The productivity of Moroccan firms is among the lowest across the MENA region and has declined since 2000 (World Bank 2018). One key challenge is a misalignment between the skills taught in local educational institutions and the needs of the labor market. Sectors including information and communications technology, tourism and banking are growing fast, but struggle to find candidates with the required technical, behavioral and linguistic competencies (Agénor and El Aynaoui 2015). At the same time, youths with tertiary education are five times more likely to be unemployed than those without any formal education (HCP 2017). In cooperation with Education for Employment-Morocco (EFE-Maroc), the researchers experimentally evaluate two interventions designed to address skills mismatch and boost productivity: First, an intensive vocational training in small, industry-specific cohorts, developed by EFE in direct response to hiring needs of their partner firms. Second, an on-the-job support intervention aimed at reducing high turnover rates, which may result from workers not feeling adequately equipped for their job.

Evaluating the impact of EFE’s job training and retention programs will inform EFE, and other training programs, on how to more effectively design employment training and retention programs.