

# Developing Tools to Optimize Atlas for Development's Internal Efficiency

By

Elizabeth Euwart

Madelyn Thrasher

Noah Wolf

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Hatim El Otmani

Atlas for Development

Professor Mohammed El Hamzaoui and Professor Joseph Doiron

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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## **Abstract**

Rapidly developing non-governmental organizations in Morocco commonly lack resources needed for a professional organization. We developed tools to optimize internal efficiency for the Moroccan non-governmental organization (NGO) Atlas for Development. We examined the organization's internal records and interviewed past and current staff, partner organizations, and another Moroccan NGO. We wrote an accurate mission and vision statement and provided recommendations and tools to improve the consistency and efficiency of program evaluations and financial management.

## **Acknowledgments**

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We would like to thank our sponsor, Mr. Hatim El Otmani, President of Atlas for Development, as well as Mr. Nacer Nafea, the Secretary-General of Atlas for Development. Your feedback and expertise were imperative to our project. Thank you for putting us in contact with your organization's members and sponsors. These contacts and interviews were essential to our project.

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## **Executive Summary**

### Introduction and Background

In many societies, women and youth do not receive equal opportunities. Women and youth can face obstacles when searching for jobs or attending school. Non-governmental organizations, also known as NGOs, strive to address these inequalities by creating societal change. Recently, Moroccan civil society, including NGOs, has grown rapidly. Moroccan NGOs serve youth, women, and other marginalized groups. Some Moroccan NGOs teach young people soft skills to help them find employment. Some try to address the difference in education and healthcare between urban and rural regions. Others focus on everything from women's rights to the environment. However, Moroccan NGOs have a need for better organization. Many NGOs do not have a consistent way to track financial data or an efficient way to evaluate their programs. NGOs may have struggle with organization because they often lack experience and resources. They may rely on volunteers rather than paid staff, meaning the NGO's members have less time to devote to the organization's work, including organizational tasks. More effective methods of financial organization and program evaluation will help Moroccan NGOs be more efficient, better serve their community, and fulfill their mission.

Our team worked with Atlas for Development. Atlas for Development is a Moroccan NGO focused on youth empowerment. The organization has been running programs for four years and relies solely on volunteers. Our goal was to develop tools to optimize Atlas for Development's internal efficiency. To do so, we better defining Atlas for Developments mission and vision, developed a platform to manage their finances, and created a method to evaluate the success of their programs.

## Our Approach

The goal of our project was to develop tools to optimize Atlas for Development's internal efficiency. Our method for optimizing Atlas for Development's internal efficiency consisted of three objectives that correlated directly to our deliverables:

1. Define Atlas for Development's mission and vision
2. Develop a method to evaluate the success of their programs
3. Develop a method to manage their finances

Before conducting our research, we met with our sponsor, Hatim El Otmani, to receive a detailed overview of what his organization was looking for help to accomplish. We also took into consideration what we would be able to complete in the short span of seven weeks. Initially, we planned to interview several other Moroccan NGOs. However, we were unable to schedule and conduct these interviews within our seven week timeframe.

In order to define the organization's mission and vision, it was important to understand who Atlas for Development was and what their goals were. To gain this information, we conducted semi-structured interviews with past and current Atlas for Development members and partner organizations. Before developing the program evaluation method, we needed to know the strengths and weaknesses of the current process. We found the necessary information for this task through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. For document analysis, we analyzed past program evaluation surveys provided to us by our sponsor. The semi-structured interviews were used to determine what past and current members of the organization deemed effective and their goals for the program evaluation method. Lastly, our third objective was to develop a method to keep track of the NGO's finances. For this objective, we needed to understand the current financial system that is in place, what worked effectively and what could

be improved on, along with the kind of information they wanted to include in the system. We used document analysis of the financial templates and forms, semi-structured interviews with Atlas for Development staff, and sponsor organizations to collect this data. After completing these three objectives, we were able to produce a revised mission and vision statement, a program evaluation method, a method to organize finances, and a manual describing how to use these tools to receive ideal results.

## Authorship

Section or Chapter	Primary Author	Secondary Author	Primary Editor	Secondary Editor
Title Page	MT	All	MT	All
Abstract	EE	MT	MT	All
Acknowledgments	NW	None	NW	All
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Methodology	MT	EE	MT	NW
Findings	EE	MT	All	All
Recommendations and Conclusions	MT	EE	All	All
Conclusion	MT	All	MT	All
References	NW	All	NW	All
Appendix A	EE	MT	EE	MT
Appendix B	MT	All	MT	All
Appendix C	EE	MT	EE	MT
Appendix D	EE	All	EE	MT
Appendix E	EE	All	EE	All
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## 1.0 Introduction

In countries all over the world, many societies do not provide younger generations and women equal opportunities. Women and youth often lack equal access to education and employment. Non-governmental organizations, also referred to as NGOs, play an essential role in creating societal change for these groups. In Morocco, this sector of society, also known as civil society, has experienced recent growth. NGOs in Morocco provide opportunities for marginalized groups such as youth and women. These organizations help address youth unemployment issues by providing soft skills training. NGOs also address disparities between urban and rural locations in education and healthcare, along with many other activities. However, Moroccan NGOs have a need for better organization. Many do not have an organized system for keeping track of their income and expenses. Program evaluations could be more effective as well, both in terms of the amount of data they collect and the type of data. Moroccan NGOs may have trouble with organizational tasks like keeping track of finances and creating program evaluations because many of these organizations lack experience and resources. For example, NGOs may rely on volunteers who also work or go to school full time and cannot dedicate much time to these organizational tasks. Therefore, managing finances and evaluating programs in an organized and professional manner will allow Moroccan NGOs to work more efficiently.

Organizations can then serve their community better and fulfill their missions.

Our team worked with the Moroccan NGO Atlas for Development, an organization focused on youth empowerment. Atlas for Development is entirely volunteer-based and has been in operation for four years. Our goal was to develop tools to optimize Atlas for Development's internal efficiency so they can continue their work and grow their programs. To accomplish this

task, our team better defined Atlas for Development's mission and vision, developed a method to manage their finances, and created a method to evaluate the success of their programs.

To accomplish our goal, we conducted interviews with Atlas for Development past and current members to understand their hopes, goals, and views on the three deliverables previously mentioned. We also interviewed partner organizations to understand better what they know about our sponsor and their recommendations on finances and program evaluations. The information gained from these interviews informed our approach to creating the three deliverables. We carefully considered ethical issues regarding privacy, consent, and anonymity and worked to overcome limitations such as limited time through a flexible timeline. We received sponsor feedback on our deliverables to ensure our project produced high-quality work to be used by Atlas for Development and other NGOs long after we leave. The following section will discuss further information on civil society, non-governmental organizations, and Atlas for Development.

## 2.0 Background

In all functioning, ever-changing societies, there is a need for organizations striving to create societal change. Non-governmental organizations, also known as NGOs, operate separately from the government and fulfill this role (NGOsource\_Team, 2021). NGOs attempt to address social, economic, and political issues in their region. Many Moroccan NGOs are located near major cities such as Rabat, Casablanca, and Fes, as this is where they will have the most significant impact (Sadiqi, 2008). Throughout Moroccan history, NGOs have experienced different challenges and levels of government and societal support. Currently, many Moroccan NGOs have a need for better efficiency and internal organization. NGOs need to manage their finances and periodically evaluate their programs to be effective. The following sections will provide an overview of the history of NGOs in Morocco (see the timeline provided in Figure 1), describe the challenges Moroccan NGOs still face today, and introduce Atlas for Development.

Figure 1

### *Timeline of Civil Society in Morocco*

Year	1946	1958	1965-1980	1980s	2000s	2010-2011
Event	Beginning of Moroccan Feminist Movement	Official Beginning of Civil Society in Morocco	The Years of Lead	A Time of General Growth for Civil Society in Morocco	Changes to Make it Easier for NGOs to Receive Foreign Funding	The Arab Spring Movement

### 2.1 Beginnings of Civil Society in Morocco

Amazigh and Muslim traditions created early civil society in Morocco. Local, community-based groups provided certain social services, such as education and healthcare

(Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003). Morocco's colonization by France led to a more centralized government and a smaller, less active civil society sector. Eventually, Morocco gained independence, leading to a much more formal, active civil society sector from 1958 on. In fact, some people argue that the official beginning of civil society was in 1958 with King Mohammed V's royal decree authorizing civil society organizations to form (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022).

However, civil society soon faced new obstacles. During the Years of Lead, from 1965 and into the 1980s, fear of revolution led to repressive policies, human rights abuses, and a heavy crackdown on intellectuals (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022). Government restrictions limited the activity of civil society during this time (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022, Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003).

## 2.2 Women's Rights and Civil Society

The next significant period of growth for civil society centered around the Women's rights movement in Morocco. Women's rights have been a significant issue in Morocco for many years. Initially, women did not have fundamental rights such as receiving an education and entering the job market. They were viewed as the weaker sex and sometimes even considered to be minors. For example, if a woman wanted to divorce her husband, a male judge would decide whether or not she deserved the divorce (Sadiqi, 2008). In an attempt to end this mistreatment, the Moroccan Feminist movement began in 1946 (Sadiqi, 2008). While feminism in Morocco began long before this time, 1946 marked a period of increased activity, organization, and visibility. The campaign fought against polygamy, which allowed women's husbands to have more than one wife without their say while women were not allowed to have several husbands.

The movement also fought for women to receive an education and be allowed to get jobs (Sadiqi, 2008).

The issue was that women were not involved in politics, so they had to rely on male liberal nationalists to get their points across. While women aimed to improve their lives, male feminists used their views and power to better Morocco as a whole, not to improve equality (Sadiqi, 2008). Polygamy was eventually made illegal in Morocco, however, not for the sake of the women and their desires. Polygamy was illegal because male politicians deemed it immoral and against the Islamic religion. Despite this, women continued to fight for their fundamental rights. Feminist ideology was spread through biographies written about international and national feminists. At the same time, other novels attempted to enforce the domestic housewife lifestyle.

Women needed a way to fight for their rights and avoid having their views twisted by male politicians. To achieve this, women's associations began to form, also known as NGOs. The organizations were created to take action against violence against women, cultural discrimination, gender-based legal issues, lack of female representation in politics and the economy, and illiteracy (Sadiqi, 2008). These organizations were able to help women acquire financial independence, brought their perspective into politics in an organized way, and enacted legal change to reduce discrimination against women (Sadiqi, 2008). These organizations also allowed women to shape society by providing them with credibility (Sadiqi, 2008). NGOs today continue to fight against gender-based discrimination.

### 2.3 Government Support and Expansion of Civil Society

After the expansion of civil society led by women's rights organizations, financial issues, and development challenges later led to a shift in the government's strict approach. Acceptance

of the monarchy and internal pressure from political parties and NGOs led to lessened restrictions in Morocco from the 80s and on (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022). During this time, the Moroccan government increased democratization. It encouraged the growth of civil society for assistance (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022). Following this change, civil society in Morocco flourished. Prior to the 80s, there were only a couple thousand NGOs in Morocco. Today, the official count is over 400,000 (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022). During the 80s, development-oriented organizations multiplied. These organizations work on projects to improve the standard of living, such as addressing disparities between urban and rural communities (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003). For example, they may work with local governments on educational projects.

Education is a significant focus of NGOs in Morocco. Colonization by France was detrimental to education in Morocco. When Morocco gained independence, only about 20% of the Moroccan population was literate (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022). Today, according to the World Bank, Morocco has a 73% literacy rate (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, n.d.). In total, 86% of young people in Morocco will obtain some level of formal education, ranging from primary school to university programs. However, schools and universities face overcrowding, problems in educational quality, and inconsistent language of instruction in public schools (Ben Haman, 2020). In Morocco, the number of effective years of schooling was, on average, 4.4 years less than the number of actual years (World Bank Group, 2020). Access and income challenges are prevalent, and disparities in education between urban and rural locations affect job opportunities and economic success (Ben Haman, 2020). In rural areas, men are more likely than women to reach higher levels of education (Ben Haman, 2020). Additionally, with increased rates of school dropouts in remote and marginalized regions, at least



40% of Moroccan youth do not obtain a higher professional degree (Kluve et al. 2015). Many Moroccan NGOs still work on education. More recently, several of these organizations have also begun to focus on youth development and skills training.

## 2.4 Opportunities for Youth

Moroccan civil society is rapidly diversifying and gradually gaining government respect (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003). Recently, the Moroccan government has begun to appreciate the importance of civil society. Legal changes in the early 2000s made it easier to receive foreign funding, which was beneficial for many NGOs (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003). Moroccan NGOs have also begun focusing on youth unemployment, the environment, and a renewed interest in women's rights (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003). While relatively new, these NGOs have been influential (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003).

NGOs work to address the generational disconnect and lack of opportunities for youth in Morocco. Youth make up about a third of the population but experience comparatively few economic opportunities. (Hoel, 2012). As of 2004, individuals aged fifteen through twenty-four made up over 21% of Morocco's population, and many were unemployed (Boudarbat & Ajbilou, 2007). The high unemployment rate is partly due to the youth population increasing faster than the creation of job opportunities. Additionally, young people may be illiterate or have insufficient education due to gaps in the education system, as mentioned previously. Most of the unemployed youth have little to no education, and less than 5% of unemployed youth in Morocco have tertiary education (Hoel, 2012). As a result, Moroccan youth are excluded by older generations (Boudarbat & Ajbilou, 2007).

Young people's frustration with the lack of economic opportunity contributed to protests in Morocco during the Arab Spring, a series of pro-democracy protests and demonstrations in several countries across the Middle East and North Africa in 2010 and 2011 (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022). Protests began in Tunisia and rippled across the region. In Morocco, in early 2011, young people organized a powerful movement, including a large protest march in Casablanca. Sensing public discontent and aware of the destabilizing effects of similar protests in nearby countries, King Mohammed VI promised constitutional reform, increases in salaries, and more jobs for young people (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022).

However, the public education system will not change overnight. Therefore, there must be another way to transition young people from school into the workforce effectively. One potential solution is NGOs focusing on youth inclusion. Some NGOs are helping youth develop soft skills, including leadership, teamwork, communication, and time management, all of which are skills not consistently taught by Moroccan schools or universities (Hoel, 2012). These skills allow Moroccan youth to enter the job market more prepared. Supporting youth also means including young people in the decision-making process (Hoel, 2012), and NGOs provide this opportunity as well.

## 2.5 Need for Organization Among Non-Governmental Organizations

Civil society in Morocco is gradually taking on more and more societal challenges. Some organizations are even becoming government partners. However, the rapid growth of NGOs in Morocco has led to several challenges. While there are 400,000 government-approved organizations in Morocco, many organizations are short-lived, small, and have a budget of \$600 or less. This severely limits their work (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022).

Nearly all NGOs in Morocco have budgets of less than \$50,000 (S. El Asri, personal communication, March 30, 2022), and, as of 2003, most NGOs were less than ten years old. Without much experience to rely on, many NGOs face issues with training and the overall sustainability of their organization. NGOs also often lack ways to demonstrate their success and impact (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003, 241). Therefore, professionalization could help civil society grow further in Morocco (Dimitrovova, 2010).

As of 2014, the World Bank also recognized the need for improving the internal efficiency of NGOs in Morocco, “While there is an NGO movement developing in Morocco, most NGOs in the country display a limited capacity, have limited access to finance, and do not generally generate much revenue other than that they get from donations” (Angel-Urdinola, 2014). Moroccan NGOs have a need for increased capacity and better finances. USAID, which provides funding and support for the development and civil society organizations in other countries, also recognizes this need. A 2016-2021 project by USAID in Morocco notes that “Numerous Moroccan civil society organizations lack the ability to enact systemic change and play the role of broker between citizens and government actors. At the same time, the legal and fiscal environment continues to create significant challenges for civil society” (USAID, 2022). The proposed solution involved improving internal operations, capacity-building, and developing civil society organization (CSO)-specific skills and expertise. This project helped address the need for better organization, and USAID has addressed some of the legal hurdles facing NGOs. However, USAID only worked with five organizations on this project, and challenges remain for other organizations (USAID, 2022).

### 2.5.1 Managing Finances

Successful NGOs need a system to manage their expenses and the funding they receive. Moroccan NGOs may receive significant funding from governments or other large organizations. For example, USAID provided more than three million dollars of funding to Moroccan NGOs from 2016 to 2021. Moroccan NGOs also received funding from the Department for International Development (DFID), a part of the UK government, and the European Union (USAID, 2022). Sponsors want to know how their money is being used. Therefore, Moroccan NGOs must carefully document their income and expenses and provide sponsors with this information to receive funding (Atia & Herrold, 2018). In addition, by keeping track of their budget, NGOs can make sure they have enough money available to run programs to advance their mission. Keeping a detailed budget can help NGOs evaluate their programs as well.

Based on discussion with Professor Sarnie from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) Business School, we learned that there are some well-known industry-standard financial platforms such as QuickBooks and Excel (R. Sarnie, personal communication, February 28, 2022). QuickBooks is a simple accounting software for small businesses and NGOs. Quickbooks is the more expensive but also more professional option due its high security and automated charts and graphs features (R. Sarnie, personal communication, February 28, 2022). Another viable option for a NGO would be to use a collection of automated spreadsheets for calculations, a free but less expensive, professional, and powerful option (R. Sarnie, personal communication, February 28, 2022).

### 2.5.2 Program Evaluation

Successful NGOs also need a way to evaluate the success of their programs. Again, Moroccan NGOs may receive significant funding from governments or other large organizations (USAID, 2022). Sponsors need to make sure that any NGOs receiving their funding are making an impact on the community. To determine if the organization is making an impact, the NGO collects data showing the success of their programs (Atia & Herrold, 2018). Program evaluations are also valuable to beneficiaries and the organization itself (Atia & Herrold, 2018). Data from these evaluations can show potential stakeholders that participating in the program is worth their time and effort, while the NGO can use the assessment to decide whether to continue the program and how to improve it.

### 2.5.3 The Gap in Current Research

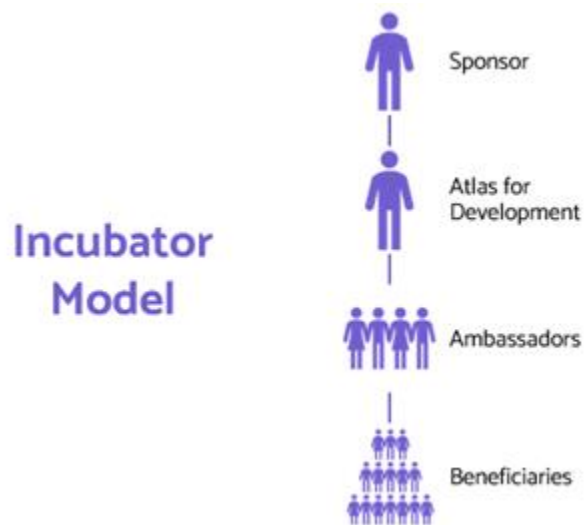
While current research often points out needs in the NGO sector, less research is available on potential solutions to these challenges. Furthermore, while information on civil society worldwide is available, up-to-date information about Moroccan civil society is lacking. Many resources are out of date, especially when considering the rapid growth and development of civil society in Morocco. Societal conditions, including citizen and government relationships with NGOs and changes in restrictions over time, mean that what holds true about civil society in general may not hold true in Morocco, leading to the need for further research on NGOs in the country.

## 2.6 Atlas for Development

Atlas For Development is a nonprofit Moroccan NGO with a mission to empower youth in Morocco. They accomplish this through projects such as the Academy 2063 and Intergenerational Dialogue. The organization is a social incubator, as illustrated in Figure 2, meaning that some of their programs provide people, typically young adults, with funding and training to create their own programs. We will refer to the people receiving financing and training from Atlas for Development's incubator model programs as Atlas for Development ambassadors or, more simply, ambassadors. We will refer to the people taking part in the ambassadors' programs as beneficiaries. Although relatively young, Atlas for Development has been highly effective so far.

Figure 2

### *The Incubator Model*



### 2.6.1 Structure and Organization

Atlas For Development is a four-year-old organization with about ten members spread across many Moroccan cities. Every member has a full-time job or is a student in addition to

working for the organization. They only meet two or three times each week over video calls and have a limited timeframe in which they conduct work. They use this time to connect with partner organizations, manage finances, and plan programs.

Atlas for Development follows what is known as the incubator model. The incubator model is a standard structure often used in business and civil society that supports start-up companies and NGOs (Pauwels et al., 2016). Organizations that use this model provide the new companies with education, funding, and mentorship (Draper University, 2020). Businesses that follow an incubator model essentially bet on the success of their mentee organizations and benefit financially from helping ensure their success. Rather than receiving financial rewards, nonprofits that follow an incubator model benefit by maximizing their impact on the community (Draper University, 2020). Organizations like Atlas for Development provide funding and training to participants in some of their programs. These participants are ambassadors in the case of Atlas for Development. The incubator model can be incredibly powerful. In fact, it is the basis for one of Atlas for Development's most successful programs, the Academy 2063.

### 2.6.2 Programs and Past Work

Atlas For Development has created many projects with the goal to “contribute to youth and women empowerment in Morocco, with a purpose of promoting the civic, economic and social-cultural rights through inclusive community projects” (About Us, 2021). These projects get Moroccan youth and women more involved in the community, promoting the goals of the Agenda 2063, a set of 50-year sustainable development goals for the African continent (About Us, 2021). Some of their major projects include the Academy 2063 and Intergenerational Dialogue.

### 2.6.3 Academy 2063

The Academy 2063 is a project with the goal of connecting youth and decision-makers to debate strategies to promote the Agenda 2063 (2063 Academy, 2020). According to Atlas for Development, the first edition of the Academy 2063 in 2019 reached two hundred and fifty-five Moroccan youth. Following the first edition's success, Atlas for Development decided to repeat the program in 2020 and again in the summer of 2021. There have been three editions so far, with more planned for the future. The academy was praised by the African Union Youth Envoy as one of the most promising African projects led by youth and presented during the SDG Action Zone at the United Nations General Assembly 2019 in New York (2063 Academy, 2020).

### 2.6.4 Intergenerational Dialogue

Atlas for Development has hosted multiple intergenerational dialogues. As mentioned previously, lack of education, opportunities, and soft skills often means the exclusion of youth from professional environments, including debate and decision-making spaces. However, youth perspectives are essential in policy for these same reasons. Intergenerational Dialogues provide an opportunity for youth to engage with decision-makers in government, industry, and civil society and discuss issues facing Moroccan Society and potential solutions. The first Intergenerational Dialogue was organized on the 26th of November, 2019. It included Mr. Mustapha El Khalfi, Ex-Minister in charge of relations between parliament and civil society, an Ex-Spokesperson of the Moroccan Government, Mrs. Fatima Zahrae Touzani: curator of the Global Shapers Rabat, and Dr. Najib Saoumai, a member and representative of the local youth government initiative. Atlas for Development partnered with the African Union Youth Envoy and the Scientific Institute at Mohammed 5th University Rabat in organizing this event.



### 3.0 Methodology

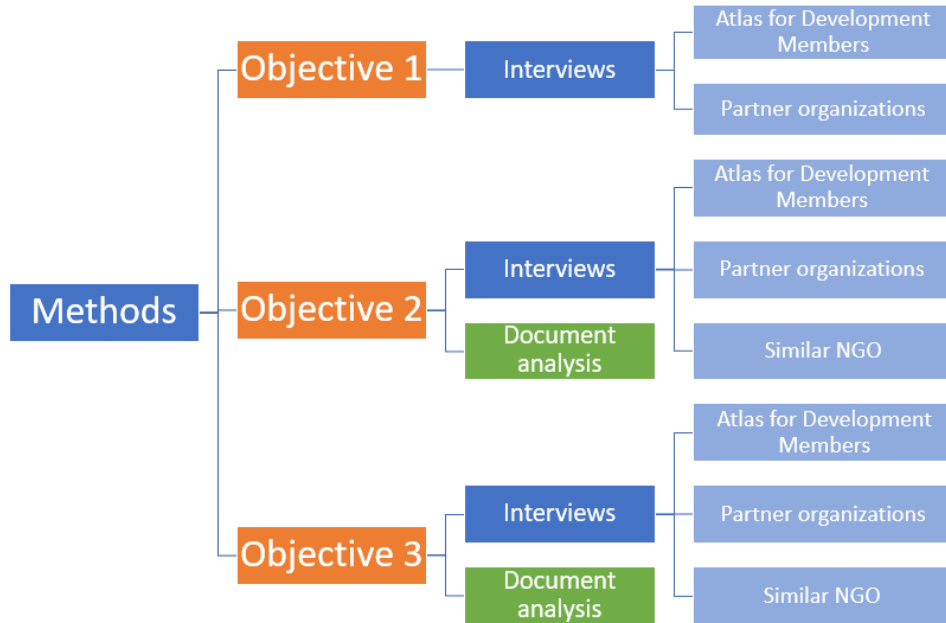
Our main project goal was to develop tools to optimize Atlas for Development's internal efficiency. To accomplish this, we focused on three objectives.

1. Define Atlas for Development's mission and vision
2. Develop a method to evaluate the success of their programs
3. Develop a method to manage their finances

First, we collected and analyzed interview data to clarify Atlas for Development's mission and vision and better communicate and respect the organization's goals. Mission refers to their method for accomplishing that goal (Jones, 2016). On the other hand, vision is how the organization makes an impact on the community and describes their goals for the future (Peek, 2021). Next, we analyzed past survey questions and interview responses to make survey templates to rate the success of their programs. Then, we conducted document analysis and analyzed interview responses to create budgeting and financial processes to make it easier for Atlas for Development to develop proposals and track expenses. Interviews and document analysis contributed to our objectives in different ways, as shown in Figure 3. Interviews helped us achieve all three objectives, while document analysis helped us achieve objectives two and three. We will discuss in detail each method and how each contributed to achieving the objectives below.

Figure 3

*Methods Used for Each Objective*



### 3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

#### 3.1.1 Rationale

We decided to use interviews to collect this data, rather than other methods such as surveys, as we needed rich, descriptive data in order to answer our questions (Rowley, 2012). Semi-structured interviews allowed us to ask interviewees specific questions and receive consistent data. This was easier to analyze, as each individual was asked the same questions (Rowley, 2012). It also gave the interviewees a chance to discuss problems we did not consider.

### 3.1.2 Interview Process

We conducted eleven out of thirteen interviews virtually due to limited availability of suitable interview space. We conducted two interviews in person due to interviewee preference or resources. The team recorded interviews using Zoom software or mobile phones when in person, then transcribed the recording using Zoom transcription. Next, we checked the transcripts for accuracy against the recordings. Due to language barriers and the different experiences of each Atlas for Development member, not every interviewee was able to answer every question. Questions about finances were especially difficult, with a median of two responses.

### 3.1.3 Interviews with Atlas for Development Members

We interviewed ten past and current Atlas for Development volunteers to understand the organization's mission and vision. We also asked questions to determine the goals for their program evaluations, their current method for evaluating programs, any opportunities for improvement, and the current method for managing finances, budgeting needs, existing data collection processes, and hopes for the new method. Questions we asked to learn about these different topics included "What does Atlas for Development do?", "What is Atlas for Development's mission?", "What are Atlas for Development's goals for the program evaluation?", and "What is the current method for managing income and expenses?". This data contributed to findings for objectives one, two, and three. We identified our interviewees with a contact list provided by our sponsor of current and past Atlas for Development volunteers. We contacted the thirty-six potential interviewees by email when possible. In several cases, email addresses were not available, and we contacted the potential interviewees by WhatsApp or

Facebook messenger instead. We scheduled interviews with any individuals who responded in the first two weeks. During that time, we contacted individuals who had not yet responded up to three times.

#### 3.1.4 Interviews with Sponsors

We interviewed two of Atlas for Development's partner organizations, Peace First and the Swiss Embassy. We spoke with these organizations to understand how sponsors view Atlas for Development's focus, programs, and financial organization and to learn what program and financial data partner organizations found helpful. This data contributed to findings for objectives one, two, and three. We identified our interviewees with a list provided by Atlas for Development of five sponsoring organizations. We emailed all five sponsors on the list. We received responses from four sponsors and were able to schedule interviews with two.

#### 3.1.5 Interview with Similar NGO

We interviewed another Moroccan NGO that follows the incubator model, AJTCD (Tamdoult). We interviewed an NGO with similarities to Atlas for Development because we wanted to learn from their experience. We also wanted to learn about industry standards for program evaluations and financial organization for Moroccan NGOs. This data contributed to findings for objectives two and three. We identified our interviewees from a list of five suggestions from our advisors. We contacted the organizations on this list through WhatsApp, Facebook, website contact forms, and email up to three times. We received two responses and were able to schedule one interview.

### 3.1.6 Data Analysis

Once we completed and transcribed the interviews, we organized the responses by the question. Within each question, we summarized the responses. Next, we read all the answers and grouped the text according to significant themes by highlighting similar text. Finally, we recorded the number of times each theme appeared in the responses. We also recorded the number of responses for each question. We color-coded all of the themes to make it easier to visualize common themes. We analyzed all of the information and organized it into a spreadsheet for easier management and viewing.

### 3.2 Document Analysis

We conducted document analysis on some of Atlas for Development's records. We chose this method because documents are often readily available, do not change due to the researcher's presence, and cover a lot of information (Bowen, 2009). We asked our sponsor for examples of past program analysis and received a link to the organization's Google Drive folder. These documents included many of Atlas for Development's internal records, such as past program evaluation surveys, project reports, receipts, program budgets, and financial reports. We received a wealth of past documents and program records. Many of these documents contained valuable information not available on Atlas for Development's website, publications, or social media, such as how their programs changed over time. We focused on the program-specific folders since it was possible to compare documents of the same type across programs.

We consulted the past financial records and looked for information about Atlas for Development's current financial organization system, budget, and record-keeping needs. This data contributed to objective three. We consulted program records and evaluation surveys to

determine Atlas for Development's goals for program evaluation and the current method for evaluating programs. This data contributed to objective two.

We analyzed common themes in these documents by reading through them and noting the name of the document, what subfolder it was in, and the kind of information it contained. We took notes on the language of the document, the type of document (budget, report, survey, etc.), the topic, the structure (budget categories, section headings, mostly text, primarily visuals, etc.), and any other important information. Observations that appeared multiple times helped us to draw conclusions about Atlas for Development's program evaluations and method for managing finances. We also collected past program evaluation surveys from these documents. We counted the number of times each question appeared across all sixteen surveys and sorted them by the type of information the question requested (personal information, program content, transportation, etc.).

### 3.3 Obstacles and Limitations

One obstacle we encountered was working with individuals whose first language is not English. Despite this obstacle, we conducted interviews in English but avoided using complicated syntax in our questions. Still, we encountered situations where interviewees seemed to have trouble understanding or misunderstood interview questions and situations where interviewees had trouble articulating detailed responses in English. For example, communicating the concept of an incubator model was difficult. We were always prepared to rephrase questions and explain further, especially as the project progressed.

Atlas for Development is entirely run by volunteers. Most, if not all, of Atlas for Development's volunteers have full-time jobs or are students, which made it difficult to schedule

interviews with them. Furthermore, we visited Morocco during Ramadan, a major holiday, which made scheduling interviews difficult. We reached out to set up interviews early and were flexible when scheduling them to resolve this dilemma. We also reached out to past Atlas for Development members, which tripled our pool of potential interviewees. We interviewed as many volunteers as possible and focused on the whole population instead of sampling.

There was no program running during the time we were in Morocco, so we did not have a chance to test the program evaluation method. While we hoped to resolve this by reevaluating a past program, our 7-week timeframe did not leave time for this final step. However, we shared the deliverables with Atlas for Development and used their feedback to improve the program evaluation method.

Similarly, Atlas for Development's annual review of income and expenses did not occur during our visit. As a result, we could not test the method to manage their finances and see how it might affect their annual review. We initially planned to ask Atlas for Development to have a similar meeting while we were there. However, given their busy schedules, this was not feasible. Again, we tried to mitigate this obstacle by sharing the deliverables with Atlas for Development and using their feedback to improve the deliverables.

### 3.4 Ethical Considerations

During our research, we carefully considered and addressed several ethical concerns: (i) parental consent, (ii) sensitive financial information, and (iii) anonymity. First, Atlas for Development had begun to run programs for ages fifteen through eighteen. However, Atlas for Development's established programs target young adults ages twenty and up. Consequently, we focused on individuals over eighteen, so we did not need parental consent. We were also

provided with Atlas for Development's financial information. We made sure not to share this information with others or allow others to access or edit it. Participation in interviews was strictly voluntary, and we kept responses confidential. Our consent script is available in Appendix B. We carefully considered the ethical issues involved with using past survey data and decided only to consider the questions themselves. Atlas for Development staff, who were aware of our work, wrote these questions. Additionally, we made sure to go through the WPI IRB process.



## 4.0 Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

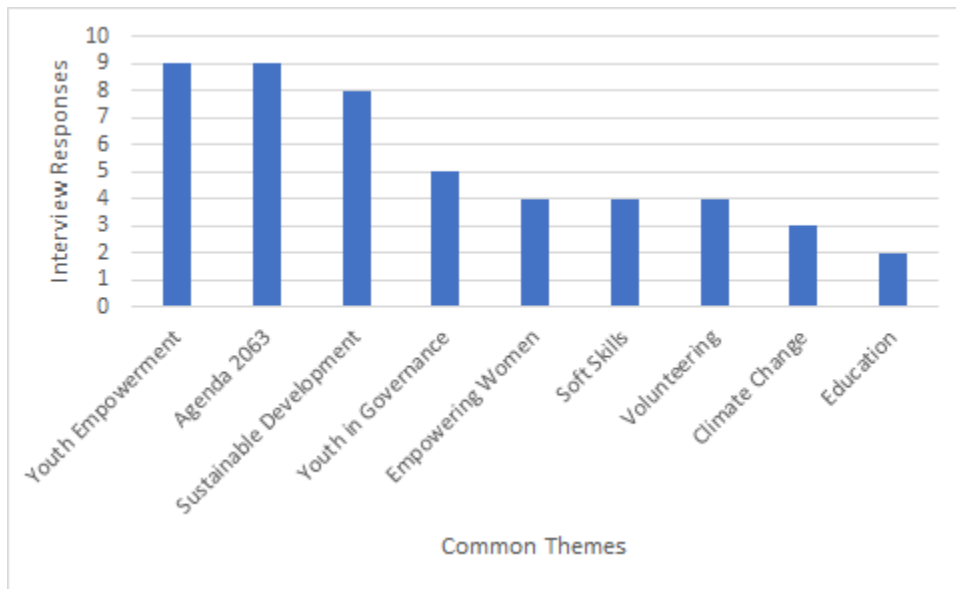
Through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, our team learned about Atlas for Development's mission and vision, their program evaluations, and their current financial method. After analyzing the interview responses and the provided documents, we completed the three objectives mentioned previously.

### 4.2 Who is Atlas for Development?

To revise Atlas for Development's mission and vision statements, we had to gain a better understanding of the organization as a whole. We conducted ten interviews with past and current Atlas for Development members, along with two of their partner organizations. During these interviews, our team found there was quite a bit of variation in what the NGO does. Figure 4 illustrates the number of times interviewees mentioned certain themes when asked about the focus of Atlas for Development's work. All of the interviewees stated that the organization works to empower youth. However, three out of ten of the responses mentioned that the NGO focuses on climate change. Eight out of ten of interviewees mentioned achieving the Agenda 2063, whereas only two out of ten mentioned the organization's involvement in education. Overall, the data helped us determine that the current mission and vision statements do not accurately reflect the breadth of Atlas for Development's work.

Figure 4

*What does Atlas for Development do?*



We obtained a significant amount of other information as well. For example, Atlas for Development has started to use the incubator model for some of their more recent projects. How these projects work is using the funding from their sponsors, Atlas for Development runs programs to teach their ambassadors the skills needed to start their own organization or program. The NGO then provides these ambassadors with funding to begin their projects independently.

When running a program, Atlas for Development usually works with a partner organization or is sponsored by an organization. These partnerships determine the type and kind of programs that Atlas for Development will run. The topic of the program is typically a collaboration between Atlas for Development and their partners.

Additionally, the reason why the organization is called Atlas for Development is not well known. Only the organization's president, Hatim El Otmani, knows why it is called that. He mentioned that when he established Atlas for Development, he was trying to think of names. He knew the organization would broadly focus on development, in terms of “sustainable

development, skills development, [and] personal development”. But he wanted to distinguish the NGO as a Moroccan organization and included Atlas for the Atlas region of Morocco, hence the name Atlas for Development.

We found that the general thread through all of Atlas for Development programs is that the organization focuses on empowering youth. Almost all (nine out of ten) of the past and current members of Atlas for Development that we interviewed stated that Atlas for Development focused on working with young people in their responses to the questions “What does Atlas for Development do?” or “What are the goals of Atlas for Development?” or “What do Atlas for Development’s programs usually focus on?”. In addition, both sponsors that we talked with also identified that Atlas for Development focuses on working with young people. Especially compared with the relative lack of consensus on other themes of Atlas for Development’s work, this consistent theme clarifies that empowering youth is a significant focus for the organization.

Two different common themes that appeared when we asked interviewees about the focus of Atlas for Development’s work were the sustainable development goals and the Agenda 2063. Again, the Agenda 2063 contains a set of goals for the African continent by the year 2063. Nine out of ten Atlas for Development interviewees mentioned this in their responses. One of their sponsors, the Swiss embassy, also identified this as a significant focus. Based on our interviews and the records of past programs we found during our document analysis, Atlas for Development does a considerable amount of work with the sustainable development goals and the Agenda 2063. Most notably, they run their signature program, the Academy 2063 every year, providing support and training to young people attempting to implement the goals of the Agenda 2063 in their communities. They also consider the goals in this agenda within their other programs, so

some programs aim to improve education or address climate change. These issues appear in the Agenda 2063 and sustainable development goals. However, we also found when looking at descriptions of past programs and speaking with interviewees about the work that they had done that Atlas for Development also runs several programs that do not relate as directly to the Agenda 2063 or sustainable development goals. For example, their Greenpreneur program focused more on environmental issues and climate change. They also helped with Young Mediterranean Voices. This program focused more on debate skills. Atlas for Development also uses the incubator model, so while the ambassadors may receive training guided by the goals in the Agenda 2063, the initiatives that they put into place may vary widely. While the Agenda 2063 and sustainable development goals guide Atlas for Development's work, Atlas for Development also does work that falls outside these two topics.

Other common themes that emerged from our interviews with past and current Atlas for Development members included empowering women, youth in governance, soft skills, and volunteering. Again, looking through documents and speaking with Atlas for Development members we discovered that each of these relates to some of the programs Atlas for development does but not all. For example, the Greenpreneur programs focus on soft skills and volunteering but not empowering women. In contrast, Young Mediterranean Voices might focus on youth in governance but not volunteering. In fact, neither of the sponsors we spoke with identified any of these themes as Atlas for Development's major focus. While Atlas for Development does run programs that focus on empowering women and volunteering, these topics are not common themes throughout all of their programs.

We also found that Atlas for Development works with partner organizations for many of their programs. Eight out of nine interviewees mentioned this. Please note, we were not able to

obtain an answer from every interviewee for every question. In this case, we received nine responses. When asked how often the NGO works with partner organizations, one of their members stated, “Our vision is a collaborative vision, so that means that whenever we have a program we seek to partner with other organizations. For the majority of our programs, we work with other NGOs, either by bringing their expertise or by promoting the events.” Atlas for Development seeks out partnerships for the majority of their projects, relying on partner organizations to bring additional skills and expertise to their programs. Most (seven out of eight) interviewees stated that the choice of topic was a collaboration between Atlas for Development, their sponsors, and other partner organizations. From this, we learned that Atlas for Development’s sponsors and partners have an influence on the topics that Atlas for Development chooses.

#### 4.3 Program Evaluation Findings

Similar to our first objective, our findings for the program evaluation were found through semi-structured interviews with past and current members of Atlas for Development, along with document analysis, specifically the past program surveys and reports. Our investigation found that the NGO’s current evaluation is through surveys. We discovered that multiple surveys are sent out throughout the program. There is usually a pre-program survey, a mid-program survey, and a post-program survey. The surveys are usually printed out and handed to the ambassadors during in-person programs. However, due to Covid-19, many recent programs have used virtual surveys instead. While interviewees mentioned they liked in-person programs, one interviewee preferred virtual surveys. They mentioned that the issue with handing out a physical survey to

the ambassadors is that the data must be analyzed manually. In contrast, virtual surveys can analyze the data automatically.

Atlas for Development does not have a single survey template as well. They have a different survey for each program they run, making it difficult to compare how successful the programs are to one another. Members of the organization expressed their desire for more quality data as well. Through document analysis of past surveys, we found that the only questions across all the surveys involved asking the ambassadors for their personal information, such as their name, email, etc. The questions asked in these surveys were often inconsistent as well.

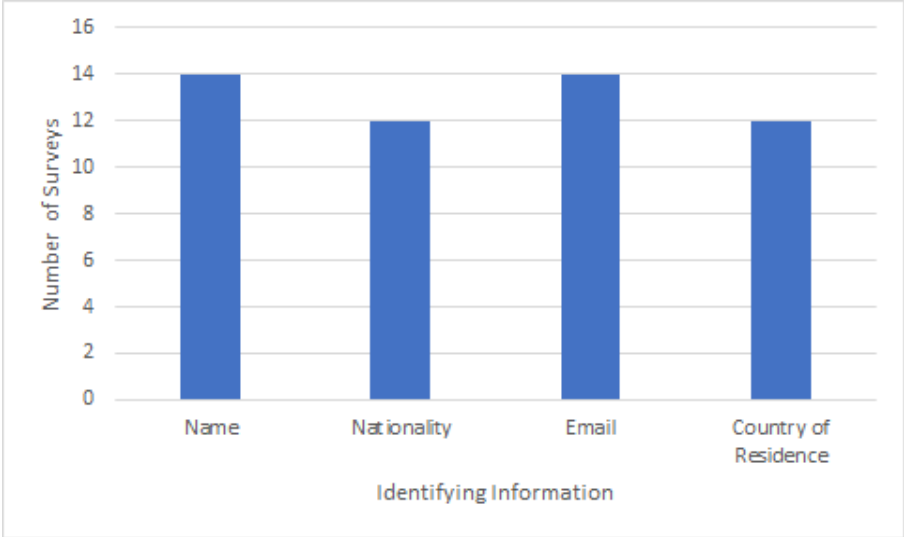
We noted that program surveys differed in the questions asked during document analysis. For example, only some surveys asked whether communication before the event was sufficient. Only some surveys asked for feedback about the organizing team. Interviewees also mentioned the inconsistency to us. When asked which steps of the program evaluation method could be improved, common themes in the seven responses included standardizing the evaluations (two out of seven) and making data analysis easier (three out of seven). Two interviewees also mentioned prioritizing in person surveys, but interviewees also explained to us that paper surveys are standard for in person surveys, while online surveys were used during virtual programs during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Atlas for Development's current surveys often ask for identifying information, such as name, nationality, and the specific program group the person is in. We quantified the number of times different demographic questions appeared in past program evaluation surveys. This information is presented in Figure 5. Fourteen out of sixteen surveys asked for full name, fourteen asked for email, twelve asked for nationality, and twelve asked for country of residence. Other common questions, besides demographics, included asking if workshops met

ambassadors' expectations, asking about the content in workshops, and asking for suggestions to improve the event. Based on these questions, we can tell that Atlas for Development is trying to find out whether ambassadors are satisfied with their programs, what the ambassadors learned, and what Atlas for Development could improve for future programs.

Figure 5

*Identifying Information in Past Program Evaluations*

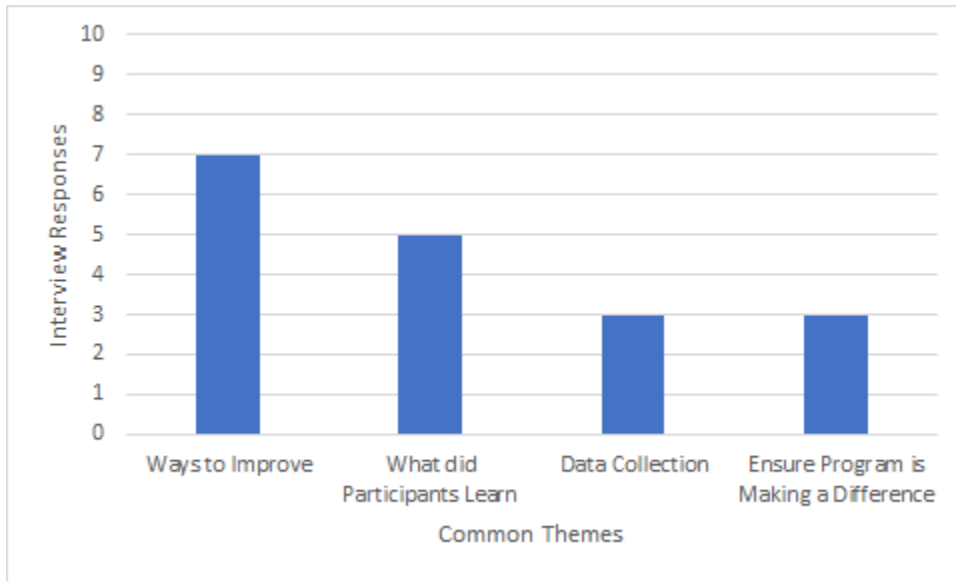


Based on our interviews, we found that Atlas for Development's main goals for their program evaluation survey were to look for ways to improve and see what ambassadors learned.

Figure 6 shows the number of interviewees who mentioned specific goals of the program evaluation. Seven out of ten interviewees mentioned Atlas for Development evaluated their programs to find ways to improve, and five out of ten said the evaluations let them know what ambassadors learned. Other common themes included collecting data (three out of ten) and checking to ensure that the programs were making a difference (three out of ten).

Figure 6

*Common Goals for the Program Evaluation Method*



To understand the true impact of their programs, Atlas for Development collects reports from ambassadors after they have completed their programs. While these reports are usually very informative, one interviewee expressed that it was often difficult to collect these reports from ambassadors and difficult for ambassadors to create the reports. We received a suggestion to create a report template or example or another standardized method to make it easier for the ambassadors to create reports and for Atlas for Development to see the impact of their programs.

Depending on the size of the program, anywhere from one to four people work on the program evaluation. Interviewees working on different programs gave varying figures when asked for this number, and one even mentioned that it did depend on the program. However, across the three responses, all of the numbers given fall somewhere within the one to four range.

The current program evaluations do provide useful data. When asked how the results of the program evaluations were used, interviewees were able to provide examples of using the results to correct technical issues and add information to their operational report on the program.



The majority of the Atlas for Development's members that we interviewed felt that the program evaluations did provide enough data to them, although that was not the case for every interviewee. Those who disagreed mentioned that they felt surveys were asking the wrong questions. They also felt the questions were phrased in the wrong way and there was a lack of consistency between programs. Interviewees stressed that virtual programs were inferior to in-person. One interviewee also mentioned that lack of resources made it difficult to evaluate programs. Interviewees also cited incredibly high response rates, near 100% for in-person programs, where ambassadors receive and complete paper surveys during the program. Even for virtual programs, response rates ranged from 30% to over 50%, with a lower response rate mentioned for a larger program, where 100 to 120 of the 300 ambassadors responded. Interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the response rate for virtual programs. However, they objectively still received a significant amount of responses. Overall, the program evaluations currently can vary significantly from program to program.

We asked sponsors how they decide which organizations to partner with. To our surprise, they did not refer to the organization's website. Both mentioned that they either had not looked at the website or looked at it only briefly. Instead, they prefer face-to-face interactions to better understand who the potential partners are as people, their morals and values and if they align with their own. Peace First explained their reasoning behind in person interviews:

It's important to understand the organization, the structure, and the people who work there and if they truly see young people as partners, not as beneficiaries, if they truly believe what they do, [because] that will enable those young people to create change ... That's what we care about. We care about sensing that, and you can easily sense that when you meet the partner.

Sponsors felt in person interactions were best to determine the character of the partner organization, valuable information when deciding whether or not to work together. Both sponsors also research the organizations and their members before the meeting and seek out organizations with a good record. The Swiss Embassy also looks at the budget and proposal for the project, and looks at the potential partner's financial and operational reports. Sponsor prioritized dedicated organizations with good reputations and relied on human interactions to choose partners.

#### 4.4 Financial Findings

Similar to the previous objectives, our financial findings were found through document analysis and our interviews with past and current Atlas for Development members, in addition to Atlas for Development partner organizations and a similar NGO. Of the ten documents we analyzed, only six contained financial budget spreadsheets, all of which had different organizational methods. The financial budget spreadsheets were not well documented and usually not fully completed. Our interviewees shared that they did not feel as though they had a consistent method to upload receipts and information from purchases. They would like a way to accurately record Atlas for Development's spending. Some of the interviewees believed the best solution to both of these issues was through Google Forms.

While Atlas for Development members indicated areas for improvement in the NGO's financial organization, both of the sponsors that we interviewed, the Swiss Embassy and Peace First, were happy with Atlas for Development's financial organization. One sponsor said:

Atlas for Development tended to keep financial aspects [organized] very well. They justify how they use money correctly based on what they shared with us in the beginning.

They have a budget and they have expenditure, and expenditure should fit with the first budget, and from that perspective Atlas for Development is good.

Both organizations indicated that Atlas for Development's spending record was accurate and their budgeting was reasonable. When asked for more details, one sponsor recommended that Atlas for Development hire part-time staff such as photographers instead of freelancers for each event. Both organizations also indicated that they had someone who looked at the budget and financial reports produced by Atlas for Development. Overall, the sponsors that we spoke with were satisfied with the financial information they received from Atlas for Development.

Currently, Atlas for Development relies on Excel sheets and a couple of members to manage their finances. When asked about the current method for managing finances, three out of the four interviewees who answered financial questions mentioned Excel spreadsheets and folders for receipts, which could be reviewed. The interviewees indicated that two people are mainly in charge of finances. These people are the treasurer, who took care of the spreadsheets and calculations, and the president, who communicated financial information to outside entities such as sponsors and partners. A focus group of about three to five people work on finances as well but generally work on obtaining quotes or estimating expenses. Sometimes, up to three people from a sponsoring organization may also work with Atlas for Development members on a program's finances.

Interviewees expected the method to manage finances would only be used by the people currently working on money management, mostly the president and financial director.

Interviewees wanted to balance privacy and transparency in their financial system. When asked what information should remain private and what information should be more accessible, one interviewee said

On the topic of transparency, we want people to know the percentage of the budget we use for communication, the percentage of the funding we receive from international donors, and the percentage of the membership fees. We want people to have this overview, but not the details. Details we want to keep as a private thing.

Atlas for Development members hoped that the method would allow them to keep the details of their financial information private but also allow them to share a general overview with outside entities like partner organizations.

During our interview with AJTCD Tamdoult, another NGO that uses the incubator model, we learned that the organization relies on an accountant to handle their finances. Our interviewee told us that initially the organization had smaller programs and was able to rely on spreadsheets. However, when they began running national and international programs with sponsors, they found they needed to hire an accountant. They also developed a manual of internal procedures, and as the organization has grown they have added additional staff qualified to assist with finances and worked on purchasing specialized software. We also asked AJTCD Tamdoult what advice they would give smaller organizations looking to grow. They responded,

Organizations need to have the capacities that can help them grow, so they need to have people who can do budgeting, people who can do project development and project management, they need people who can sacrifice their time. [...] So, if I may [give advice] it's to believe in their organization and to build capacity and look for people who can help them grow their organization.

They recommended that smaller organizations focus on building capacity and hiring trained, qualified, and dedicated people to help them accomplish their mission.

During document analysis, we found that financial documents had no standardized structure. In the files we examined, several programs contained what appeared to be complete budgets. However, we found no standardized structure between these budgets. Formatting, layout, categories, information reported about each transaction, language, and even currency varied between each budget.

#### 4.5 Summary

Through our use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis we were able to find a lot of useful data to apply to our objectives. We found that Atlas for Development addressed a wide range of issues, influenced by their partners and ambassadors, however their focus is on empowering young people. For program evaluations, we found there is a lack of consistency in the questions being asked on Atlas for Development's programs. Though the surveys receive plenty of responses, the members we interviewed would like more detailed feedback and to have the data analyzed automatically instead of manually. We found that Atlas for Development's sponsors are satisfied with their financial organization, however a more standardized and less resource intensive system would be helpful for the organization's members. We used these findings to create our deliverables and recommendations, which are presented and explained in the following section.

## 5.0 Recommendations and Conclusions

The following chapter will discuss our recommendations to Atlas for Development based on our findings. These recommendations will allow the NGO to spend less time on program evaluations and organizing finances, and instead use that time to continue their work to improve society. The chapter is split into three sections, which correlate to our three objectives. These sections are defining Atlas for Development's mission and vision, evaluating the organization's programs, and creating a method to manage the NGO's finances.

### 5.1 Mission and Vision Recommendations

1. Atlas for Development should educate members on their mission and vision.

We found that there is no consensus among sponsors or Atlas for Development members on what the NGO does. Members and partner organizations only know the topics they have focused on themselves. We recommend that Atlas for Development educate members on their mission and vision. It will be easier for members to build the organization's reputation if they can easily explain the NGO's focus when networking

2. Atlas for Development should use the new mission and vision statements.

Again, we found that there is no consensus among sponsors or Atlas for Development members on what the NGO does. To address this, we recommend using revised mission and vision statements that better reflect the organization as a whole.

- *Mission Statement: Equip young adults with the necessary skills to create change in their communities.*
- *Vision Statement: A generation of empowered young people actively working towards a better future.*

These revised statements could be put up on their website to provide potential partners, sponsors, and new members with a concise description of what the organization hopes to achieve.

## 5.2 Program Evaluation Recommendations

1. Atlas for Development should continue to use surveys to evaluate their programs.

We learned that, currently, Atlas for Development distributes surveys to ambassadors during their programs and uses the results to evaluate their programs. Surveys are easy for the NGO to distribute and past surveys have had very high response rates. Based on this data, we are recommending that Atlas for Development continue to use surveys to conduct these evaluations. This way, the NGO can continue using a method members are already familiar with and continue to take advantage of the large amount of data their surveys collect.

2. Atlas for Development should use Google Forms instead of pen and paper surveys.

Atlas for Development members usually enter data manually from pen and paper forms. They would like a more efficient method to analyze survey data. Our second recommendation is that program evaluation surveys are on Google Forms instead of pen and paper. This is a much more efficient method as most of the data analysis will be done for the NGO. Google Forms generate graphs and other data visualizations automatically when the creator views the responses to a form. This will free up Atlas for Development members' time and energy for other important items.

3. Atlas for Development should have ambassadors complete surveys during their events.

The NGO receives the highest response rates when ambassadors complete surveys during their events. Even though future evaluations will be a Google Form, we still recommend that the

organization provide the program ambassadors time to complete the survey at the end of the event, and send the survey through a link or give out a QR code for easy access. This way the organization will still get a high response rate without having to analyze the data manually.

4. Surveys should not ask for demographic information.

We found that the organization's surveys often ask for personal information and that ambassadors might not be filling out Atlas for Development's surveys truthfully. We are recommending Atlas for Development eliminate any parts of their surveys asking for personal information. Responses are more truthful and often more helpful when they are anonymous.

5. Atlas for Development should use the program evaluation resources created by the team.

The program evaluation resources are included in the attached files. We determined that creating survey templates that could be used on any program would provide consistency and make comparing evaluations across programs easier. We created three templates, each of which contains different types of questions. One survey focuses on the program's content, one on the program's logistics, and one on the program's comfort aspects. The content template contains questions pertaining to what was taught and how well it was explained. The logistics template contains questions pertaining to how well the program was organized and whether or not the ambassadors were given enough information prior to the start of the program. Finally, the comfort template contains questions pertaining to the venue where the event was held and any other accommodations. These templates can be used to create a survey suited to each program while still allowing the NGO to compare any data that could apply to a variety of programs. There is also a question bank, which is a Google Form containing additional questions that can be copied and pasted into surveys if they are applicable or necessary to include in the program evaluation.



We also created an ambassador report template and example report. After the ambassadors run their own program or start their own organization they send a report to Atlas for Development describing how it went and what they did. To make this process easier, we created a report template that shows what format the paper should be in, the sections it should contain, along with the questions and information that should go into each section. We also created an example report. The example report shows the ambassadors what their completed report should look like and how in depth their responses should be.

Finally, we also included a deliverables manual. The manual contains three sections, each one focusing on a different topic. The first section contains instructions on how to use the provided survey templates and the question bank, the second section discusses tips and tricks on how to make a successful survey, and the last section describes how to use the report template and the example report. We are recommending that Atlas for Development use these deliverables for all future programs they run so that they will be able to determine how well their programs do when compared to one another.

6. Atlas for Development should translate the survey templates.

Right now, our deliverables are in English. However, Atlas for Development conducts business and keeps records in Arabic and French as well. We recommend translating the survey templates into Arabic and French to make them easier to use for Atlas for Development members, ambassadors, and sponsors.

### 5.3 Financial Method Recommendations

1. Atlas for Development should continue to use spreadsheets.

Atlas for Development currently uses spreadsheets to record their finances. Since they have a limited budget, we are recommending they use Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets as it is free and can be accessed by multiple people.

2. Atlas for Development should use the financial management resources made by the team.

We learned that Atlas for Development does not have a consistent method of financial organization as it changes from program to program. Their financial system is also time and labor intensive. To standardize the NGO's financial organization, we created a system of spreadsheets, forms, and data visualizations, along with instructions for how to use these items. This deliverable is included in the attached files. We recommend Atlas for Development use this system. Financial information can be directly entered into a spreadsheet or added via forms. Once a form is filled out it will automatically add the information into the desired spreadsheet. Visuals, such as charts and graphs, provide an overview of Atlas for Development's budget and spending. These visuals will update automatically as data is entered. This provides an overview of finances which could be presented to current and potential partner organizations and sponsors. Using this financial template will standardize financial records and make keeping track of expenses and funding less time consuming.

3. Atlas for Development should translate the financial management resources.

Right now, our deliverables are in English. However, Atlas for Development conducts business and keeps records in Arabic and French as well. We recommend translating the financial management resources into Arabic and French to make them easier to use for Atlas for Development members, ambassadors, and sponsors.

4. Atlas for Development should train more members in financial record-keeping.

Right now, Atlas for Development relies on very few people to do a large amount of work pertaining to finances. Because of this, we are also recommending that the organization instructs more of their current members in financial record-keeping. Involving more people in record keeping could substantially cut down the time required to manage the finances and allow more time to focus on tasks pertaining to civil society.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Our sponsor, Atlas for Development, works to empower young adults in Morocco through their programs. Like many other Moroccan NGO's, Atlas for Development has a need for better internal organization. Our goal was to develop tools to optimize Atlas for Development's internal efficiency. We accomplished this through three objectives. Our first objective was to define Atlas for Development's mission and vision. The second objective was to develop a method to evaluate their programs and the third objective was to develop a method to manage their finances. We conducted interviews with past and current Atlas for Development members, some of the organization's sponsors, and a similar NGO. We also conducted document analysis on Atlas for Development's records of past programs, including reports, budgets, and surveys.

We found that there is no consensus among the members of Atlas for Development and the sponsors we spoke with as to what Atlas for Development does. We redefined Atlas for Development's mission and vision statements to emphasize their focus on empowering youth and their use of the incubator model. Atlas for Development uses surveys to evaluate their programs. While this method generally produces high response rates, the members of the NGO mentioned a lack of consistency, opportunities for increased efficiency during data analysis, and the need for honest feedback. We developed a collection of resources for program evaluations, including

three survey templates and instructions for their use. In the future, Atlas for Development should provide their ambassadors with time during the event to fill out the suggested Google Forms and maintain anonymity.

We found that Atlas for Development relies on a couple of people to handle their finances. They use Excel spreadsheets for budgeting and rely on sponsors for funding. Interviewees indicated opportunities for more consistent record-keeping and simpler data analysis. Partner organizations that we spoke to were satisfied with the financial information they received from Atlas for Development. We recommended and developed a system of spreadsheets, charts, and forms to standardize record-keeping across programs, visualize the larger financial picture, and make data analysis simpler. We also recommended having other members take on some responsibility for managing finances, such as recording out-of-pocket costs in a simple form.

Future work could focus on defining industry standards for program evaluations and financial management among Moroccan NGOs. Other directions for future work include sharing the resources we have developed with other NGO's in Morocco and further developing our deliverables, for example converting the system of spreadsheets into a software application.

Our project focused on developing tools to maximize Atlas for Development's productivity given limited resources. While we noted areas for improvement, we also noted that interviewees generally felt the current methods were acceptable. And, while we provided tools to help with program evaluations and managing finances, we made only small changes to the current methods. We feel that Atlas for Development would benefit from assistance in recruiting and retaining more members and locating additional funding. Simply put, Atlas for Development

has been successful with the people and funding they have now. To grow further, they need more resources.

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**Appendix A: Timeline**

We conducted interviews with WPI expert sources before the start of our project term. A timeline for our project term is shown below, in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Timeline

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Collecting Documents							
Scheduling Interviews							
Conducting Interviews							
Analyzing Data							
Develop Program Evaluation Method							
Develop Financial Method							
Final Presentation Preparation							

## **Appendix B: Interview and Survey Consent Scripts**

The following is an example of our consent script when conducting interviews.

### An invitation to participate in an interview:

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are conducting interviews with non-governmental organization volunteers and participants to learn about the financial system and program evaluation methods used in Morocco. This research will be used by Atlas for Development to improve their financial management system and their program evaluation method, and will be published.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. We would like to record this meeting for future reference with your approval. Please keep in mind that your answers will remain anonymous. No names or identifying information will appear in the project reports and publications. The interview is estimated to last for an hour. Please feel free to ask us any questions concerning the interview before you begin, and to skip any questions you do not want to answer.

For more information about this research or about the rights of research participants, or in case of research-related injury, contact:

Morocco D'22 Atlas4Dev Team: Madelyn Thrasher, Elizabeth Euwart, Noah Wolf,

Email: [gr-atlas4development-d22@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-atlas4development-d22@wpi.edu)

The IRB Chair: Professor Kent Rissmiller, Tel. 508-831-5019, Email: [kjr@wpi.edu](mailto:kjr@wpi.edu)

The Human Protection Administrator: Gabriel Johnson, Tel. 508-831-4989,

Email: [gjohnson@wpi.edu](mailto:gjohnson@wpi.edu)

## Appendix C: Interview Questions for Atlas for Development Members

The following table includes what we want to learn during our semi-structured interviews with Atlas for Development members followed by the questions we plan to use to gather this information. Potential probes and follow-up questions are also included.

What we want to learn	Question	Probes/follow ups
What are Atlas for Development's goals for the program evaluation?	Please list what you hope to learn from the program evaluation  Please order these pieces of information from most to least important.	Why did you order the items this way?
How does Atlas for Development define a successful program?	Please list the goals of your programs.  Please order these goals from most to least important.	Why did you order the items this way?
What is the current method for evaluating programs?	Please list the steps of the current method in order.	How much time does each step usually take?
What parts of the current method are successful?	Please point out the steps which are usually successful.	Why is this step successful?
What parts of the current method are not successful?	Please point out the steps where problems usually occur.	What problems usually occur?
What parts of the current method could be improved? How?	Please point out any steps which could be improved.	How do you think these steps might be improved?  Why do you think these improvements might help?
What resources does Atlas for Development have to evaluate their programs?	How many people usually work on each step?  What data analysis tools are	

	or could be used?	
How does the program evaluation change from program to program?	How does this process change depending on the program?	Can you give an example?
Does the current evaluation method produce meaningful results?	Does the current program evaluation provide enough data?  How are the results of program evaluations used?	If a survey is used, do people respond? How many?  Have you changed a program based on the results?
What are Atlas for Development's goals for the platform?	Please list what you hope the platform will accomplish  Please order these pieces of information from most to least important.	Why did you order the items this way?
What is the current method for managing income and expenses?	Please list the steps of the current method in order.	How much time does each step usually take?
What parts of the current method for managing income and expenses are successful?	Please point out the steps which are usually successful.	Why is this step successful?
What parts of the current method are not successful?	Please point out the steps where problems usually occur.	What problems usually occur?
What parts of the current method could be improved? How?	Please point out any steps which could be improved.	How do you think these steps might be improved?  Why do you think these improvements might help?
What resources does Atlas for Development have to manage their finances?	How many people usually work on each step?  What data analysis tools are or could be used?	
How does this method change depending on the situation?	How does this process change depending on the expense, source of income, program, or	Can you give an example?

	person?	
Does the current system produce meaningful results?	Does the current system provide enough data?  How are the results of the system used?	Have you changed how the organization operates based on the results?  Can you use the results to apply for funding or give data to partners?
Who will be using this platform?	Who will be using this platform?	Do they have experience with income and expenses?  Will they be able to find specific information if it is requested?  Is it one person or a group?
What kind of security should this platform have?	What type of security should this platform have?	What types of information should be available to everyone?  Would you prefer to keep some information private?  Who should be able to edit the information?  Do you need digital security features? What type?

## Appendix D: Interview Questions for Partner Organizations

The following table includes what we want to learn during our semi-structured interviews with Atlas for Development’s partner organizations followed by the questions we plan to use to gather this information. Potential probes and follow-up questions are also included.

Question	Probes/ Follow-up questions
Based on your interactions, what does Atlas for Development do?	What is their goal/mission? What kind of programs do they conduct?
Did you find their website to be useful in discovering what the company does?	What might you want to see more or less of on their website?
How well does Atlas for Development organize its finances?	What could they do to improve their organizational system?  Can you give an example of this strength/weakness?
Is there any specific information you are looking for when deciding to partner with an organization?  Did you receive this information from Atlas for Development?	Any financial information?  Any information about the success of their programs?

## **Appendix E: Interview Questions for Similar Organizations**

The following list includes the questions we asked during our semi-structured interviews with NGOs similar to Atlas for Development. Potential probes and follow-up questions are also included.

- How does your organization organize their finances?
  - How does your organization create and stick to their budget?
  - How does reimbursement work?
- What kind of tools does your organization use to aid in their financial organization?
- What information is collected from participants before/after they receive a grant?
  - What kind of data does your organization collect on the programs run by their participants?
- Does your organization ever work with other organizations?
  - What information does your organization need from these organizations?
  - What information do these organizations request from your organization?
- How does your organization evaluate their programs?
- Can you talk more about the incubator model?
  - How does this affect program evaluations and finances?
- Does your organization have any advice for smaller organizations?

## Appendix F: Interview Structure

To make sure our interviews are successful we have developed a structure we plan to follow during the interviews as shown below:

1. Greet the interviewees and perform introductions.
2. Create a welcoming environment by engaging in small talk.
3. Provide the interviewee introductory information about the interview to give them context such as:
  - a. The purpose of the interview
  - b. The confidentiality of their responses
4. Provide the consent script from Appendix B.
5. Ask our pre-developed interview questions as shown in Appendix C, D, or E, depending on the interview.
6. Conclude the interview and provide the interviewee the opportunity to share any other helpful information by asking the following questions:
  - a. Is there anything you feel is important for us to know that you haven't been able to mention yet?
  - b. Is there anything else you would like to add?
7. Thank the interviewees for their time.