	<i>%</i>	85%	126%	81%	62%	78%	91%	78%

⁶<https://juntosporeempleo.cclearning.accenture.com/web/informe-del-impacto-digital-en-los-colectivos-vulnerables>

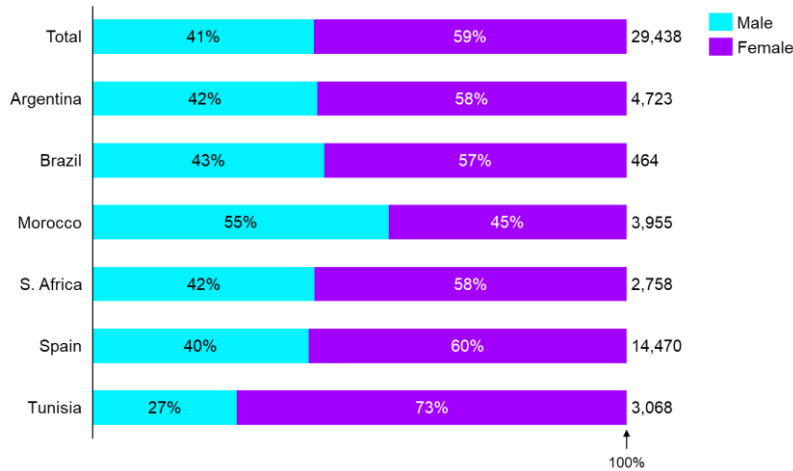
⁷ Please note that each phase follows a funnel approach and therefore are not additive. A subset of beneficiaries in each phase goes into the following one.

⁸ Progress against targets are based on internal metrics, retrieved from the Emplea+ platform and the global project management database. Please note that this project is still in progress, and final reported figures may be subject to change as project results are confirmed.

PHASE 1: IMPROVE EMPLOYABILITY

Training for the Future has globally improved the employability skills of over 17,000 young women, who account for 59% of participants who completed the competency training. Gender balance was closely monitored throughout the program, and almost no interventions were required to maintain this balance per country

FIGURE 4 Beneficiaries by Gender, Phase 1 (Improve Employability)⁹



According to *Emplea+* tracking, participants improved their competencies by 0.5 to 3 points (on a 0 to 6-point scale).¹⁰ These improvements did not go unnoticed by employers and participants. One employer in Spain said, “It is amazing to see the difference in youth before and after going through the soft skills training.” Many beneficiaries said they would recommend the course to others. Alaeddine from Tunisia said, “This was my first online course, and it was excellent. It was easy to navigate within the platform, and I could work at my own pace...I feel that going through this course was a very useful exercise and a reality check. I have recommended the course to my previous classmates.”

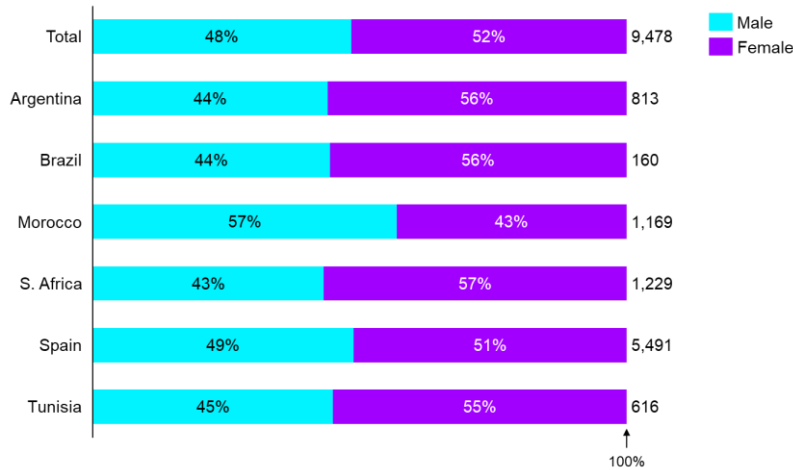
PHASE 2: TRAIN FOR EMPLOYMENT

Nearly 10,000 youth have completed “Training for Employment,” 52% of whom are women. Digital jobs represented a 16% of trainings (primarily ICT-dependent jobs). Trainings for digital jobs included email creation, registration on an online platform, software development, Microsoft Office, telecommunications, network support, IT programming, mobile apps development and end-user computing.

⁹ Progress against targets are based on internal metrics, retrieved from the Emplea+ platform and the global project management database. Please note that this is project is still in progress, and final reported figures may be subject to change as project results are confirmed.

¹⁰ Pre- and post-training scores by competency are based on internal metrics, retrieved from the Emplea+ platform.

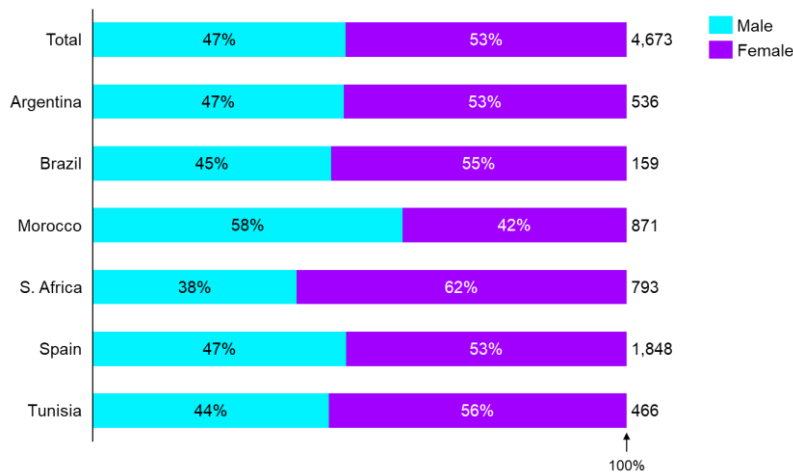
FIGURE 5 Beneficiaries by Gender, Phase 2 (Train for Employment)¹¹



PHASE 3: PLACE IN EMPLOYMENT

At the time of this assessment, approximately half of youth who completed Phase 1 had been placed in a paid internship or full-time role (85% and 15% respectively). To date, approximately 15% of those opportunities have been directly or indirectly digital. The percentage and category of placements vary significantly by country, primarily owing to the implementing partners’ focus areas and employer relationships. The overall placement rate is expected to reach 75% by the end of the project.

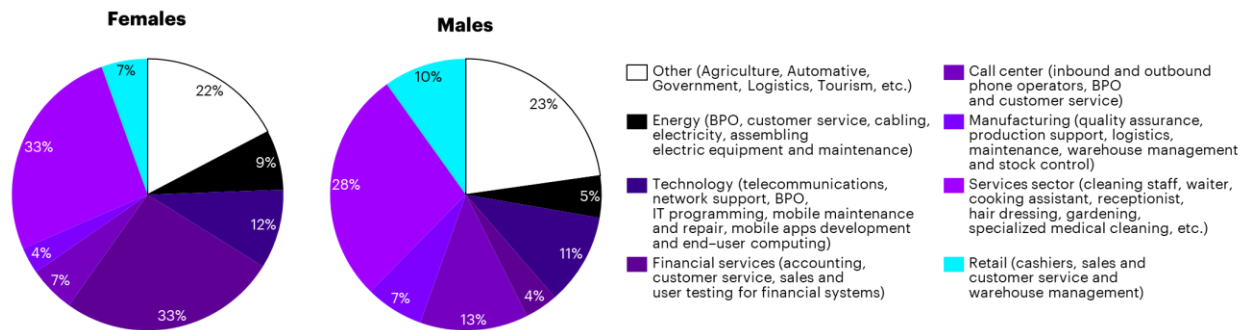
FIGURE 6 Beneficiaries by Gender, Phase 3 (Job Placement)¹²



¹¹ Progress against targets are based on internal metrics, retrieved from the Emplea+ platform and the global project management database. Please note that this project is still in progress, and final reported figures may be subject to change as project results are confirmed.

¹² Progress against targets are based on internal metrics, retrieved from the Emplea+ platform and the global project management database. Please note that this project is still in progress, and final reported figures may be subject to change as project results are confirmed.

FIGURE 7 Job and/or Internship Placement by Gender and Sector, Phase 3 (Job Placement)¹³



KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Latent talent in vulnerable youth must be harnessed.** For youth, a job is their stake in a stable, flourishing society. Training for the Future supports beneficiaries' transition from education to employment, helping them succeed not only as members of the workforce, but as engaged members of society. With the necessary training and support, vulnerable youth can be positive agents of change for themselves and their communities. Developing strategies to scale and expand programs is essential.
- 2. Strong ecosystems are a critical success factor.** A strong, ongoing relationship with employers, schools and universities is critical for program success. This is the only way to guarantee alignment between what students are taught and what the labor market demands.
- 3. Soft skills are increasing in relevance.** Soft skills are crucial for professional success, particularly among young people entering the labor market for the first time. In addition to supporting job seekers, Training for the Future has increased awareness among employers and educators regarding the criticality of these skills.
- 4. Competency framework and model can be adapted to fit different beneficiary profiles.** Leveraging an online platform, *Emplea+*, enabled Training for the Future to increase flexibility and individualization. *Emplea+* allows for personalized training that can be adapted to meet the needs of a diverse beneficiary population, from Spanish youth with an elementary-level education to young Moroccans entering university.

¹³ Progress against targets are based on internal metrics, retrieved from the global project management database. Please note that this project is still in progress, and final reported figures may be subject to change with as project results are confirmed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on Accenture's experience creating a multi-country, multi-stakeholder coalition to drive in-demand skills development among youth, Training for the Future recommends the following actions to organizations seeking to undertake similar efforts:

- 1. Diversify efforts across countries, and work with smaller cities when appropriate.** Smaller cities tend to receive less investment and are more receptive to innovative ideas and new ways of skilling.
- 2. Create formal relationships with universities, career centers and relevant government entities.** A strong ecosystem is integral to successful sourcing strategies.
- 3. Gather and incorporate feedback from trainers and beneficiaries on an ongoing basis.** The use of formal surveys to collect feedback from stakeholders will ensure that opportunities for improvement are identified early and that timely corrective actions are taken.
- 4. Personalize training to the local needs.** Fine tuning trainings to match the unique needs of employers and markets is critical to ensuring the effectiveness of job placement activities. Continuing the conversation with employers throughout the project, not only during placement, leads to more effective trainings and a higher employment rate.
- 5. Engage with employers at every stage.** Employer engagement is essential for high placement and retention rates. Investing in young talent benefits companies and the community. Both human resources and corporate social responsibility should support this aim.