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## EHL CASE STUDY

# The role of Hospitality Education in Social Sustainability

Giving back to society and supporting  
Africa to thrive in the future through the  
Hospitality and Tourism industry.

## Social Sustainability: the path for Africa

Sustainability has become much more than a mere environmental concern. It incorporates a critical economic and social dimension. With most of the public dialogue focusing on economic or environmental sustainability, i.e., Profit and Planet, social sustainability is the least understood pillar. Yet, people are needed to sustain healthy economies. And none more so than in Africa.

Talents are needed to imagine new economic models, contribute to societal growth, and drive a meaningful and long-term return on investment. Social sustainability is therefore the future of business, especially when it comes to developing high-performing skilled manpower.

## What is social sustainability?

Social sustainability can be summarized as “doing business in ways that benefit society and protect people”. While an ever-evolving definition, the term refers to a process or framework that “promotes wellbeing within an organization’s own members while also supporting the ability of future generations to maintain a healthy community”.

## Hospitality Education: an enabler of social sustainability

In this context, hospitality and tourism education is one of the key drivers and enablers of social sustainability.

“Tourism and Travel” is one of the world’s major industries, and the second-fastest growing sector in the world. It generates 10 percent of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP) and employs over 300 million people around the world. This growth is notably a key GDP earner for many developing countries, especially in Africa.

The Hospitality and Tourism industry in Africa is suffering from a lack of talent, and many management jobs are held by foreigners. It is therefore so important to close the gap as well as inspire and educate the young generation to assume the hospitality managerial position of the future, breaking the glass ceiling.



However, breaking the glass ceiling comes with finding ways to make the Hospitality and Tourism industry attractive in a region where aspiration comes from engineering fields and where the service industry suffers from its image. Providing exciting and aspirational opportunities is key for the younger generation, as well as reassuring the parents that their children can have a great future.

## A well-thought-out and strong vision: UM6P

The Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (commonly abbreviated as UM6P) in Morocco exemplifies the commitment of leading universities in Africa to contribute to social sustainability. The University emerged as part of the “Green City” project, a major urban development project located in the historical city of Ben Guerir aiming at creating a model city of sustainability, with a special interest in promoting research, education, and development in Africa.

UM6P vision is to be a leading African higher education institution, nurturing talents, knowledge, and innovation for a sustainable impact in hospitality and tourism management. The mission is to uplift the knowledge and competencies in the African Hospitality and Tourism industry by:

- Training existing and future ethically and socially responsible leaders with an entrepreneurial and resilient mindset
- Generating rigorous and impactful knowledge supporting the sustainable growth of the industry
- Being a driving force for innovation by fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

To offer an aspirational learning destination to its future students, UM6P built an iconic campus, designed and imagined by the architects Ricardo Bofill and Elie Mouyal, creators of the Casablanca Twin Center. UM6P also became one of the only 2 institutions worldwide to be recognized as a Climate Hero in the United Nations Climate Change Conference of Youth 16.

A new School of Hospitality Business Management (SHBM) was envisioned to execute UM6P’s vision for the hospitality industry.







## The right partner to fulfill UM6P SHBM social responsibility vision

In support of its educational offer, UM6P SHBM has set a goal to build partnerships with world-leading higher education institutions. In line with this goal, UM6P SHBM reached out to EHL as the world's #1 in hospitality management education.

In June 2019, EHL Advisory Services and UM6P SHBM signed a consulting agreement for the provision of services and guidance towards the development of a world-renowned hospitality school in Morocco. The objective has relevant economic importance since hospitality is expected to create over 3 million jobs by 2030 in Africa, including 200,000 in Morocco. The country needs over 10 000 hospitality managers to help develop and shape a new type of tourism in Morocco. UM6P SHBM values and objectives resonated with EHL and their immediate objectives.

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“Rooted in the African continent, SHBM aspires to build on the continent's vast potential by designing and delivering a customized, agile, and impactful curriculum to nurture a new generation of students that will shape the future of the Hospitality and Tourism industry. EHL Advisory Services' approach, stemming from the century-long expertise of EHL Group and supported by a clear methodology, allowed our school to build a resilient foundation. In a sector impacting the economic, environmental, and social ecosystem of its host communities, sustainability intention is the core value shared by SHBM and EHL Group that drives both institutions in their vision and that will contribute to positioning the African continent as a catalyst for sustainable change in the hospitality and tourism industry.” Syrab El Malti, Director of the School of Hospitality Business and Management at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University

# Approach

To fulfill UM6P SHBM vision, EHL Advisory Services proposed a collaborative structured approach that started with confirming the feasibility and sustainability of such a project in the region:

## 1. Identify the training needs and recommend the best and most suitable training models and infrastructures for the region.

EHL Advisory Services' methodology entailed 5 steps:

- Identify the hospitality education needs of the country
- Understand the current hospitality education offer
- Identify opportunities for investors to make the vision become a reality
- Recommend the most appropriate hospitality education initiatives for the country and the region
- Define the development steps in establishing the institution

EHL Advisory Services did extensive desk research, on-site market research including interviews, site visits and workshops with relevant project stakeholders. The research and analysis confirmed the opportunity to develop a hospitality education center in Morocco. In addition, several opportunities to get support from hotel industry stakeholders and regional associations were identified.

## 2. Develop a strong business case and design the curriculum

Once the project feasibility was confirmed, a complete report on the requirements for opening a hospitality institution in Morocco was developed. EHL Advisory Services joined forces with UM6P SHBM in designing of the curriculum for their 4-year bachelor's program in Hospitality Management based on EHL best practices.

The curriculum was designed to balance the practical and theoretical components demanded by the hospitality sector. It is based on the industry needs, prioritizing the future employability of the graduates and therefore building the sustainable success of the UM6P SHBM's in the long run.



### 3. Support the infrastructure development

For a successful hospitality education, investment in real estate with state-of-the-art facilities is one of the key success factors to ensure excellent training in the sector and prepare graduates with skills to serve in the industry in a sustainable way.

EHL Advisory Services worked with UM6P SHBM on the plans of the institution to facilities briefs and recommendations i.e., classrooms, hotel rooms, receptions, restaurants, bar, kitchen areas. All of this to enhance and motivate the learning of the students. EHL further shared best practices with UM6P SHBM with the infrastructure and equipment requirements to ensure more efficiency and cost-effectiveness. To cope with a delay in construction works, due to COVID-19, EHL assisted UM6P SHBM regarding the adaptation of alternative learning facilities, to accommodate the launch of the Bachelor program.

### 4. Train and reinforce the core educational team

In preparation for the launch of UM6P SHBM, EHL Advisory Services facilitated reflections with the core team and support functions on hospitality knowledge. A particular focus was dedicated to the demystification of the perception and stereotypes of hospitality in Morocco.

The Qualified Learning Facilitator's (QLF) program provided the UM6P SHBM management team and faculty members with the knowledge, and competencies in the areas of pedagogy, andragogy, and epistemology. The training program helped the team shift from the traditional way of teaching to facilitation that stimulates the learning of the students. The program was specially adapted to an online format, to cope with the travel restrictions imposed by the 2020 Covid-19 Global pandemic.

### 5. Collaborate and coach on marketing and brand matters

UM6P SHBM and EHL worked together on marketing matters ranging from marketing strategy to online branding and communication. A tailor-made workshop guided the UM6P SHBM team through the definition of a launch plan for the Bachelor program and the implementation of the supporting recruitment plan.

EHL Advisory Services facilitated the creation of the school's website and implemented a state-of-the-art digital marketing platform based on the best practices for education marketing that are in effect at EHL.







## Key Advantage: A complete roadmap for all stakeholders

The objective was to accompany UM6P SHBM with the creation of a detailed roadmap to drive the school towards a successful launch and make sure the mission to uplift the knowledge and competencies in African Hospitality and Tourism was met. The roadmap focused on the following social sustainability goals:

- Training existing and future ethically and socially responsible leaders with an entrepreneurial and resilient mindset
- Generating rigorous and impactful knowledge supporting the sustainable growth of the industry
- Being a driving force for innovation by fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

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Through UM6P exclusive academic training, “the UM6P intends to strengthen its multidisciplinary and provide Morocco and the continent with a succession that places innovation at the heart of its approach. A succession represented by a new generation of experienced and resilient young professionals ready to face the specificities of the changes and transformations that the industry is experiencing, which is currently suffering the brunt of a slowdown and the harmful consequences imposed by the Covid-19 health crisis. Innovation is even more necessary as the hospitality industry becomes more and more consumer-centric, in a globally interconnected environment” Hicham El Habti, President of UM6P.

## Results

In May 2020, the school has been successfully recognized as the first school in Africa to obtain Associate Member status within the EHL network of certified schools. Through the delivery of tailor-made workshops, in December 2019 and February 2020, EAS advised UM6P SHBM with fundamentals to achieve the student recruitment goals for October 2020.

Activities have been developed to enable the UM6P SHBM team to elaborate an effective recruitment marketing launch plan for the school. A fully operational website has been provided to UM6P SHBM. Furthermore, the marketing and student recruitment team at UM6P SHBM has been trained to be fully autonomous with their website and digital recruitment platform. The new bachelor's program in Hospitality Business & Management was successfully launched on October 19th, 2020 with 65 students recruited, the majority benefiting from a scholarship program, in line with UM6P SHBM's commitment to the broader society.

Many partnerships with Tourism and Hospitality professionals have been finalized, and SHBM has an extensive network in the field. In addition, the OCP group, to which the university is attached through its Foundation, has set up a National Hotel Center of Excellence, in partnership with the ONCF (Office National des Chemins de Fer du Maroc) and the Hassan II Fund of development. This center will include historic hotel assets from Morocco: Mamounia Marrakech, Palais Jamaï in Fès, Michlifen in Ifrane, and Marchica Lagoon Resort in the Oriental Region. SHBM is changing the mindset of many and helping the community see hospitality and service through a different lens as making a larger positive impact on people's lives.

As an example of its commitment to work with the local ecosystem to develop homegrown leaders of the hospitality industry, UM6P SHBM has started working with members from nearby villages to bring back old culinary recipes to life. This is a way to celebrate their heritage from a culinary perspective and also to bring it forward as a magnet for tourism.



“We are happy to partner with EHL Group, an institution that has been training leading professionals for more than 125 years. In 2017, nearly 62 million international tourists traveled to Africa. Tourism is developing at a very fast pace in the continent and there is an opportunity for UM6P to contribute academically by offering this exclusive training in Hospitality Management. Through this partnership, we aspire to arm Africa with a new generation of leading and resilient professionals, ready to face the challenges of disruption and the consumer-led specificity of the industry that is today operating in a globally interconnected environment” Hicham El Habti, President of UM6P.



## Conclusion

The UM6P SHBM business case is an illustration of how investing in hospitality Education can be a social sustainability enabler.

Africa's hospitality market is growing. The world's largest hotel chains are making headlines as they are in a billion-dollar race to lead "the hotel chain development pipeline in terms of rooms and number of hotels". The development of the hospitality industry in Africa needs a talented, high-performing, service-excellence-oriented workforce. Hospitality learning centers such as UM6P SHBM can therefore become a pool of talent development, which can in turn be injected into the local industry and contribute to the sustainable growth of the economy.

Besides producing talent, hospitality education and learning centers have a magnetic effect.

In addition to students, they help attract outside companies, investors, research institutes, and new businesses to locate nearby to take advantage of the institutions' talents, network, and infrastructure.

In addition to getting financial return on investment from its hospitality programs, an institution like UM6P SHBM becomes a platform for research and insights into future technologies, trends and opportunities for the industry. Institutions embracing a vision similar to UM6P SHBM and being supported by industry leaders through the complex implementation process, can become drivers for continued growth and innovation shaping both the hospitality industry and its local economy.

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