

Going Global Partnerships

Partnering for a greener future

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As more countries transition to renewable energy, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) providers have an increasingly important role in equipping the global workforce with the green skills of the future. With funding from the British Council, training providers in the UK and Morocco have partnered to address this challenge through, knowledge sharing and international mobility to bring innovative approaches to green skills training and boost employability to support the shift to net zero.

Meeting the growing demand for green skills

The global growth of the green energy sector has led to a boost in new jobs. As reported by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the sector grew by 700,000 new jobs in 2020-21, totalling 12.7 million globally, and this growth looks set to continue as more governments turn towards renewable energy on the road to net zero.

TVET systems have a fundamental role to play in supporting this global shift, by equipping the global workforce with the skills to support the jobs of the future. To stay both competitive and

relevant, training providers must not only adapt to new technologies and approaches, but must also look to strengthen their international connections in helping to address global issues.

Connected by a shared commitment to the environment

This collaborative approach is at the heart of a partnership between the Devon and Cornwall Training Providers Network in the UK and three Training Institutes for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (IFMERE) in Morocco. Connected by their shared commitment to the environment and supporting the green jobs of the future, the partners started collaborating in 2022 using funding from the British Council's Going Global Partnerships programme to strengthen capacity in green skills development and boost employability.

As a leading training provider in Devon and a member of the Devon and Cornwall Training Providers Network, Petroc College joined Going Global Partnerships as an opportunity to bring new perspectives and expertise to explore key themes, whilst also broadening staff and students cultural understanding. Situated at the heart of a UNSECO Biosphere, the college prioritises biodiversity, conservation, renewables, green skills and the environment.

'It's important the college provides opportunities to encourage greater cultural understanding, to understand more about the Sustainable Development Goals and international development, to challenge thinking on climate change and sustainability, and to present new ways of solving local and global issues. Internationalism plays a major part in all of these areas and is the common thread that links our approach,' says Dr Caroline Chipperfield, Director for Higher Education at Petroc.

Located across three sites, IFMERE is a leading green skills provider in Morocco, which is an emerging leader in sustainable energy and has a national target of reaching 52 per cent renewables by 2030. Catering for around 1,000 students per year, the institutes aim to support Morocco's national energy strategy by making renewable energy and green skills available to the sector. For IFMERE, Going Global Partnerships was a chance to connect with UK expertise in order to strengthen capacity and bring more innovative approaches to their training provision.

'Promoting innovation is at the heart of Morocco's green skills strategy, so this partnership was a perfect opportunity to develop our capacity with expertise from our UK partners, in order to stimulate technological innovation and strengthen research and training in the renewable energy sector,' says Abdessalam Halouani, President of the management board at IFMERE.

‘Both IFMEREE and Petroc support the shift to net zero and the development of renewable energy and green skills. Both partners are in locations moving from an economy based predominately on tourism and agriculture, to the new era of renewables and green skills and the brand-new jobs this will unlock in the future.’



Defining the structure of collaboration

At an initial preparation meeting in Morocco, in summer 2022, Petroc and IFMEREE came together to set the course for the partnership by identifying two key areas of co-operation. The first was to build capacity in higher technical training, by incorporating innovative delivery methods and pedagogies to support learning in the solar and wind renewables curriculum. The second was to exchange knowledge and methodologies to support soft skills development, with a focus on employability, entrepreneurship and business start-up.

As part of this visit, the UK partners got to conduct an in-person tour at the IFMEREE site in Tangiers to see first-hand the institute's renewables facilities and curriculum resources, alongside a virtual tour of the IFMEREE site in Oudja. They also connected with IFMEREE's

local industry partners Adiwatt and Polydesign to learn more about the institute's renewable-specific internship model.



Strengthening capacity and exchanging experience

With a core focus on capacity strengthening and the exchange of experience, the partnership enabled Petroc to share their expertise by providing targeted training and curriculum development support to IFMERE.

This included hybrid train-the-trainer e-learning sessions, delivered to over 20 trainers and five institute leaders across IFMERE's three sites, focusing on technology-enhanced teaching. A key area of focus was how to apply virtual reality and augmented reality in vocational green skills training, including how to utilise the virtual space to enhance learner outcomes and relevance to the labour market.

These sessions also provided opportunities to share knowledge and expertise around blended learning approaches, such as Go-Pro-enabled distance training provision. Other areas of focus

included the renewables curriculum, energy storage, grid integration, life cycle analysis and policy development.

The partnership gave Petroc the chance to learn from their Moroccan partners' knowledge and experience as specialised renewable energy training providers, whilst giving staff the chance to strengthen their international collaboration skills.

'Our colleges learned more about innovative approaches to delivering quality training and first-hand experience in using new technologies for teaching, such as virtual reality tools. These will really help to revolutionise the sector in Morocco,' says Yassine Tber, Director at IFMERE.

Strengthening connections

Two more in-person visits during the partnership provided opportunities to strengthen connections between the partners and other local stakeholders, helping to ensure the sustainability of the collaboration.

In November 2022, Petroc were joined by the University of Exeter and representatives from the Devon and Cornwall Training Providers Network at a site visit to IFMERE in Ouarzazate, where they also connected with MASEN, the Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy, and local government trade representatives.

Then, in December, Petroc hosted a delegation from IFMERE, which included locally based tech companies, council representative and the University of Exeter

The visit included a roundtable event, where participants discussed changing industry needs and the future jobs and careers that the green economy will bring.

Planning for future collaboration

During the December visit, both partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding to continue the collaboration and build on their Going Global Partnerships project in the future.

Plans are now underway for future staff and CPD exchanges, in-person student exchanges to facilitate work experience and project-based-learning, collaborative research and resource sharing.

Two other stakeholders involved in the partnership – MASEN, the Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy, and the University of Exeter – are also keen to collaborate further by exploring resource sharing and internships for Moroccan graduates and to align master's research projects in UK and Morocco with the needs of the renewables sector.

For Petroc, the partnership has also inspired a thirst for further international collaboration to support the shift to net zero.

'We want to link more closely with colleges who are located near or inside the other 738 biosphere reserves in 134 countries across the world. We would love to connect with them and look for opportunities to develop joint projects, to arrange staff and student exchanges, to develop green skills literacy and to work together to fight the climate emergency,' says Dr Caroline Chipperfield, Director for Higher Education at Petroc.

