



« How effective is the help of Alakhawayn University on the social development of  
Ifrane and its region? »

Critical thinking and Problem Solving Process

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## Abstract

The report studies the effectiveness of the help of AUI associations' in Ifrane and its regions. The purpose of this report was to describe how these associations help to improve the development of the Atlas area and whether this help is effective or not. That said, the team project tried to identify the benefits received by the population from the assistance of these associations. In addition to conducting a review of the literature, surveys were completed by 50 students and 10 staff, which gave an idea about what do other people, maybe external to the associations, think about the work done. Since AUI associations' have a relationship with the administration, staff knew more about their achievements than students. Two interviews were held in this research to better know the achievements and effectiveness of these associations; one interview with the advisor of Hand in Hand and the other one with the coordinator of Azrou Center. The research showed that AUI associations' are doing a very effective work on the field, given their resources and their duties, however, they deplore the superficial involvement of the officials who are the ones who should make sure the region is doing well.

## Introduction

In every region of the world, each important entity, which has a certain position and power, should play a role in the development of that region. In fact, it is part of social responsibility, in other words, contribution to the society at large and everyone should be aware of that. This is particularly the case when the region is one of the poorest in the country. It's important to make the population of the region socially aware for the development of the region since most of them are illiterate and poor. The team members assumed that people were not making efforts in order to take their responsibilities and with the assistance of the entities, to help develop their region, that is to say that people relied on the different entities to solve all the problems and to pay all the bills, so they have to take initiatives and try to help the development of their region by themselves.

Alakhawayn University is an entity of importance in the Middle Atlas region. This research focuses on the ability of Alakhawayn University to help and motivate the population of the region through its associations. The research focused mainly on two associations which are Hand in Hand and Azrou Center. The first one is a body standing mainly on the priority of helping people and improving their living conditions in Ifrane and its surrounding areas. This association is known through the organization of many big events like the "Fun Run" from which the association collects money in order to invest in the development of the area. On the other hand, Azrou Center aims at providing medical, social and educational services in favor of women, children and unemployed graduates seeking complementary training, with the aim of diversifying their knowledge in the technical and economic fields, with a view to increasing their chances of integrating the job market medical oriented center which is also concerned with providing

information and teaching the population in order for it to be aware of its environment and to be able to work for the social development of the area. The team members can define social development as the improvement of individuals' life conditions which implies family, community and society in general. The purpose of this research is to know if AUI through its associations helps effectively the region; that is to say if it makes enough efforts and whether those efforts bring better life conditions to the population.

The reason for investigating this issue is that AUI is linked to the government and therefore it has certain roles and obligations to fulfill toward the region where it has been located. In fact, according to the web site of Alakhawayn University, it was located in Ifrane for two main reasons, the first one is the environment that is providing a healthy atmosphere for students to succeed in their studies; the second reason was that, according to AUI Web Site, Ifrane is one of the most important cities in the poor Middle Atlas region and therefore, the creation of the university was meant to help developing the region socially and economically. Some members of the AUI community assumed that Azrou center and Hand in Hand are doing their best in order to provide respectively medical and educational assistance, others say that the population of Ifrane relies too much on the help of the university without trying to get involved in the actions. Through our research question, "How effective is the help of AUI associations on the social development of Ifrane and its region?" we will investigate the effectiveness of the work of AUI associations. In other words, whether they are joining efforts between them to improve the development of the region and whether there are positive consequences of those actions on the population.

## Literature review

Social development is no more a concept particular to some associations or governments; rather, universities are becoming real actors of this phenomenon. Indeed, concerning Alakhawayn University, it is highly operating in this domain through projects led by Hand in Hand and Azrou Center. Indeed, the case of AUI is very important in this sense; indeed, the Leitmotiv of the university is “Excellence and Identity”, and one can seriously suppose that the identity comes along with the involvement in the environment of the entity. Also, AUI has put in place since fall 2004 mandatory community service Documents and numerous studies conducted in various countries give good evidence of this trend. ( Banta, 2005, Baker-Minkel, et.al, 2004 and Wheeler and Eldelbeck, n.d.)

Indeed, the work of Banta, (2005) gave an example of civic engagement from universities. In fact, civic engagement is in a rank of much more merit within college and university campuses. “At Indiana Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), they define civic engagement as “effective, mutually beneficial collaboration of students, faculty and staff and their community”. According to the text, “IUPUI’s community collaborations build on the range of resources and expertise of both the university and the community to improve the quality of life in that particular city and region”. In that sense, it will help in the present research to examine what are the different ways in which civic engagement can be beneficial to students such as Alakhawayn’s.

However, another article written by Baker-Minkel, Moody, and Kieser, (2004) drew a comparison of 15 California College town budgets to 15 cities with comparable demographics found that, “although they may provide a host of intangible benefits, the presence of universities, can also impose negative fiscal impacts on municipal budgets.

Despite the recent rise in legal battles between the universities and their host cities, both parties have incentives for engaging in more cooperative cost sharing initiatives.

Universities need city approval in order to implement long-range plans, and cities would like remuneration from public services”. This research also, through interviews shows that the relationship university-city is being improved due to the efficiency of the agreements. The article could be helpful in the way to explain and maybe provoke collaboration between the university and the city or the region to improve the development of the area.

The article by Wheeler, and Edelbeck, (2006) states the action of the Innovation Center for Community and Youth development based in Washington DC and which is engaged in “programming, research, and policy development related to youth civic engagement”. In fact, this text talks about the integration of some young people in civic actions in order to make them leave their ways of living and find a place for themselves in organizations focused on civic engagement. In this sense, this text adds to our research another side which is the one of the young people involved in the actions taking place in AUI. In fact, AUI being a university in which the average age of students is approximately 21 years old, and that the associations Hand in Hand and Azrou Center are mainly guided and lead by students of the university, is also another element that is important to notice.

According to Caputo, (2005), in last years, there have been a lot of efforts made in order to implement civic engagement among university students through programs and associations. The findings of the research made bring the idea that “major and sustained commitment to civic engagement across the USA, showing a growing interest of students

for civic engagement and community serving. This is interesting to notice, since we can easily observe the same phenomenon taking place in the university with a growing number of students taking part of the social development of Ifrane and its region and also it will add to the research a new breath in order to improve and propose other ways of dealing with civic engagement.

In his article, Walker (2002) defines the term accountability as being a social oriented concept, and not only a term with a financial orientation. The article gives the different theories underlying the concept of accountability. To the research question at hand, this article is very helpful since it will help to understand which accountability Alakhawayn University is following. In fact, AUI being an important entity in the region, it is supposed to be accountable to the community and the state for its achievements.

According to Einbinder, Robertson, Garcia, Vuckovic and Patti, (2000), “staff at [...] welfare agencies encounters families that frequently experience severe and complicated difficulties and are often in need of multiple forms of aid”. Also, the article states that it is more and more restricted to improve and avert the effects of these problems, and therefore, one approach is the use of inter-organizational collaboration. That said, organizational scholars have identified four prerequisites to effective inter-organizational collaboration: incentive, willingness, ability, and capacity. This article will be very important to our research question since Hand in Hand, and Azrou Center are very involved in inter-organizational collaboration and to see how it can be improved given the different pre-requisites.

According to Hardy, and Schaen (2000), “community fieldwork enhances learning by allowing students to integrate course material with actual issues in a

community setting”. This process includes students from undergraduate psychology programs, whereas at Alakhawayn University, community service is open to all the students. This paper might be interesting to understand the differences between the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Alakhawayn University in the way they deal with community service. Also, it will benefit the university and the associations more particularly to learn how to behave concerning the students enrolled in community service programs.

In her article, Hutchinson, (2004) gives an view of the “ways in which this pedagogy [service learning] may help business and technical-field students to develop a broader view of the world and their roles as citizens in it.”(2004, p.441) Indeed, it states that through service learning, students become more involved in their studies and more motivated to work. The pedagogy developed by Hutchinson claims at enrolling also professors and instructors to incorporate service learning in curricular programs. Concerning AUI, this pedagogy is already used and it might be helpful to understand more the repercussions of the inclusion of students within these kinds of processes.

However, according to Marks, and Jones’ (2001) findings, it is not recommendable for colleges and campuses to require community service from its students “based on the negative effects of mandated service among students”. (2001, p.335) In fact, the authors do not advise to pursue community service unless it “significantly benefits others” than the students themselves since Marks and Jones think it is not transforming positively the students. Those conclusions are drawn after a deep study on the field, and the results show that in order “to create core volunteers, they [services experiences] would need to be powerful, profoundly human, ongoing,

intellectually and emotionally compelling”. This view is very interesting and would for sure help us really understand to role of community service at the University and whether it is effective or not.

To conclude, the team members think seriously that those articles have brought important points to the research question, underlying new perspectives and adding other sides to the research, which are the fact that civic engagement can also be beneficial to the students undertaking the actions, and also the growing civic spirit all around the world and therefore, permitting to compare the performance of the university with other ones.

## Methodology

### Design

How effective is the help of AUI’s associations on the social development of Ifrane and its region? The focus here was mostly on Education and Health issues. The method chosen was a mixed between both quantitative and qualitative one. It is necessary to gather and to measure information about the indicator of improvement of social development in Ifrane in terms of education and health. It is also necessary to use qualitative data will enrich the study by providing detailed descriptions of personal experiences.

Concerning the type of design, the use of both explanatory and descriptive types was necessary. They were the best choice for the study because it is crucial to describe the situation first (descriptive), and to explain how things are being improved (explanatory).

Three tools were used. First, surveys were needed to gather information to describe people's views about the improvements and their thought of the work of the different associations. Second, in order to get detailed description with real examples, interviews were conducted. Finally, the last tool used was the personal observation to see the improvements and how things are going on the field.

### Subjects

The population from whom we were gathering data is divided into three main samples. The first one is composed of people involved in the projects of Hand in Hand and Azrou center (students and staff); the second one are the poor among the population of Ifrane and Azrou, which the two associations aim at helping; and, the third one is made of AUI students. The first sub-population is made of doctors, project leaders and AUI students involved in charitable actions. It is important to interview and survey those people for the reason that they are the principal actors of the help. They can give their opinion about the difficulties and the challenges they are facing and give their own interpretation of the consequences of their action on the field.

The second sub population is generally poor, lacking financial help, and is also composed of sick people who do not have the financial means to get medicines and medical care. Interviewing those people is a major point in the research in order to know their feeling about the help they receive and whether it is really serving them and whether it is effective and efficient. The main people we will be surveying are the children's teachers of Dar Attalib, a primary school in Ifrane, the Director of the school, and the sick people who benefit from the medical care and the social help at Azrou center.

The third sub-population is made up of AUI students who will give their opinion on how efficient and effective they see the help of AUI for the region. Providing an external opinion of people not directly involved in the help could be supportive for the research.

### Procedures/Tools

In the project, two tools for the research were used: interviews and surveys. They have been chosen because they are effective helpful in gathering data.

Due to the fact that there are just three members in the group and that time constraints is an issue, so the survey is the easiest way to collect data from a large number of people in the least amount of time. The survey consists of two sections; first, one is about the situation of the person at AUI and general questions about AUI' associations to know if the person is well informed. Second, another category question where we focus on the achievement and also some suggestions to improve the work of these associations. Surveys will be distributed in some places where students are grouped such as in the restaurant, to groups of students sitting, in the cafeteria and also in dormitories. This strategy will help us to save time and collect a large amount of data. Lunch time is the most suitable time to distribute surveys in the restaurant and night time for dormitories. We have to wait for students until they complete the survey in order to avoid checking more than one answer. For faculty and staff we will distribute surveys in offices and we will collect them back after several hours because they are always busy. The survey contains a total of seven questions with five close questions and two open ones.

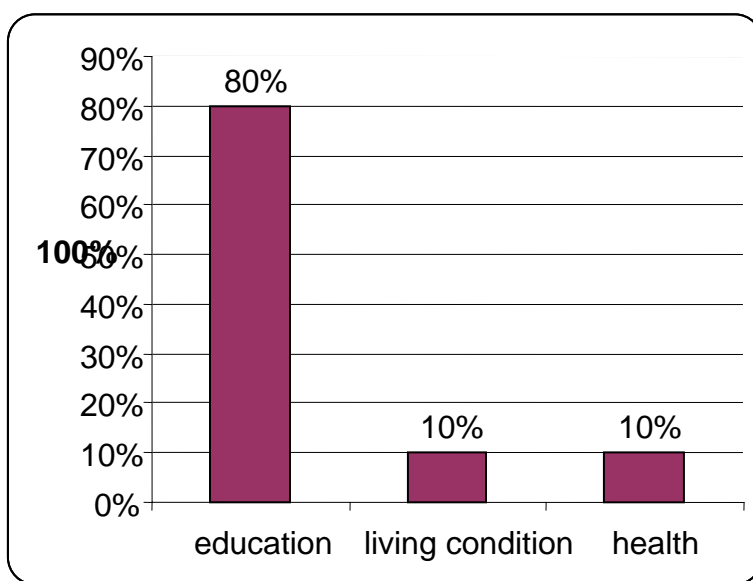
Interviews are very useful for the project in order to collect data from the population of Ifrane. Persons interviewed are Dr Hicham, who is an active member in Azrou Center, and Mrs Belmokhtar, the president of Hand in Hand association. Interviewing Dr Hicham and Mrs Belmokhtar will be helpful to know some achievements of these associations and also some questions about if these association help these population in an effective way? The interviews consist also of some questions about some statistics of the improvement of the living condition of the population of Ifrane and its region in the last five years. Before interviewing we should have appointments and also a small introduction to inform people about our project.

### Results

Two data-gathering tools were used to answer the research question – how effective is the help of AUI's associations in Ifrane and the region? - A survey and interviews. The survey respondents were students and staff of Al Akhawayn University. 60 surveys were completed and returned.

Students were asked to give some examples of associations' achievements. Their responses are displayed in the figure 1. It is necessary first here to say that 60% of students are aware of associations' achievements. The graph reports that the majority of that 60% of students thinks that Education is the field in which most achievements were done. Living conditions and health are shared equally by those students with a low percentage.

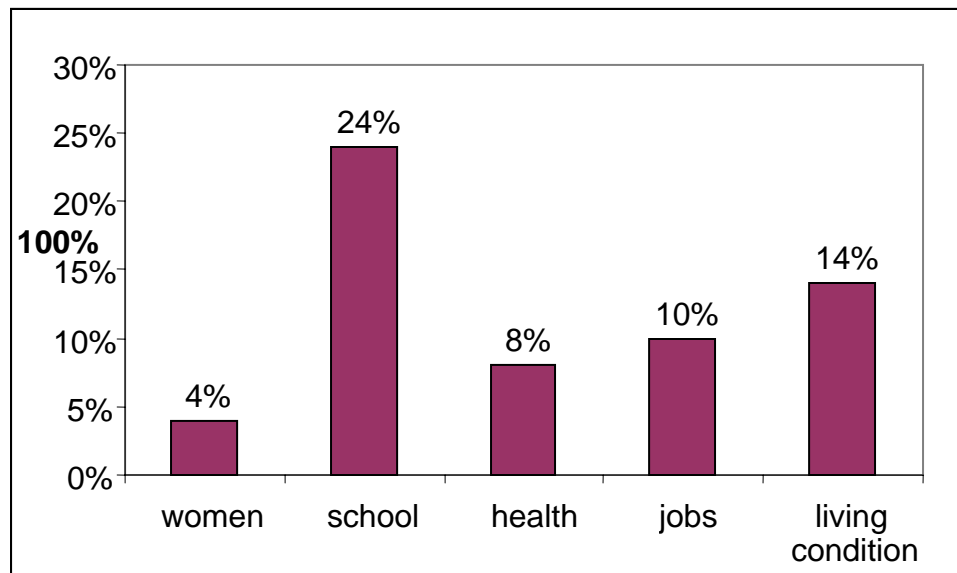
Figure 1: Students' examples of associations' achievements



N=50

Students were asked to give some possible associations' contribution in order to develop more the region. The variety of their responses is reflected in figure 2 and figure 3. The graphs illustrate the opinions and suggestions of 50 students concerning what they see as being important to achieve in the region and that the associations haven't done yet. The second graph reports that the highest percentage of the respondents thinks that schooling is one of the fields needing to be improved. However, jobs opportunities and life conditions are also shared by most respondents. Finally, women and health are the less expressed as being necessary and not fulfilled.

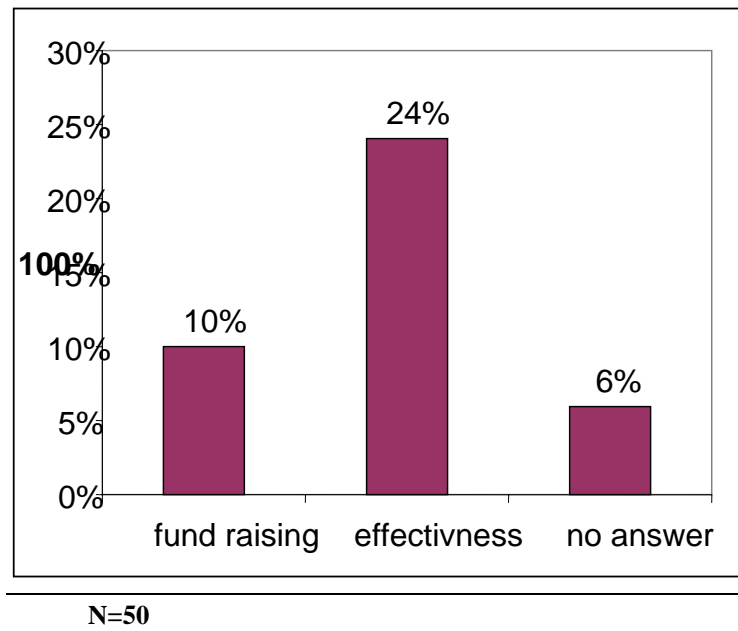
Figure 2: Students' ideas of possible contributions



**N=50**

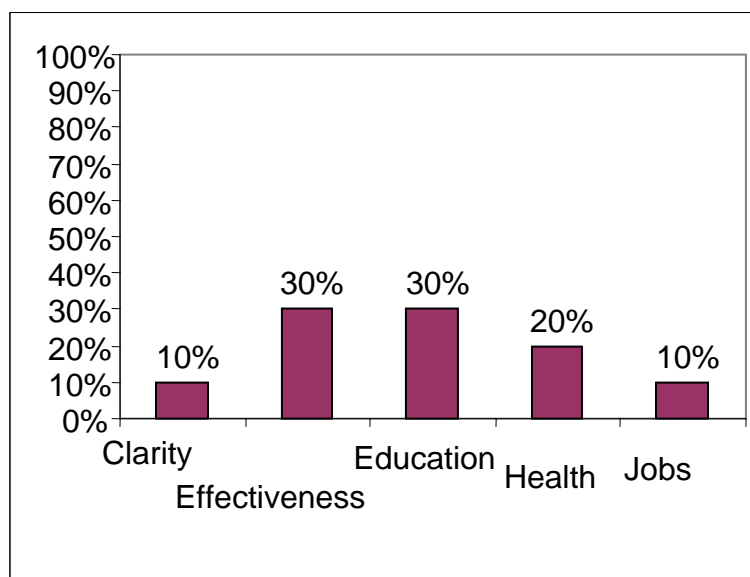
The second graph underlines other areas the associations need to improve in to help the region. It is noticeable that the effectiveness of the associations is the field that is shared by most of the respondents. It is followed by the fund rising with 10% of the answers. It is also possible to notice that 6% of the respondents did not answer.

Figure 3: Students' ideas of possible contributions



After asking AUI's staff the following question: In your opinion, what could or should the associations be doing in order to contribute to the region's development? We get different answers which mean that staff has different opinions about possible contributions

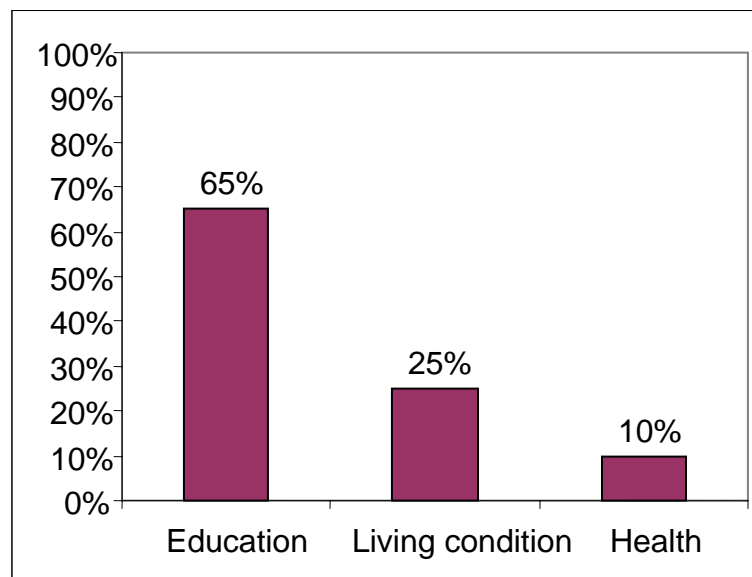
Figure 4: Staff's ideas of possible contribution



**N=10**

As it is clear in the graph (figure 4) the percentage of staff who propose that these associations should be more effective which is 30%, is equal to the percentage of staff who think that education is an important contribution to the region's development. Concerning the other staff 10% of them think that clarity which that associations should be more transparent in the way of dealing with money they collect, and other 10% offering jobs are significant to develop Ifrane's regions and 20% believe that the association should focus more on the health aspect. The data collected from this question we help our group to know the effectiveness of these associations since all the staff think that they should improve their work in some fields.

Figure 5: Staff examples of achievements



**N=10**

After asking AUI's staff about examples of association's achievements, 30% of staff is not aware about the achievements of AUI associations, which means that they could not have any examples concerning these achievements. However, 70% of the staff surveyed knows some of these achievements. According to (figure 5), 65% of the staff thinks that education is one of the important achievements, but 25% think that AUI's associations have improved the living condition of the population of Ifrane and its regions. 10% of these staff, which represent a small part, believes that health is an example of the achievements. The graph shows that there are not big differences between staff examples of achievements since there is a large part that have the same ideas. This question will have a great impact on answering the research question about association's effectiveness since 70% of staff surveyed know association's achievements.

In this section, the results from the interviews will be reported. Indeed, the whole 1202 team conducted the interview with Dr. Hicham El Berri on Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> 2006. Dr. Hicham El Berri is a doctor at the university's health center and at Azrou Center. This interview was meant to understand the role of Azrou Center in the development of the region from the point of view of an active participant in the activities. In the interview with Dr. Hicham, the group noticed that Azrou Center was including its activities within many fields such as education (with Dar Attalib School), health, professional insertion, and among others, socio-economical growth. However, Dr. Hicham, the coordinator of the activities at the Center, revealed that the region is a very poor area with such huge needs that it is impossible for a Center with limited resources to be effective.

Concerning the second interview, two members of the 1202 team, conducted the interview with Ms Benmokhtar on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> 2006. Ms Benmokhtar is the wife of the President of the University and she is active in many fields and actions of the university. This interview was about the actions and activities of Hand in Hand association which is coordinated by Ms Benmokhtar.

Ms. Benmokhtar's interview brought the same answers and raised the same questions as the one with Dr. Hicham. Indeed, whereas Hand in Hand is mainly focused on education within many schooling areas of the region, it is also suffering from a lack of resources. According to Ms Benmokhtar, "the association lacks young people and persons who can benefit the region with their expertise". Also, both interviews brought one idea which is that the associations are doing their best in order to work effectively on their projects and

to reach their objectives, but unfortunately, it is not sufficient regarding the needs of Ifrane and its region.

### Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, the analysis of the data was discussed in relation to the research question. In fact, it is noticeable that all the students are aware of the existence of Hand in Hand but only 60% of them know of the Azrou Center. This is certainly due to the fact that Azrou Center is not located within the borders of the University, whereas Hand in Hand has its offices within its buildings. Moreover, Azrou Center's activities mainly fall within the city of Azrou which makes it even more unlikely for students in Ifrane to know about it, even though it is an entity connected to the university.

It is necessary, also, to say that 60% of students were aware of the associations' achievements. Through figure 1, one can observe that 80% of those students thought that education is the most developed field of action within the associations. It is understandable thanks to the campaigns of Hand in Hand, involving the schools bags distribution, the Fun Run, and all the advertising of the children of the region. Also, since it is the main activity of Hand in Hand, it is promoting it very broadly within the university and even outside.

On the other hand, concerning student's ideas of what the associations can do further for the region, the results showed that the highest percentages consists of 24% each, respectively for education and more effectiveness in the work done. By asking for these improvements, the students would like the education to be improved in the region and for the associations to put more emphasis on the effectiveness of their work, as to say to get the work done in a more professional and serious manner. The fact that the students

would like to see the associations working more on education and effectiveness is actually due to a lack of communication from the side of the associations and the university. In fact, it means that the students think that Azrou Center and Hand in Hand are not doing enough in this field, whereas, according to the interviews conducted, all their time is devoted to such actions as education and getting the work done in a more effective way.

A large number of staff surveyed knew about the achievements of AUI's associations. Since AUI's staff is part of the administration and have a relationship with these associations, they are aware about the goals that these associations have achieved. Since a large number of staff agreed that education is the most important achievement these associations have, it meant that those entities focus more on children who do not have the opportunity to go to school by offering some materials and supplies that can help them to attend schools. These associations help also illiterate parents in terms of education to be able to transmit knowledge and be apt to help their children. The project team thought that these associations, especially Azrou Center are doing a good job to improve the living conditions of these region by providing some training in fields such as informatics and cooking to prepare the population to integrate easily into the job market. Additionally, these associations provide the population with medicine. On the other hand, staff had different ideas of possible contribution that could be made to the region's development such as health, more clarity, education, and jobs. Even though these associations are doing their best in developing education in these regions, developing the condition of health for this population and offering jobs, an important number of staff thought that they should be more effective in their job and clearer in the way money is

spent. These associations should expand their work broadly to help the largest number of people possible and to improve the development of these regions. AUI staff tend to be more knowledgeable about the work and achievements of these associations than AUI's students; this is mainly due to the fact that the majority of students might not be interested and do not really interfere with the associations in order to get the right information concerning their activities and achievements.

Finally, the interviews we made with Dr. Hicham and Ms Benmokhtar brought real professional insight to the research. Indeed, their opinions about the activities of the associations and their effectiveness toward the achievement of the region's goals allow a comparison with the respondents' opinions and therefore permit to answer the question. The results from the interview drew a realistic image of the work of the associations in the field of action. In fact, at the opposite of the answers of the students, Dr. Hicham and Ms Benmokhtar deplored the huge needs of the region in terms of education, health and socio-economic improvement. However, they underlined the impotence and powerlessness of the associations at those levels because, like pointed out by Ms Benmokhtar, it is not the role and the responsibility of the associations to recover and meet all the needs of the region. Therefore, at their level and their possibilities they are doing a sufficient and effective work for the region. That said, Dr. Hicham described all the activities in the different domains done by the center and so did Ms. Benmokhtar regarding the work of Hand in Hand associations.

After conducting the research, the group succeeded in answering the question "How effective is the help of AUI associations on Ifrane and its region?" Indeed, according to the answers of the students and staff, the team found out that the respondents

were not aware of the real achievements of the associations. Also, given the answers of some officials in those same associations, the team could conclude that actually, the work of the associations is a good work, they are trying to do their best in order to achieve their goals, but unfortunately, like Dr. Hicham and Ms Benmokhtar said, it is like a drop of water on the ocean. Therefore, even if the associations would like to solve all the problems of the region, they are not able to do so and moreover; it is not their duty to accomplish those tasks. Also, more resources are needed to carry out the projects and reach the end goals of the region. The answer to the research question is therefore not finite, it is not a yes or a no, and rather, it is that the associations are doing a great and effective work with the resources they have and for the work they are accountable for. Whereas concerning the huge needs of the region, it is the function of the local government to build out projects to develop the region.

Unfortunately, the team faced some problems during the research. The first problem was the withdrawal of one of the team members who dropped the 1202 CAD course. The project team was left with only three members for a great amount of work delegated to each one; hopefully, each one made it possible by taking his responsibilities concerning the work load assigned. Also, more specifically to the research, the group had difficulties at the beginning narrowing down the research question, as it wanted to cover a lot of domain AUI associations work on, but finally, the team decided to focus mainly on education and health. Additionally, it was very difficult to find out articles and writings about the literature review section, since the research subject is specific and singulars

As said previously, the work of AUI associations is very effective in the region given their possibilities and their duties concerning development. However, the Atlas area is still suffering from huge needs and lacunas in such domains as education, health, socio-economic development and human development. As a result, the proposals the team project could make is to push concerned authorities and officials in the regions to do their part of the work because associative work will not solve the problem for everybody, it is only meant to help some people to try to reduce their pain.

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Appendix 1:

## AUI survey

We are a group of 1202 class. Our research is about the effectiveness of the help of AUI's associations (Hand in Hand and Azrou Center) on the social development of Ifrane and its region.

Here is a survey for us to understand the point of view of AUI's students and staff. Confidentiality of your responses will be protected.

We are using the term "social development" to mean the improvements in the society, here in terms of Education and Health.

We really do appreciate your participation. Thank you

1. Situation  staff  faculty  student
2. Do you know "Hand in Hand"?  yes  no
3. Do you know "Azrou center"?  yes  no
4. Do you think AUI's associations (hand in hand, Azrou center) are doing an effective job in the social development of Ifrane and its region?  
 yes  no
5. Do you know some of their achievements?  
 yes  no
6. If yes, please give some examples  
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7. In your opinion, what could or should the associations be doing in order to contribute to the region's development?

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Thank you for your participation

Appendix 2:InterviewsInterview 1:

The answers to the questions of the survey will be stated as given by the interviewee. The first and second and, fourth and fifth questions will be merged in order to best state the answers.

1. *Dr, can you give us a brief description of this association?*
2. *What is its main goal?*

Azrou center is a medico-social and educative center. It was actually meant to follow the path of Alakhawayn University in the sense to be an education oriented center but thereafter it became also a medico-social center. The role of Azrou Center is the development of the community in the Atlas region. As stated before, it has two main directions, education and health. Concerning education, according to Dr Hicham, the center takes care of literacy training of both children and women, according to the directives of the new Moudawana, and social integration of unemployed young people. In that category, they receive training in computer literacy, French, English, communication, schooling to become commercial agents, and in the field of the audio-visual. These sessions have brought their fruits given that the young people are often hired by enterprises. Also, the center holds professional training such as building electricity, plumbing and sanitary installations, hair dressing for young women, and as soon as possible the center will be offering hostelry classes. Concerning children's education, the main activity is for Dar Attalib, which is a school next to the Center and

which is also renting a portion of its land for the Center to exist. They are receiving help for extra-curricular activities and tutoring classes.

Concerning the medical aspect of the center, it is doing a lot of medical consultations for the sick and ill population. Also a main activity is sensitizing the population at many levels, mainly hygiene, and family planning. Medical campaigns are also organized either, with the help of the Ministry of Health or with private doctors, in such fields as dentistry, cancer and ophthalmology. Finally, care of diabetic children is another activity the center takes care of.

*3. What is your role in Azrou Center?*

The role of Dr Hicham is to coordinate the different projects of the center either educational or medical ones.

*4. In your opinion, is the center effective in terms of improving the health of persons in this region?*

*5. Can you give us concrete examples and statistics of your center's achievements?*

The Center is only a drop of water in the ocean, but it is trying to do its best with the resources it has to improve the health and the education of the region. The center offers quality consultations (approximately 20 persons a day), but it is not covering urgencies. It tries to facilitate things for the population, orienting them in case of need to doctors able to operate on them without fees. Those people do not have insurance and medical coverage. According to Dr. Hicham, the center also takes care of chronic illnesses, for which there is a need for continuing consultations and medicines for the people. There is a new direction taken by the Center, which is for mentally handicapped

people, with a real census of the handicapped people of the region, and also for physically handicapped persons.

*6. Does the center regularly meet its objectives?*

There are huge needs in the region. It is a big region with not many resources or good infrastructure. The prostitution takes a great portion of the activities of the region because of high unemployment rates, and this is making things harder for the medical actions given that there are a lot of people suffering from HIV. The action plan of the center is done every year, and hopefully the objectives are readily met. The personal of the center is made of only 10 regular staff but who are doing many tasks, not only their official role, and this is helping a lot the ongoing of the center. However, there are big problems with financing; the university does not finance the center, it is an autonomous entity, but thanks to the public network of the university and the President, the center can raise funds. However, at this particular moment, there is a real financial crisis.

*7. Are there any changes that you think would improve or increase the center's effectiveness?*

There is an idea of merging with Hand in Hand Association and getting the designation of "association" for the center in order to combine actions and profit from the funding of each others. Also, according to Dr. Hicham, the center needs new ideas and new breath, especially from the students of the university; and, people on the field who can bring their expertise in their personal fields to the improvement of the center. Communication is also an important field; it can bring donors and make the activities known to the public and coordinate more the activities between the different social entities of the university.

Interview 2:

An overview of each answer to the questions asked will be given.

1. *Ms Benmokhtar, can you give us a brief description of Hand in Hand association?*

Hand in Hand association is above all, a student club dependant on the University, Dr Belfeqih and the Student Activities Office. It is true that many students think that it is an autonomous entity but it is not in reality. Actually, Hand in Hand association is operating mainly on the external environment of the University, so as to know Ifrane and its region rather than for the AUI community, like other clubs. It first began with a small school called Ait lahcen Oubrahim for which it could bring children and especially little girls to the school. The parents were not satisfied with this, so the association had to take complete care of the students involving bags, books, pens, and even the rehabilitation of the school by providing sanitary installations for example. This was a “400%” success for the Association. Another field work of the association is the communitarian development. Indeed, according to Ms Benmokhtar, there are different small illegal constructions in which people are living without real protection and they need real help. Also, computerization of the schools and libraries is another action of Hand in Hand, with the help of Muhammad V Foundation and its donations of computers.

2. *What is its main goal?*

The main goal of the association is to militate for the schooling in the rural world. The first years were mainly dedicated to the material help of the people and the students but the association realized that it could not do everything for everybody; so it started, for

example, to provide school bags and books only for the poorest people of the region. It also restrained itself to four major schools for which it is actively operating. Another goal of Hand in Hand is to rebuild the environment of the region so that the children want to go to school and therefore, to fight school abandon. In this sense, it is providing water, and electricity thanks to the funds raised by the Fun Run, an annual event organized by the association. Also, to realize this, Hand in Hand built different libraries and stocked it with the needed equipments. Another actual goal is to provide transportation for the students, in order for them to reach school more easily and to get to a better education than the one available in their region.

*3. What is your role in Hand in Hand association?*

Ms Benmokhtar is the coordinator and is responsible of the advising of the club. She is helping the association thanks to her wide public network and the one of M. the President of the University.

*4. In your opinion, is the Association effective in terms of improving the education of the region?*

*5. Can you give us concrete examples and statistics of your Association's achievements?*

It is really difficult to talk about effectiveness in the improvement of the education of the region because this is actually the role of the Ministry of Education to realize those actions But in the case of Hand in Hand, it is actually doing its best to bring what it can to the population. For example, the actions of Hand in Hand have pushed many people to make donations for the association to be used efficiently in the improvement of the region. For example, there is a man who donated 2200m<sup>2</sup> for the

association between the cities of El Hajeb and Azrou to build a school, a dispensary and to create jobs and generate revenues for the men and women of the region.

6. *Does the Association regularly meet its objectives?*

7. *Are there any changes that you think would improve or increase the Association's effectiveness*

The association does regularly meet its objectives given that it tries to state the objectives not too far from what the association can do in order to be motivated and to reach its goals. However, the changes that could be brought to the association are to involve more the students of the university in their specific field of expertise to help the population. Also the study of Berber is an important issue that should be taken into consideration because most of the time when the association is on the field of work, the population can not communicate effectively with the club members.