

Youth employment and social commitment strategy of enterprises “Case of Benguerir Skills Center’s employment program ”

L’employabilité des jeunes et les stratégies d’engagement sociétal de l’entreprise “Cas du Programme Employabilité du Skills Center de Benguerir”

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Abstract

In a globalized world, companies are moving towards the adoption of corporate social responsibility (CSR), by integrating a strategy that aligns with the values of listening, proximity and partnership with all stakeholders. In this sense, Moroccan companies have shown an effective commitment to an approach that goes beyond the sole objective of exploiting the "good" towards a logic of creating and strengthening the social link.

Since its establishment in the phosphate mining towns, the OCP group has tried to contribute to the local development of its territories. This is a commitment to sustainable development making it possible to respond to the company's strategic challenges, particularly the youth employability program. A program which is part of a national employment policy approach and which generally addresses labor market activities and the issue of unemployment

The aim of this work is to question the contribution of the employability program in the OCP site in Benguerir in the integration of young people. The data used comes from a field survey involving a sample of 189 young beneficiaries from the province. The analysis allowed us to show the success of this program in this city and the real commitment of the OCP group.

Keys words: Skills center; young people; Employability; corporate social responsibility; mining towns.

Résumé

Dans un monde mondialisé, les entreprises s'orientent vers l'adoption de la responsabilité sociétale de l'entreprise (RSE), en intégrant une stratégie qui s'aligne sur les valeurs d'écoute, de proximité et de partenariat avec toutes les parties prenantes. Dans ce sens, les entreprises marocaines ont montré un engagement effectif dans une démarche qui dépasse le seul objectif d'exploitation du « bien » vers une logique de création et de renforcement du lien social.

Depuis son implantation dans les villes minières phosphatières, le groupe OCP tente de contribuer au développement local de ses territoires. Il s'agit d'un engagement en matière de développement durable permettant de répondre aux enjeux stratégiques de l'entreprise notamment le programme d'employabilité des jeunes. Un programme qui s'inscrit dans une approche de politique de l'emploi à l'échelle nationale et qui traite généralement les activités du marché de travail et la question du chômage .

Le but de ce travail est de s'interroger sur la contribution du programme d'employabilité dans le site OCP de Benguerir en matière d'insertion des jeunes. Les données utilisées sont issues d'une enquête de terrain portant sur un échantillon de 189 jeunes bénéficiaires de la province. L'analyse nous a permis de montrer la réussite de ce programme dans cette ville et l'engagement réel du groupe OCP.

Mots clés : Skills center; jeunes; Employabilité; responsabilité sociétale de l'entreprise; villes minières.

Introduction

The disengagement of the government's social program for employment (Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2015) and the governance's crisis in term of human resources and budgets already falling out (Hibou, 1996), only reflect the problem that government facing in term of unemployment management. Employment has become an important variable to achieve convergence and coherence of economic, social and sectoral politics, on multiple levels according to the Moroccan National Employment Strategy (SNE) 2015-2025. However, in an environment perputally changing, enterprises have more interest to cooperate and consider the expectations of the different parties involved through the integration of social, economic and environmental considerations in their actions and their decision processes.

The OCP Group is one of the Moroccan enterprises adopted a corporate social responsibility strategy within its sustainable development political frame. A strategy influenced by the multiple pressures of the national and international environment, which has the objective, among others, the improvement of the youth employment in order to integrate the labor market and the possibility of improving the local and regional economy. The OCP skills program, which was launched in 2011 in all of the phosphate mining towns such as: Khouribga, Youssoufia, Benguerir.

The Rhamna Skills Center conceived in 2012 becoming a local platform to converge different support initiatives and the promotion for competence, talents and other capacities. It is an initiative that reflects the Group as corporate citizen capable of maintaining relation with its territory and most particularly professional reintegration of young job appliers through the development of their capacities.

Based on this research we will try to answer on the following questions: **How does the OCP's employment program, which is a part of the corporate social responsibility, demonstrate OCP's real commitment towards the youth of the Benguerir province?**

The present problem, combined with the theoretical framework developed, led us to formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The CSR strategy of the OCP reflects a real commitment to their stakeholders in their territories, especially the youth in terms of employability.

Hypothesis 2: The integration of CSR in the decision-making process of the OCP constitutes a stakeholder management mechanism and a communication strategy.

To answer this question, our work will focus on four pillars. The first one will be dedicated to collect the literature review and the definition of the key concept of the study. The second one will present the methodology with an emphasis on the utility and innovation of the study. While the third part will be presenting the study results and the final part will expose discussion around the given results.

1. Literature review:

1.1 Concepts and CSR strategy:

The CSR (Corporate Social Strategy) was created in order to resolve the difficulty of aligning corporation with sustainable development challenges. This ambition has offered CSR the status of «conventional wisdom» in the business field despite its definition (Gendron et al. 2004). Authors like Dejean and Gond (2003) make a distinction between the CSR institutional definition and its theoretical definition. Within this scope, organizations and institutions define CSR depending upon the expectations of the most important parties involved, in terms of their nature, operating sector or the degree of their impact. Academic definitions of the CSR concept are different from one and another, based on the desire to establish a general analysis frame beyond the organization's objectives. Dejean, Gond, 2003 ; Gendre-Aegerter, 2008).

The CSR concept covers various dimensions that go beyond pure economical and legal aspects and of corporation's activity. Institutional definition integrates CSR in their philosophy of sustainable development, which also forms a managerial translation of sustainable development (SD) (Gendre-Aegerter, 2008; Ben Boubaker Gherib, 2009). It can also be interpreted as corporation's contribution to sustainable development and the trigger to a triple performance: environmental, social and economic: *«The concept of sustainable development challenges the company in its goals, in the design of its organization, by providing the principles that frame or condition economic activities»* (Capron & Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2007, p. 16).

Based on the research of Acquier (2008), corporation is not limited by identifying strategic choice when it comes to CSR, rather by justifying the choices coming from within. The advantage of such a typology reside in the interaction between entreprise and society trough the «imposed figures» and «free figures» that can influence strategic choices.

Figure 1 : enterprise strategy in term of CSR/SD

		Free figures	
		-	+
Imposed figures	-	Business versus Society	Green washing and dissonance
	+	Good citizen	Leadership in terms of CSR/SD

Source: from Aquier research ,2008

- **First strategy**, described as « *business versus society* », concern companies who have negative impact internationally and socially (weapons, cigarettes, intensive farming, etc.). Their commitment to a CSR policy is less probable.
- **Second strategy**, described as « *green washing and dissonance* », concern companies committed to CSR policy, however, it does not respect certain standards or rules applied in its sector. CSR policy would be more of display show than a real commitment.
- **Third strategy**, described as « *good citizen* », concern companies that respect regulations with a minimal commitment to CSR policies.
- **Fourth strategy**, described as « *leadership in terms of CSR/SD* », concern companies that do not limit their commitment to the law but try to innovate in terms of developing actions beyond standards or regulations. Benaïcha argues in his doctoral work that the impact of multinational firms on the adoption of responsible practices by Moroccan SMEs is not a relevant value in his model. According to this author, CSR is more influenced by normative, regulatory and institutional incentives. Although attention is beginning to be paid to the topic of CSR in Morocco, the literature continues to suffer from a paucity of empirical studies that can help to understand how CSR is diffused within Moroccan firms. The social dimension continues to be the most prevalent, followed by the environmental dimension Benaïcha (2017) cited in Ouriachi N. & al (2021).

1.2 Employment, support and CSR:

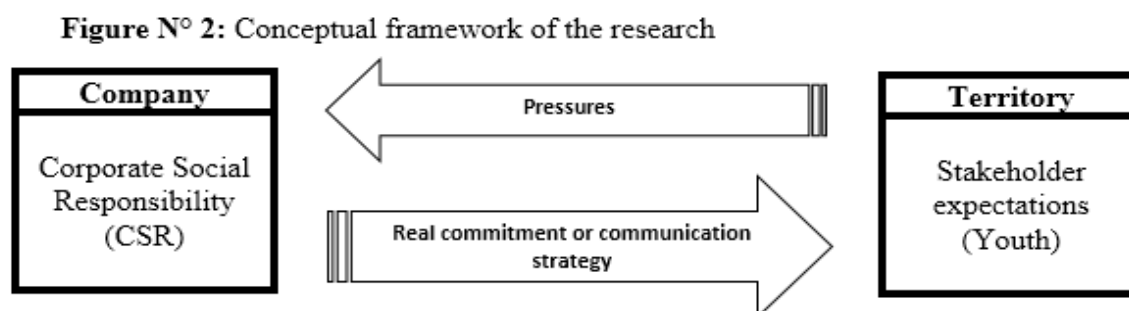
Gazier (2003) Research and theoretical summaries on employment definition show the dynamic and evolutionary character of the concept. However, the concept is defined as the individual capacity making the person employable. Chances of job seekers must be considered as well as the different interactions between his personal aptitude and the job market.

Job seeking is in the center of the news today. The young job seekers in a vulnerable situation who are suffering from difficulties linked to their integration in the professional life because of the economic difficult situations and the major evolutions in the structure (INSEE, 2016). The relation between the job seekers and the job offers available represent always a controversial issue. The victims of the economical situation have to accept unstable contracts, providing low earnings and on a part time basis. Equally, other people are discouraged by their low chances of success and give up their job search.

For this reason, we took Acquier's fourth strategy, as for what happened in 2011, and facing a critical situation in the mining towns, OCP had launched a vast program that covers CSR social economical aspect especially employment of support of the young job seekers as a strategy. The program was named Rhamna Skills with the purpose of improving youth employment conditions and facilitates their integration in the professional world. A very ambitious strategy of the OCP aims to legitimize its operations in the region.

The company has made CSR a priority for its civic action. Witnessing the intense activity of its foundations, especially OCP foundation, the program intend to promote civic Entrepreneurship, support and finance the creation of new companies with a high local added value and sustain the development of the local companies already in place. Among its initiatives the program « Entrepreneurs in action » which is held annually and count nearly 700 participant aging from 15 to 25 years in order to spread awareness and develop their civic entrepreneurship spirit. Through these different initiatives (entrepreneurs in action, start-up Morocco, ...) this program have already trained almost 3.200 individual and financed nearly 120 projects. Moreover, in order to make small entrepreneurs autonomous, there are plenty of initiatives launched by the OCP Group entrepreneurship Network. Entrepreneurs targeted are the one living in exclusion, job insecurity, segregated as the same as the population found in certain rural areas, handicapped individuals and illiterate people. The challenge in making population not dependable can be by valuing their know-how and existing skills in order to reach economic opportunities. The goal is to support them to establish projects capable of creating added value by supporting and improving their competences.

In this sense, our reasoning starts from the following conceptual framework:



Source: Elaborated by ourselves

2. Research methodology:

The relation job-training is usually related to a statistic projection, based on the theory between offer and demand. Nether the less, the professional integration of graduates is still limited to mutations of educational system and economic and social development of the region.

To answer our main question and to demonstrate if OCP Group has a real commitment or not to the young job seekers, we proceeded to empirical research from youth of the Rhamna Skills Center of Benguerir province, in order to have better understanding of the function dynamic of training system and the job market.

These researches discuss the professional future of graduates in terms of training received and the jobs held at a national or local level.

2.1 The choice of research field:

The choice of the research field is the city of Benguerir which has become a Province. The city is relying mainly on agriculture. Its phosphate reserves and its location make it susceptible to a certain development opportunities. It's known also for the influence of the different existing party on the OCP Group. The Group has launched the Rhamna Skills Center with the aim of satisfying the young job seeking demands trough initiatives that will support creativity values, self-realization, citizenship and programs for developing capacities of future entrepreneurs. The employment program, which was being managed by the Orient-Occident Foundation, is aiming to ensure the best integration of youth in the job market. The steps that are needed will ease the determination of the program targets such as young job seeking

graduates, non-completers and the long term unemployed young people without qualification for a period of three years. Also to provide a local support personalized for subscribing members in order for them to succeed their social professional projects and to establish and job market surveillance. (OCP report, Department of sustainable development, 2013).

2.2 Sample research and methodology approach:

In order to understand the job market dynamics in a city in an expansion phase. The youth come by to the Center group by group where they can benefice from training for their job market integration or for creating their own companies.

The support process relies on putting the beneficiary in the center of interest. The process is defined by 5 essential steps:

- **Reception and counseling:** Step consists of contacting the job seeker and presenting and explaining the training programs through the organization of information sessions that can be presented as: workshops, open days, focus group.
- **Situation assessment:** Consists of putting the job seeker in contact with an adviser in order the study and evaluate the job seeker's career history, also his acquired knowledge while identifying obstacles that can restrain his progress. This diagnostic helps in elaborating the skill chart and life project.
- **Professional project definition:** Achieving the professional project is the result of a clear life project; it has to take into consideration the young tendencies, his competences and the desired activity sector.
- **Capacities reinforcement:** Consists of training in soft and life skills. This type of training depends on the beneficiary profil.
- **Real-life professional situations:** Consists of putting the job seeker in a real life professional situation, following the progress of his professional project and developing his competences related to the selected activity sector.

Therefore our sample consists of young graduates living in the Province of Benguerir and its regions, and who have benefited from Rhamna Skills Center program between the years of 2017 and 2018.

Concerning the methodology approach targeted, we have conducted a field study in order to discover the social and professional situation of the young accepted in the Rhamna Center Skills. The field study was conducted in two phases of collecting data:

- **Phase 1:** we have proceeded to collect primary data through establishing semi-interview directive guides and focus groups to a population of job seekers reaching 189 whom already benefiting from the program.

- **Phase 2:** Collecting existing and secondary data from advisers and trainers like for instance: employment advisor and trainer in job searching technics.

3. Results:

3.1 Gender of the young beneficiaries:

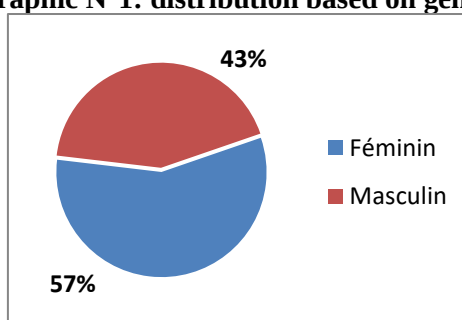
In 2017-2018 as shown in the table below, the number of youth who benefited from the Rhamna Skills Center is 189 on total of 500 job seeker. In which are 108 young females representing 57% and 81 young male at 43%. The study shows an increase in the number of female enlisted consequently overcoming the male population. The Skills Center main objective is to offer youth a guidance, training and individual support.

Table N°1 Distribution of youth based on gender

Gender	Number of beneficiaries	Frequency in %
Male	81	43%
Female	108	57%
Total	189	100%

Source: Elaborated by ourselves

Graphic N°1: distribution based on gender



Source: Elaborated by ourselves

3.2 Criteria of origins of young beneficiaries:

Our sample is composed from young graduates who accepted to follow a training program in the Skills Center. However, Rhamna Skill Center is one of the centers launched by the OCP group in the mining towns as a part of its sustainable development political frame. In 2017 and 2018, the center has welcomed 189 young in which are 108 young female and 81 young

male. As a part of its local and regional development plan, the OCP Group has opened the center for the whole region while targeting the city of Benguerir as shown in the table below. 180 young males and females originated from the city of Benguerir are around 95% while the rest is coming from other places such as Sidi Bouatman 2%, Labrahla 1.5%, Bouchane and Brikiyine 1%.

In addition to its diversified service offers, the Rhamna Skills Center has a goal of becoming a place to live, serving the social cultural dynamic of the city and its regions, with the different local partners of the civic society and academic world.

Table n°2: Distribution of beneficiaries per origin

	F	%	M	%	Total
Benguerir	103	95%	77	95%	180
Bouchane	1	1%	0	0%	1
Brikiyine	1	1%	2	2%	3
Labrahla	0	0%	1	1%	1
Sidi bouatman	3	3%	1	1%	4
Total	108	100%	81	100%	189

Source: Elaborated by ourselves

3.3 Age criteria of the young beneficiaries:

The data base analyzed has 189 young job seeker originated from the Benguerir region, these young people have or do not have a diplomat desire to get training from the Center. The observed population of active age is between the age of 16 and 35 years old, which we divided by three age types: below 20 years old, between 20 and 30 and above 30 years old.

The female population of 108 (57%) majority of 43% has an age of 19 to 20 years old, 49% have 21 to 30 years and 8% has 31 to 33 years. The high number of young females is explained by the high presence of technician in enterprise management profiles. For males the population is relatively young 81 (43%) who are between 16 and 35 years old. Youth from 21 to 30 represent 66%, high percentage of youth with bachelor's degree in multiple specialties.

Table N°3 Distribution of youth per age :

	16 à 20	%	21 à 30	%	31 à 33	%	Total	%
F	46	63%	53	50%	9	100%	108	57%
M	27	37%	54	50%	0	0%	81	43%
Total	73	100%	107	100%	9	100%	189	100%
%	39%		57%		5%		100%	

Source: Elaborated by ourselves

3.4 Training level of young beneficiaries:

Our sample is composed of young people who don't have or have diplomat as shown in the table below. The population interview shows that 7% of youth (M or F) do not have any diplomat and have been coached and guided by the Center. One of the Center's principles is the support of new talent and offering the young people initiative possibility and activity creation. The population without a diplomat divided on young females (10%) and males (14%). Trend that indicates the massive contribution of young females to the region of Benguerir through creation of associations, cooperatives and activities that generate source revenue funded by the OCP Group.

Table N°4: Distribution of youth per level of education

Educational level		F	%	M	%	Total	%
Technician	T	21	19%	13	16%	34	18%
Specialized T.	TS	43	40%	35	43%	78	41%
Bachelor's degree	DG	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
LICENCE	L	25	23%	13	16%	38	20%
L.prof	LP	1	1%	5	6%	6	3%
Master's degree	M	2	2%	3	4%	5	3%
Qualified	Q	4	4%	9	11%	13	7%
Without diplomat	SD	11	10%	3	4%	14	7%
Total		108	100%	81	100%	189	100%

Source: Elaborated by ourselves

The low percentages are recorded within youth that have the bachelor's degree which represent (1%), Followed by youth holding master's degree and others with "LICENCE" degree. In general, those who have this level of education are highly demanded in the job market.

The number of specialized technicians is 43 representing 40%; on the other hand the number of young specialized technicians is 35 representing 43%. The second diplomat following technician or specialized technician is "LICENCE" representing 23% of female population and 16% of males. These high percentages are explained by accumulation of faculty graduates from different disciples (literature, Economy and legal, Islamic studies). And also graduates from training and certifying centers especially for technician and specialized technicians. The presence of these two levels of education in the Skills Center can be explained with the absence of sufficient professional experience or training that does not respond to the needs of job market and rely on developing communication skills or soft skills.

3.5. Difficulties accessing the job market:

Table N°5 : Types of faced difficulties

Difficulty	Yes	No	NRSP
Geographically mobile	26,5	70,5	3
Low self-esteem	40,7	38,6	20,7
Insuficient experience	83	13,6	3,4
Insuficient qualification	62,7	32,7	4,6
No job available	42,5	34	23,5

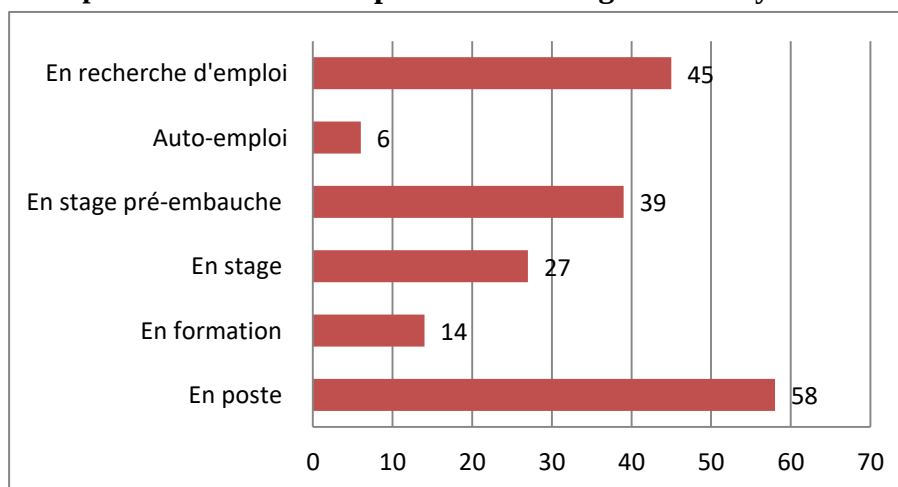
Source: Elaborated by ourselves

The results of individual interviews show that more than 95% of youth cannot find a job immediately after their graduation. In fact, the lack of experience and insufficient recorded in degree of basic qualification for over 50% of trained youth present one of the major difficulties. Concerning geographical mobility, 70.5% of youth say that they are not mobile no matter what the opportunity might present to them, although they said they prefer job opportunities closer to their homes which downgrade considerably their chance of professional integration.

The problem is not limited only by technical skills but rather extend to other aspects that are related to behavioral responses appreciated by most employers. It is also the lack of knowledge of job search techniques (TRE) such as making professional resume and the techniques needed for passing a successful interview and overcoming the difficulties faced.

3.6 Professional integration results:

Graphic N° 2: Number of professional integration for youth



Source: Elaborated by ourselves

The employment program deployed in the Rhamna Skills Center has recorded 59% in term of professional integration results which 58 adherent is currently employed and 39 are in pre-employment and 45 still looking for a job opportunity.

Opportunities that are found and presented to the job seeker are attained by the employment adviser. Also, professional integration approach adopted develops a spirit of self-reliance in youth in terms of job searching.

4. Results discussion:

In Benguerir, as well as in other Moroccan cities, unemployment threatens the social tissue and have a great social and economic impact on families, the region and nationwide. The youth that are the most invulnerable are the ones who graduated at the age between 16 and 30 years old, and the ones who are in the process of integrating the job market. In most cases, they are the technicians and specialized technicians having their diplomat from training institutions for a period of two years. The class of (2017-2018) has shown that are some of the youth graduated or without diplomat, females in particular, who look for a source of revenue instead of continuing to work in informal economy. The commitment of the OCP Group in developing the professional integration of youth in mining towns is the implementation of the national strategy for employment (SNE). Recalling that in (2015-2025) the (SNE) in morocco has put employment in the heart of public action which the objective is (i) preparing conditions allowing creation of enough jobs in terms of quantity and quality in order to respond to the youth expectations (ii) and to correct existing inequalities between genders and territorial disparities in employment chances¹.

In 2006, the OCP Group has created the department of sustainable development (DDD) which reflects the company's commitment in term of social responsibility. The department aims to develop the economic, social aspects and the protection of the environment. Furthermore since its creation in the different mining towns, the OCP Group never hesitated to develop the infrastructure and the workers' environment such as training programs, education and health. It should be noted that since its creation until the 80's. The OCP group was the only institute employing not only in the phosphate sites and cities, but in the whole region. Even more, there was no unemployment in the mining towns (Khouribga, Youssoufia), but rather a

¹ The national strategy for employemnt of the moroccan kingdom (summary document (2015))

considerable lack in qualified and disqualified force work. Nevertheless, the adopted strategy by the group which consisted mainly of delegating and outsourcing the entire activity and tasks in different domain: electricity, machinery, welding, health service, gardening etc..... had a great impact on reducing the chances of young graduates to find jobs.

Thus, since 2011 until 2019, the OCP group has launched multiple programs like the OCP Skills and Skills Centers with the help of other institutions such as the World Bank and foundations (FOO). The aim of these programs is the guidance and support of the youth employment and their integration in the professional world. The adopted strategy targets the entire segment of youth with or without a diplomat and neglects the gender. An enormous effort was deployed by the Skills Centers in offering different training to consolidates achievements and professionalize the knowledge and the knowhow of the participants and visiting different companies. The integration course was the most important course measured by an employment indicator. The local job market was relatively difficult to access; due to the fact job demands were far superior to job offers. It is the classic job offers such as (education and training, administration etc....) that had the most potential to recruit the youth of the mining cities.

The commitment of the OCP group through the opening of a support center (Rhamna Skills Center) was a great initiative for the young of the region especially the ones from the city of Benguerir in term of welcoming young graduates, dropouts, the capacity reinforcement of women and students in term of academic support.

4.1 . Managerial implications

Concerning the main managerial implications of our study, we can recommend that OCP Group become aware of the importance of implementing the youth employability program and adopt a global vision that aims to satisfy the expectations of the various stakeholders.

Other implications lie in the identification of the main factors that prevent young people from entering the job market and the Group's contribution to improving the employability of young people in the province of Benguerir; these results are useful not only for the group but also for the different actors involved insofar as they will be able to put in place the necessary mechanisms to raise the challenges that hinder the employability process in the province.

Conclusion:

The OCP Group holds an important place that enables it to become an industrial and commercial leader on a global scale. It understood that its leadership should be based on the specifics of the territories where it is operating. In the same logic, the company takes into consideration its territorial and local presence as a factor for reinforcing its competitiveness. In fact, OCP's territories especially Benguerir have specific assets that enable it to distinguish from competition on a global scale.

As a part of the global responsibility, the OCP group has launched multiple projects considered as innovative in order to find a certain balance expressed in mutual expectations for the majority of local partners and concerned parties regardless of any claims from the population about the wealth distribution, and the preservation of the historical identity of the Rhamna Province. The Rhamna Skills Center has recorded positive results in terms of support and capacity reinforcement as well as a space for welcoming youths from different background (graduates, out drops, youth without qualification, student etc.....). Nevertheless, these positive results can't hide the fact that the program still has more issues to deal with:

- ☞ The absence of a strategic vision (Contract with the delegated manager for 3 years)

- ☞ The non-satisfaction of over 50% of job seeking youths.

Based on the results and the literature reviews of our study, we have recognized that the company have conducted citizen actions and made a considerable effort in favor of the youths. This responsibility reflects the voluntary commitment of the company towards the local parties involved in its operating locations. Although, this commitment is seen as cosmetic standing behind a strategic goal, which does not scale to be a real commitment as viewed by some of the local parties.

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