Assessment of Local Democracy from a Gender Perspective

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(AMSED)**

and

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Introduction

Gender-sensitive democracy is a new approach, not in terms of its premises, reference points, and tools, but rather because local democracy in Morocco is still in its fledgling, experimental stages on a practical level. Until now, local management has focused on representation of citizens and administrative service provision and from the outset did not encompass spatial development in all its dimensions.

The adoption of decentralisation and closeness as a development policy and strategic option led the communities to demand a transition from their administrative role to a developmental role based on a participatory approach that responds to the needs and strategic interests of both men and women. This is manifested in the historical development of legal texts that regulate local communities (Community Charter).

The gender-sensitive community means a community that links spatial development with local democracy, i.e. a community that harmonises between legal and administrative approaches and human resources. It is able to work on the cultural and relationships levels and with roles and authorities. As such, it works on managing this realm by pursuing the following actions:

− **Participatory Democracy:** Development of local strategy-focused leadership that seeks change through enabling men and women to participate in building strong local institutions that generate democratic values and guide spatial development.

− **Representative Democracy:** Development of local leadership through ensuring the balanced representation of women and men on the one hand, and benefiting from their potential, qualifications, knowledge, and expertise to address structural problems related to spatial matters on the other hand.

− **Distributive Democracy:** Enabling women and men to attain equal benefit from the wellbeing, profits, and opportunities linked to production.

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Assessment methodology

In 2012, the Association Marocaine de Solidarité et de Développement (AMSED), with the participation of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), carried out its second[1] project entitled "State of Local Democracy from a Gender Perspective in Morocco" based on the outcomes of the first experiment. This was done together with its international partner, IDEA, as well as national, regional and local partners.

This study derives its timeliness and importance from the fact that, as mentioned above, the experience of communities in Morocco has entered a new phase distinguished by modifications to the Community Charter.

Three years have passed since the local elections. Consequently, local elected bodies are now called upon to assess and update the community development plans which they drew up, and to prepare local budgets for the coming three years. However, no new date has yet been announced for local elections, which are to be organised based on the constitutional developments Morocco has witnessed since the approval of the July 2011 constitution.

This assessment takes place in the context of social upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa which have shaken the foundations of some dictatorial regimes and apparatuses in the region, while prompting others to move quickly to implement political reforms toward the promotion and institutionalisation of democracy and human rights. Together with Morocco's 20 February youth movement, other voices have also demanded additional reforms and greater respect for human rights. These factors have led to a complete overhaul of the 1996 constitution and the issuance of the new, July 2011 constitution.

Perhaps the most important issue raised by the Arab Spring is the need for citizens to open their eyes to reality. Young people of both genders have become the principal actors in political and human rights work and are clearly involved in the exercise of their political rights. Foremost among such rights is the right to self-expression, which includes the right to criticise the economic and social conditions which citizens face in their cities and villages.

This study, which is an exercise in the assessment of local democracy as reflected in the performance of elected institutions, aims to advance the culture of assessment of local affairs and to offer proposals which can help to develop local democracy in Morocco. With this as its point of departure, the study includes an assessment of the following:

- The degree to which declared national goals relating to the development of local affairs are reflected in the work of local elected bodies.

- Application of the participatory approach to preparation of community development plans.

- The degree of improvement that has taken place in citizens' relations with local governing institutions, particularly local elected bodies.

- The effectiveness of mechanisms devoted to increasing women's access to local political participation.

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[1] The first project was implemented by these two organisations in 2008-2009.

- The degree to which the gender dimension is being integrated into local communities' goals and strategic visions.

- Determine the basic steps required to advance local democracy from a gender-based perspective.

- Stimulate public debate over local democracy from a gender-based perspective and nurture the various reform tracks and open forums relevant to establishing the foundations of good governance at the local level, including engagement of citizens in local decision making, feasibility, effectiveness, transparency, programming, and assessment.

In order to begin assessing local democracy in Morocco from a gender-based perspective, an assessment reference guide was drawn up. This guide contains 77 questions (see attachment 1) which address the most important and relevant aspects of community action. A representative sample was selected from a number of groups concerned with local affairs:

- ❖ elected officials and government employees

- ❖ political parties

- ❖ civil society organisations

- ❖ the private sector

- ❖ the media

- ❖ citizens.

The study included local communities in northern and southern Morocco. In the south, the assessment targeted six (6) rural communities and four (4) urban communities located within the regions of Zagora, Ouarzazate, and Tinghir.

- Tinghir: Aït Ouassif, Aït Sedrate al-Sahl al-Gharbiya, Kelaat M'Gouna

- Zagora: Tamezmoute, Bni Zouli, Agdz, Zagora

- Ourarzazate: Ourarzazate township, Aït Zineb, Tarmigt

Direct contact was made with 375 individuals as sources of information, and women's focus groups (66 women) from various sectors were activated. The group of relevance consisted of 182 women and girls and 259 men. Of these, the following categories were represented:

- Elected officials. Men: 46, women: 16

- Media. Men: 11, women: 1

- The private sector. Men: 40, women: 7

- Citizens. Men: 53, women: 108

- Civil society organisations. Men: 62, women: 45

- External ministry offices. Men: 21, women: 3[n1].

In the north, the assessment covered the following communities:

1) al-Biban

2) Sidi el Hajj Mohammed

3) Agzanaya al-Junubiya

4) Tahala

5) Al Hoceima

6) Aït Kamra

7) Tetouan

8) Zinat

9) Bab Taza

10) Tasift.

Direct contact was made with 460 individuals as sources of information (238 women and girls, and 222 men). These individuals were engaged in the assessment process. The target groups were distributed as follows:

- elected officials and community frameworks: 105

- political parties: 46

- civil society organisation activists: 88

- the private sector: 33

- media personnel: 26

- citizens (male and female): 162.

A 24-member work team participated in the study, with twelve researchers in the north, and twelve in the south, and were chosen based on the principle of equality (equal numbers of men and women).

Face-to-face interviews were used in the research, in addition to the organisation of focus groups and the sharing of personal experiences by a number of community actors of both genders in the community sphere.

Part I: General frame of reference and standards of local democracy with sensitivity to gender equality

1.1 International framework of standards regarding local democracy and women's political representation

The gender-sensitive analytical approach pushes us to break down conventional borders, particularly biological limits that have long imprisoned women in absolute social, cultural, and religious perceptions. This approach re-examines women and men in the public and private spheres based on a deep understanding of the complexities of their roles, relationships, and powers on the local and national levels.

Due to these complexities, we cannot suffice in this study with examining citizens' relationships to these issues. The vast legislative and legal arsenal and extent of application of international treaties ratified by Morocco must also be considered.

From this starting point, Morocco recognised the importance of activating the international normative framework to give consideration to its international obligations towards human rights in general and women's rights in particular, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

In terms of the international obligations towards human rights, Morocco has ratified all the relevant key mechanisms, as follows;

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights,

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols,

- UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment,

- UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol,

- And others.

Focusing on the subject of this study, we will concentrate on the CEDAW, the two international covenants, and the Millennium Development Goals. The most important recommendations springing from this universal arsenal of agreements and plans are:

– Realize equality as manifested in action and the law (economic, social, political, cultural, civil, and environmental equality)

– Renounce violence and discrimination;

- Correlate national legislation with international agreements;

- Economic, social, political, cultural, and civil equality;

- Expand individual and collective freedoms;

- Formulate mechanisms targeting women's rights;

- Adopt mechanisms of affirmative action to encourage women's political participation (promote gender equality and women's empowerment to reach one-third representation of women in governing bodies such as legislative, executive, and judicial authorities and in all decision-making bodies);

- Eliminate all gender disparities in both primary and secondary education systems by 2005 if possible, and in all levels of education by 2015 at the latest;

- Eliminate all disparities between men and women's access to various fields of employment.

Nevertheless, the degree of appropriateness of these agreements to legislation on the one hand and their actual application to public policies on the other hand remains far removed from the expectations of citizens who participated in voting since Morocco's independence to the present day (October 2013). Moroccans have gone to the polls a total of twenty-nine times, nine of which involved participation in local elections. These local elections took place in 1960, 1963, 1969, 1976, 1983, 1992, 1997, 2003, and 2009.

Box 1:

> A survey of elected individuals at the local level reveals the following:
>
> - Poor knowledge of the normative framework and the international rights arsenal;
>
> - Poor knowledge of international covenants' precedence over national laws;
>
> - Poor knowledge of the importance of harmonising between international covenants and national laws;
>
> - Poor knowledge of recommendations issued by UN committees to monitor international treaties and agreements;
>
> - Poor knowledge of the importance of applying international commitments at the local level;
>
> - Poor knowledge of national equality strategies as part of UN recommendations.
>
> - Poor knowledge of the Declaration on the Right to Development

1.2 Constitutional provisions for local representative democracy

The methodology used in preparing the 2011 Constitution was characterised by its participatory approach. All parties, unions, and associations were invited to present their notes, observations, and demands. A broad public discussion was conducted, with a variety of perspectives and suggestions feeding into the constitution.

The preamble of the Constitution emphasised that the choice of building a democratic state must be dominated by truth and the rule of law, and everyone should enjoy security, freedom, dignity, and equality. A balance should be found between the rights of the citizenry and their duties. The Constitution states the importance of complying with the principles, rights, and duties delineated in international covenants. It further emphasises holding tight to the concept of human rights as universally recognised, protecting, promoting, and developing the systems of human rights and international humanitarian law, while taking into account the universal, indivisible nature of these rights.

The Constitution's chapters[2] stipulate the importance of how "the state, public institutions, regional communities shall work to mobilise all available means to enable citizens, on an equal footing, to benefit from their right to:

- medical treatment and healthcare;

- social protection and health coverage; mutually reinforced solidarity or that organised by the state;

- easy access to modern, quality education;

- nurturing in cherishing the Moroccan identity and firm national principles;

- vocational training and physical and technical education;

- adequate housing;

- employment and support of public authorities in the search for jobs or self-employment;

- access to public employment according to qualifications;

- access to water and living conditions within a sound environment;

- sustainable development.

Moreover, the Constitution defined the principles upon which should be based local development, confirming that "*regional and local organisation matters shall be based on free management principles, cooperation, and solidarity; shall ensure the participation of the concerned population in managing their own affairs; and shall enhance their contribution in integrated, sustainable human development*".[3]

The Constitution clarified the importance of local communities and defining their functions in a regulatory law, specifically:

"*Terms and conditions for local bodies and associations' management of their affairs democratically, the numbers of members on their councils, rules for eligibility and nomination, cases of incompatibility, preventing the overlap of assignments, the electoral system, provisions to improve women's representation with the said councils, and the prohibition and control of all forms of discrimination.*"[4]

Although the provisions of the Constitution confirmed the importance attributed to local matters and the political participation of women in local management, actual practice demonstrated significant sluggishness in the

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[2] Chapter 31 of the 2011 Constitution.
[3] Chapter 136 of the 2011 Constitution.
[4] Chapter 146 of the 2011 Constitution.

implementation of such. Thus, the regulatory laws that should clarify how to manage local communities have not yet materialised.

Box 2:

> Nevertheless, the survey of locally elected officials demonstrated the following:
>   – stressed the importance of amendments defined by the Constitution;
>   – poor knowledge of the requirements for ensuring equality; they are merely informed of Chapter 19 which begins with the words, "The State strives to...";
>   – lack of knowledge of new provisions in the Constitution which emphasise equality in the law, not just equality before the law;
>   – poor knowledge of the connection between democracy, governance, and equality;
>   – poor knowledge of importance of matching local development strategies with international treaties;
>   – poor knowledge of the role the council of advisers plays in spatial development;
>   – poor knowledge of the new functions attributed to local communities.

1.3 Key legal provisions to encourage women's political representation

The past decade was marked by increasing attention to strengthening and protecting women's rights at the legal level, including the formulation of strategies, whether related to violence or equality. This was thanks to the significant efforts exerted by civil society in general, and associations involved in women's rights in particular.

These developments were enhanced with the adoption of Law No. 9.97 on the Elections Code that modified and complemented Law No. 36.08 dated 30 December 2008. Key amendments adopted by this law are:

–   Restricting electoral lists to place of residence, with exceptions limited to nomadic communities; (general requirements do not directly benefit women but do contribute to supporting the democratic electoral climate);

–   Necessity of having and presenting a national identity card when registering to vote and when voting. As an exception, a family identity card could be presented if attached with an administrative certificate provided by a local administration authority. (This procedure facilitated the expansion of women's political participation because some female respondents stated that they did not have national identity cards.)

–   The right of political parties to obtain a public electoral list of voters in the electoral precinct or community. This list includes names of voters, their addresses, and precinct[5] in which they live. (The female respondents group,

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[5] Decree No. 2.08.737 issued on 30 December 2008 stipulates that every party has the right to extract public electoral lists for communities or subdivisions under their sphere of influence, or to extract public electoral lists at the national level. A request for extraction shall be within 15 days from the first day set for placing new registration requests, or within 15 days from the date following the date of delimiting the regulations.

especially those who have some political experience, stated that obtaining electoral lists enabled them to control mapping of voters and properly prepare for election campaigns. In particular, they benefited from prior training in political communication and from how to manage election campaigns.

– Reduction of the eligibility age for candidates from 23 to 21. (This noticeably helped women because the lack of a local party base gave way to partisan activities among female students.)

– Voters with disabilities that prevent them from marking a ballot shall have an indication on their national identity cards to assist them. In the past, the voting office was responsible for providing assistance. No one may assist more than one person with a disability at a time.[6]

– The population size upon which the polling lists are applied was raised from 25,000 to 35,000. Individual polling with a relative majority is applied to communities that have a population of less than 35,000, while list polling based on the largest remainder is applied to populations greater than 35,000.

– The ceiling for distribution of seats was raised from 3% to 6%. (This had a great impact on women's representation in added constituencies.)

– Creation of an additional voting constituency in terms of the total territorial influence of each community or subdivision ["arrondissement" in Morocco]. Political parties have agreed under the Charter of Honour to allocate this constituency to women.

The aforementioned law stipulated that additional electoral precincts would be allocated as follows:

- In communities where individual voting takes place—namely, those with populations of 35,000 or less—two seats were approved for the additional list.

- In communities where voting takes place by list, there are two possible situations:

a) If the community has a population of 200,000 or less, an additional list of four seats will be approved.

b) If the community has a population greater than 200,000, there are two possible situations:

❖ If the community is not divided into subdivisions, its list will consist of six (6) seats, four (4) of which will be extra, and two (2) of which will be drawn from the seats earmarked for the community in the original list (Electoral Code, Article 199).

❖ If the community is divided into subdivisions, each subdivision's additional list will consist of two (2) seats: one which is extra, and one which is drawn from the original list.

❖ As for the subdivisions' councils, their additional lists will consist of two (2) seats, one of which will be extra, and one of which will be drawn from the original list.

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[6] In compliance with treaties ratified by Morocco regarding persons with disabilities.

– Creation of a fund to support the nomination of women in order to encourage women's representation. This is a new means to benefit from the other half of the state's contribution in funding elections, and makes the amount of support for the nomination of women equal to five times the amount of support allocated for nominating men;

– Article 3 of the joint Minister of Interior and Minister of Communications (in the capacity of official government spokesman) Resolution No. 1089.09 of 24 April 2009 to promulgate Decree No. 2.97.233 issued on 28 May 1997 regarding the use of public audio-visual means by political parties during the general community and legislative elections campaign, which stipulates that each party shall be allocated, per its own choice, one share for the additional, updated electoral constituencies in the urban and rural communities.

Box 3:

– In spite of the sincere efforts and struggles of the women's movement and the movement to secure one-third of elected seats for women with the ultimate goal of parity[7], affirmative action measures, especially the women's "quota", remained practical measures that were not institutionalised on a legal level.

– Most female respondents were not aware of these legal amendments, with the exception of those who received training in their communities or through political parties. Responses were as follows:

Aware of all amendments	Aware of some information	Not aware of amendments
12 female elected officials	18 female elected officials	60 female elected officials
- Through training - Personal efforts	- Heard it from other female elected officials or during council sessions	- No access to information - Did not receive any training - No knowledge of the legal arsenal

With regard to information on legal matters and management, 32 of 40 female elected officials stated they had knowledge of law amendments and of the importance of continuing to amend local regulatory laws in order to overcome problems of governance and efficiency (such as ensuring results and objectives-based voting on the administrative accounts rather than political voting subject to personal interests and patronage.

1.4 Development of women's political representation at the local level

Women's participation witnessed remarkable growth in terms of nominations without actually affecting representation levels until after adoption of the additional constituencies system in 2009. To compare developments in the levels of nominations and representation, we present the following table:[8]

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[7] Called the Movement for Parity Democracy in early January 2001.
[8] Morocco, 2010.

Year	Male candidates	Female candidates	Male/ female elected officials	Percentage	Change in nomination ratios
1960	17174	14	/0		0.08%
1976	42638	76	/		0.17%
1983	54165	306	15423/34	0.27%	1.58%
1992	93000	1086	24230/75	0.33%	1.18%
1997	102179	1651	24230/83	0.34%	1.62%
2003	122658	6024	23689/127	0.55%	5.00%
2009		20500	24319/3424	12.38%	

Of the 13,360,219 Moroccans, male and female, registered to vote, 52.4 percent participated in the 2009 local elections as compared with 54.16 percent in 2003.

The 2009 local elections enabled 3,424 women to gain access to local elected bodies out of a total of 20,500 female candidates, and out of a total of 27,743 individuals elected. The number of elected female candidates constituted 12.38 percent of the total number of local elected officials in 2009, whereas in 2003, at which time only 127 women were elected, the percentage came to 0.56. The number of women who won their election campaigns by list came to 3,424 as compared with 596 women who won based on single-name voting.

However, these results were not reflected in the elections for prefecture and provincial councils, where 98 percent of those elected were men, and only 2 percent women. At the regional level, only 27 women were elected out of a total of 1,220 elected officials (the total number of men elected was 1,193).

Winners in the 2009 local elections based on the nominal electoral system in one cycle[9]		
Women	**Men**	**Total**
596	3,828	4,424
based on the list electoral system		
Women	**Men**	**Total**
3,424	24,319	27,743

Data on all regional election participation mechanisms confirm the tendency not to elect women in significant numbers. Local communities elected only 16 women out of a total of 544 individuals elected, professional chambers chose only 6 women to represent them out of 388 individuals elected, and representatives of prefectures and provinces produced only one female elected official out of a total of 176. As for salaried employees, their 113 elected representatives included only 4 women.

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[9] Source: Moroccan Ministry of the Interior

Box 4:

An examination of these data initially shows a clear growth in representation ratios from 0.56% to 12.38%, but comparing these numbers with the actual context reveals that there are a number of problems. The female respondents have described these as follows:

- difficulties facing parties in finding female candidates due to the lack of a women's partisan base on the local level;

- difficulties facing female activists in getting nominated. The methodology dictating the electoral process is how to manage the additional list by the president of the regular list;

- a vast difference between nominations in the regular lists and nominations in the additional lists;

- the added constituencies spawned a new trend among female candidates wherein their candidacies moved from mere activism to guaranteed election;

- poor presence of women in executive tasks within local communities;

- unintended exclusion of female elected officials who joined the councils by way of the additional list due to the erroneous interpretation of Article 6 of the Electoral Code.

- In spite of the educational level of the female elected officials, their lack of familiarity with political manoeuvrings makes them unable to have an impact on local development policies.

- Numerous problems arose in the wake of the added electoral constituents such as the exclusion of activists.

Part II: Local and national mechanisms and strategies to advance equality-sensitive democracy

2.1 Government approach to equality-sensitive local democracy

The government programme resolved to reform administration approaches that would improve performance and upgrade public facilities to higher levels of efficiency, capacities, and cost-effectiveness in fulfilling its duty to provide services to citizens.

The government programme considered the firm establishment of regionalisation and strengthening decentralisation and deconcentration to be vital efforts towards enhancing democracy, developing and updating state structures, promoting sustainable development that is economically, socially, culturally, and environmentally integrated, and bolstering the policy of closeness.

The programme further intends to activate the role of various actors in development and qualify them to rectify deficiencies in the infrastructure and social services. The focus should be on one dimension, namely encouraging solidarity among them to ensure the equitable distribution of the fruits of development and wealth. They should be enabled to employ all the necessary human and financial resources to effectively contribute to socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, in spite of its adoption of a bold and ambitious management policy of continuing comprehensive structural reforms, the government programme did not lay down the initial foundation for a spatial development policy that focuses on all economic, democratic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of development. Rather, the sectoral and centralised dimension remained dominant over public policies in general and local development policies in particular.

The government programme views the urban policy that focuses on: linking economic development with sustainable development; activating good governance within cities; moving from the city and its surroundings to the city as a space(s); and development of rural areas as the sole keys to conceptualising spatial development.

The development of rural areas focused on the importance of increasing the budget of the Rural Development Fund to one billion dirhams annually and allocating funds for integrated projects based on a spatial, participatory, contractual approach oriented to rural areas, particularly remote and mountainous regions.

With regard to the relationship between spatial development, local development, and equality, the government programme indicated that the state is undertaking a set of procedures that *address the principle of parity to foster the fair representation of women in positions of responsibility and establishing the results-based system of public management*.

However, it did not point to the importance of implementing the government equality programme with a view to equal parity in the future at the local level. It sufficed with pointing to its adoption of an effective and ambitious policy of women's advancement through the following:

– actual execution of constitutional provisions related to equality between men and women in terms of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights and the realisation of parity (absence of clear measures);

- work to promote women's rights and protection and monitoring public policy actions in the field;

- qualification of women and reducing the fragility of their conditions by blocking the contributing factors to such; also, formulating mechanisms and measures to confront all forms of discrimination against women as well as a number of other procedures;

- activation of support for the Family Sponsorship Fund and the stability of families, widows, and women in difficult situations, and the adoption of a preventive, developmental approach in addressing the disintegration of the family;

- adoption of a temporary affirmative action system to benefit women in appointments and assignments;

- encourage women to participate in civil society organisations and political parties.

Box 5:

A group of locally elected female officials were surveyed. Their responses were as follows:

Major local development objectives in the government programme		Development objectives with regard to equality in the government programme		Objectives related to participatory democracy	
Present	20%	Present	15%	Present	10%
Not clear	70%	Not clear	25%	Not clear	70%
Absent	10%	Absent	60%	Absent	20%

An analysis of these results shows that the locally elected women lack knowledge of major objectives regarding the extent of spatial development, participatory democracy, and equality in the government programme. As for the few who saw themselves as partisan activists and keep abreast of goings-on, whether at the government or national level, these women blamed the deficiencies in the government programme on:

- Absence of an integrated and comprehensive vision of spatial development;

- Lack of indicators on spatial development;

- Lack of indicators on participatory democracy;

- Discussion of the pursuit of parity without setting indicators to reach parity;

- Lack of a local equality policy; rather, sufficing with pointing to its importance to women and children.

According to local female elected officials, the causes of deficiencies in the government equality programme in terms of parity were reflected in the following:

- Lack of connectivity between the national strategy program and the local level;

- Weak deconcentration;

- Lack of clear goals for the local official;

- Program components relating to political representation remained constrained by rhetoric and [slow] operationalization of the constitution.

Tangible measures were not addressed with regard to certain issues such as:

- Modification of the voting pattern to allow for at least a one-third share;

- Setting a ceiling of one-third in local community election results.

2.2 The community plan as a mechanism for local participatory democracy

The community experience is deeply rooted in Morocco's history, but it witnessed greater development since the time of independence. Mid-sized cities are no longer limited to public management tasks (such as civil status, administrative permits, and social aid). The experience has now evolved into communities that developed new interventions and branched out to new development functions of various dimensions.

The rapid development seen by regional communities led to the emergence of a number of challenges and problems on various spatial, economic, social, environmental, and cultural levels.

On the spatial front: The number of urban communities increased to the detriment of rural communities due to the high rate (65%) of urbanisation. Internal migration and the massive influx of the rural population gave rise to new types of housing such as random housing and shantytowns. Such housing lacks all the conditions necessary for a decent living for the population, especially women. They lack basic facilities such as roads, water, power, and sanitation, as well as public facilities such as schools, hospitals, public spaces, and sports facilities, etc.

With the absence of a spatial concept based on gender, women become more vulnerable to violence and discrimination, since they are expected to handle both reproductive and productive work.

On the economic front: Weak infrastructures in roads and industrial zones, etc., have led to a downturn of the structured economy to the benefit of an unstructured economy. This has made it imperative for all elected individuals to work with all actors in the field within the framework of an integrated policy that evokes the importance of the transition to a new approach. In this approach, the community acts as a contractor that activates the local economic cycle and is one of the state's main partners in major initiatives aimed at revitalising investment and solving social problems.

In this way, local communities have become an important economic hub that helps support local economies in developing new visions to create local economic development projects that attract investments and generate wealth. Within the framework of community development plans, local communities may give priority to economic aspects, although until now they are limited to income-generating enterprises for women. There are no other efforts giving consideration to the welfare economy.

On the environmental front: In addition to the problem of pollution from plants and factories, communities suffer shortfalls in solid waste management and sanitary disposal facilities. A number of problems related to solid wastes and wastewater require essential solutions within the framework of community environmental work and [the basin of] development.

On the social front: The absence of strategic planning within the community and lack of specific social, economic, cultural, and environmental goals led to the expansion of the prevalence of poverty, unemployment, crime, illiteracy, unsuitable housing, poor water, power, and urban transportation networks, and poor urban integration and social cohesion.

In order to address such dilemmas, the Community Charter was amended in 2008 following civil society advocacy efforts. What distinguished the course of bringing this law into existence was community consultation events to draft the law (national debates) and extensive discussions in Parliament when the draft was presented to it by the Moroccan government.

Some of the key developments achieved by this law are:

- Obliging the elected community councils to adopt community development plans in accordance with Article 36, and placing the responsibility of preparing such a plan on the community leader; emphasizing that this plan is formulated "in cooperation or participation with the local management and community or public bodies". The approved development work shall be set for a period of six (6) years for the sake of "sustainable development according to a participatory method that gives particular consideration to gender". Among the most important clauses, this article states that the plan shall include a diagnosis showing the community's economic, social, and cultural potentials; and priority needs defined through consultation with the population, administrations, and other relevant actors;

- Approval to create an equality-equal opportunity committee as a consultative committee to express its opinion when requested by the elected council or its chairman regarding "issues related to equality and equal opportunity and the gender approach" (Article 14). The law gave the committee members the ability to organise suggestions in the aforementioned fields.

- Community management was brought to the foreground, albeit on a small scale, whereby the public registrar's tasks were specifically defined. Although this position remains under the individual authority of the council president, it undertakes "supervision of community management" (Article 54, paragraph 8).

As part of a legal updating process, the directorate of local communities has issued numerous guides[10] and other publications which explain the new legal requirements:

- The Community Development Plan [Preparation] Guide stresses, among other things, "mobilisation of the beneficiary population for the sake of adopting the plan's achievements and ensuring their ongoing management."[11] [n2]

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[10] http://www.pncl.gov.ma/Publication/guide/Pages/default.aspx
[11] Community Development Plan [Preparation] Guide, p. ....

- The Community Budget Guide contains a chapter devoted to budget preparation which discusses strategic and practical planning and stresses "a modern development approach that aims to introduce the participatory process and a gender-based approach into the process of drawing up this plan."[12]

The importance of these and other guides lies in the fact that they are the first resource to which elected officials and employees in the administrations of local elected bodies refer to when commencing work on the [community development plan] (PCD). Reference is made in a number of guides to a guide that has not been published yet, and which treats the subject of integrating a gender-based approach into budget preparation[13].

Box 6:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">When questioned on participation in community development planning, the local elected women answered as follows:</td></tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Participation in formulating the general plan conception</td>
<td colspan="2">Participation in participatory diagnostics</td>
<td colspan="2">Participation in determining priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in all stages</td><td>5%</td>
<td>Participated in designing the form or in focus groups</td><td>45%</td>
<td>Contributed to determining strategic directions</td><td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in the session in which was announced the start of work on the plan</td><td>60%</td>
<td>Participated in a meeting in which the initial results of the diagnostics were presented</td><td>25%</td>
<td>Attended a session to vote on the plan</td><td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate</td><td>35%</td>
<td>Did not participate</td><td>20%</td>
<td>Demanded projects specially designed for women</td><td>7%</td>
</tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">When questioned on participation in community development planning, the local associations answered as follows:</td></tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Participation in formulating the general plan conception</td>
<td colspan="2">Participation in participatory diagnostics</td>
<td colspan="2">Participation in determining priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in formulating the concept</td><td>0%</td>
<td>Participated as part of a work team in the appraisal</td><td>55%</td>
<td>Contributed to presenting some opinions when consulted</td><td>4%</td>
</tr>
</table>

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[12] Community Budget Guide, p. 4.
[13] Reference should be made here of the guidebook and training curriculum on gender-sensitive budgeting.

Participated in the session in which was announced the start of work on the plan	60%	Participated in a meeting in which the initial results of the appraisal were presented	30%	Were not consulted	90%
Did not participate	40%	Did not participate	15%	Demanded a participatory approach	7%

To illustrate the problems in participation in plan preparation, the female elected individuals and associations expressed the following:

- The council has no role in formulating the conception or preparing the plan;

- The elected official, male or female, has no role in the plan since it is prepared by the president;

- The council only votes on the plan;

- The council does not work according to the integrated participatory approach because it is bound to following the Guidebook on Community Development Plan Preparation[14], which defines levels of participation as:

- **Leadership and keeping pace with technology level: This is comprised of a community technical team headed by the community's public registrar. The team supports external interests located within the region of the community.**

- **Consultancy level: Representing the community participatory planning committee; composed of representatives from local associations and all constituencies that do not have such associations.**

2.3 The community budget as a mechanism to activate participatory and distributive democracy

Stipulations regulating local finances indicate that the budget is a document upon which decisions and orders are based in every fiscal year regarding resources needed and burdens carried by the local community or group. It is a document for programming and short-term planning that defines the communities' financial interventions. It acts to define the community's current financial activities according to the goals and means available for medium-term planning.

Nonetheless, actual management within the communities is based on the means rather than the results, making the budget a technical mechanism with no connection to local development or participatory democracy.

The community guidebook[15] states that the budget is a management document which gives advance permission to commit to certain costs and expenses within the

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[14] The community committee for participatory planning composed of associations and citizens.

[15] Community Budgeting Guidebook, Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Local Communities, 1st printing, 2009.

limits of reasonable estimates for the fiscal year in question. This definition shows that the budget has various dimensions to the role it plays and its objectives. It is also the most important financial document during the year for each community, since it is a tool to foresee future data and scientifically study the community's future financial situation.

The council president prepares the budget for urban and rural communities and their sub-groups, while the authorising officer prepares the budget for regions, prefectures, and districts. Budget preparation entails the following:

- Data collection;

- Strategic and practical planning;

Data collection procedures:

The budget preparation process concentrates on collecting data on community financial matters. These data are either specific to the local conditions of the community or external matters such as the administration of central or external interests.

Using these data, the community councils may formulate their own development programmes based on anticipated resources and development projects planned for the medium-term.

Strategic and practical planning procedures:

Article 14 of Law No. 45-08 regulating local community finances stipulates plan preparation based on three-year programmes covering a set of resources and burdens of the local community or group.

This multiple-year programming comes in the framework of adopting and applying the planning methodology. The community council prepares six-year community development plans covering expected projects and the necessary financial resources. The approach should be in a modern development framework that seeks to integrate the participatory method and gender approach into the preparation of this plan.

In order to activate the plan, measures are taken to earmark the necessary resources to sufficiently cover the programme's financial needs. The budget should crystallise any directions approved by the community council in the form of cash amounts, which requires the adoption of a consolidated draft budget.

The president of the community council undertakes the task of preparing the budget depending on the community's administrative interests. This is in the general directional framework, procedures, and rules related to plan preparation. The plan is then adopted by the local councils based on estimates of revenues and costs and ensuring a balanced budget.

Based on the above, the budget is considered a key policy tool for translating development options; therefore it should be gender-sensitive. A gender-sensitive budget does not mean earmarking a budget specifically for women or setting line items just for men and others for women. It also does not fall under arbitration, negotiations, or disputes between men and women. The gender-sensitive budget is a series of budget programmes based on the gender analysis; in other words, it is a series that takes the following into account:

- Differences between women and men;

- Relationships within families in the private sphere, as far as this is relevant to budget preparation, submission, and action;

- A study of results of the distribution of revenues and expenses among men and women;

- Assessment of the impact of the budget on: access to resources, benefits, and powers (production tools, loans, ownership);

- Various factors that eliminate obstacles;

- Various opportunities available that contribute to narrowing the gaps between men and women;

In response to a question on the extent to which local budgets incorporate gender, male and female local association members stated that they were unable to adopt the gender approach in preparing budgets. Most of the participants in regional and national meetings said that it was not enough to have the will; they should also have the technical expertise to seriously adopt this approach.

Box 7:

Actual management within local communities of budget planning, disbursement, and discussion is still permeated by a number of problems. The local elected female officials described this situation as follows:

- No connection between the plan and the budget;

- No relation between reform of the national budget and the local budget;

- No mention in the Community Charter of how to vote on the budget, whether during the general assembly cycle or the special assembly cycle;

- No mention in the Community Charter of how to transfer [items] from chapter to chapter;

- The operations budget is greater than the equipment budget;

- No mention in the Community Charter of how to manage problems with the administrative account;

- No stipulation was made to prevent influencing the will of elected individuals through voting on specific points, especially during the administrative account;

- The Charter grants broad powers to the council president without linking responsibility with accountability and assessment;

- Article 71 of the Community Charter that refers to admission to the Regional Accounts Council has not been activated;

- The administrative account is subject to political polling, not results-based voting, good governance, and efficiency;

- Lack of participation of civil society in the budgeting cycle.

2.4 Local measures employed to advance women's political participation and representation

It is important for changes to be made on the legal level (Community Charter), because the law plays a pedagogical role in change. Nevertheless, men and women active in this realm need to experience real progress in terms of socio-economic conditions, infrastructure, and so on. There are more immediate expectations and needs that both urban and rural communities must address.

If we are to achieve these goals, we need to be aware of the features of local communities and community action that prevailed during Morocco's "years of lead" which, according to the Equity and Reconciliation Commission, lasted from the time of Morocco's independence in the year 1965 to the year 1999.[16] These features included:

- Unfair elections and widespread vote buying which rendered the electoral process devoid of all meaning, since elections were no longer viewed as a means of holding those with public responsibilities accountable to the populace.

- Control by administrative authority, the power of trusteeship over local communities by virtue of the laws then in place, the absence of democracy and human rights, and the obstruction of all attempts to develop and improve community action.

- Local elected bodies and institutions were annexed to the administrative authority; as such, they were subject to the administrative authority's commands, with no will of their own, rather than being in the service of those who were supposed to have elected them.

- A significant number of the members of the enlightened elite withdrew from involvement in political parties, which had lost credibility with the spread of rigged elections that misrepresented the will of the electorate. Local electoral action was thus placed solely in the hands of a group of "electoral professionals" who, rather than acting fairly, treated local communities and their elected bodies as "cows to be milked."

- Ongoing discrimination against women based on prejudices held by male and female voters alike; such discrimination made it difficult for women to participate as candidates in election campaigns. This difficulty was exacerbated by the harassment and, at times, outright assaults to which women were subjected without any intervention by authorities to protect them.

- Minimal manoeuvring room for any honest attempts to make elections fairer and more open to women or to promote inclusive, effective community action once candidates had been elected and bore responsibility as elected officials.

- Adoption by local elected bodies of employment policies which, being based on cronyism and nepotism, were a far cry from any sort of professionalism.

- Disregard for the citizenry on the part of most local elected officials, who compensated for this by cozying up to the administrative authority as a means of guaranteeing their continuation in their posts.

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[16] Equity and Reconciliation Committee, Final Report

Facilitating citizen involvement in local affairs from their respective stations in life calls for a great deal of rehabilitation in order for them to overcome the cumulative effects of the past. The process of transforming citizens from tools for the exploitation of community action in the service of the state's narrow aims—which is what they were throughout the years of lead—into positive actors will require programming and planning. Radical changes such as these will not be achieved simply by announcing them, or even by including them in legislation. In fact, in a country that suffers from high rates of illiteracy and a lack of legal knowledge and awareness on the part of those charged with enforcing the laws, questions need to be raised about how laws themselves need to formulated for such groups of citizens, since it is not enough to copy laws already in existence or even to new create laws consisting of lofty-sounding texts in the expectation that they will be put into practice.

Box 8:

All female respondents asserted that encouraging women's participation and political representation requires an integrated approach that evokes the continuous efforts of all actors in the government, local communities, political parties, and associations, etc. Such measures include:

− Democratic and transparent political climate in which all citizens enjoy the right to participation and representation;

− Guarantee political freedoms and the freedom to form unions or syndicates, as well as expansion of those freedoms;

− Electoral laws should encompass the quota system to ensure women's gradual access to one-third of all posts;

− Modify the ballot format to include the principle of shares;

− Highlight women's activities in the public arena;

− Reduce the gap between the private and public spheres by recognizing the value of reproductive functions and considering reproduction as an essential component of the economic cycle;

− Overcome stereotypes, including those spread by the media, that link women's role in politics to the environment, children, and health, and disassociate women from matters of defence, finance, handling budgets, and solving conflicts;

− Abolish cronyism and nepotism among politicians, because some women's access to decision-making positions were actually made possible through their fathers', husbands', or other male relatives' positions of power, not due to any success in elections;

− Reducing some of the burdens of homemaking would enable women to participate more in community and political life;

− Economic empowerment and eliminating economic dependency on men, which largely prevent women from being involved in important political decisions and actively participating in public life.

− Women bear a double burden of both reproductive and productive responsibilities. Furthermore, long work hours and lack of flexibility in the public and political sphere prevent her from playing an effective role.

- Overcome socio-cultural impediments, because among the key factors that deter women's ability to participate in public life are the cultural value framework and religious perceptions, absence of basic services, and men's failure to share in household management tasks and care and upbringing of the children.

- Spread the culture of equality and counteract discrimination and stereotypes that consider women's sole occupation to be childbearing.

3.1 The role of political parties in defining the functions of elected institutions

In addition to the role political parties play in forming an elite among electoral staff and in constituencies, and the expansion of women's representation in these institutions, parties play a fundamental role in orienting citizens and formulating a national public opinion on basic issues. They also contribute to expanding the role of electoral institutions and defining the functions of their members.

Box 9:

Of the political party representatives polled, 92 percent said that they did not think citizens confuse local and parliamentary elections, while 8 percent stated that citizens make no distinction between local and legislative [parliamentary] elections.

In this context, the opinion poll of citizens demonstrated that 70 percent of the women polled believed that all their elected representatives (on local councils and in Parliament) performed the same task, namely, the defense of male and female citizens' interests without distinction; 20 percent stated that there was a difference between the tasks assigned to elected bodies on the local and national levels; and 10 percent stated that they did not know the difference between the tasks assigned to city councils (local elected bodies) and those in Parliament. Of the men polled, 90 percent said that there was no difference between the tasks performed by city council members and Parliamentarians; 7 percent said that was a difference between the electoral mandates given to [local and national elected bodies]; and 3 percent stated that they didn't know what the difference was.

The results of this poll are an important indication of the degree of citizen understanding of their elected institutions. Knowledge of institutions' areas of specialisation is what determines how one is to relate to them, whether it be through requesting services, presenting demands and memoranda, holding them accountable for policies, laws, etc., or participating in elections with a purpose relating, firstly, to the areas of specialisation of the elected institution, and secondly, to what elected officials will do.

This kind of conscious participation is the condition for society's ability to benefit, on the level of individuals and institutions alike, from what elected bodies offer. When 90 percent of the men polled and 70 percent of the women polled confuse the tasks of Parliamentarians on one hand, and members of city councils on the other, this points to a serious gap in people's understanding of the mechanisms of institutional functioning. And it is this lack of understanding that deprives people of the opportunity to benefit from the possibilities such institutions provide for decision-making and responding to the challenges relating to citizens' rights in the social, economic, cultural, civil, and political realms.

3.2 The impact of the electoral code on expanding women's political representation within parties

Political parties are a crucial element of the framework for democratic systems in that they organise the citizenry, embrace political trends, stimulate dialogue on topics of importance, including public policy, create the elites which manage public

affairs on the local and national levels, and provide an orderly structure for the transfer of power.

The list system[17] was adopted for local elections in Morocco for the purpose of establishing the responsibility of political parties and their constitutional role in organising the citizenry. The electoral law stipulates that the person at the head of the list that wins the total number of seats on a given city council shall become chairperson of the city council, and that if this is not possible for one reason or another, he or she is to be succeeded by the person next on the list.

Adoption of additional lists has prompted political parties on the local level to put forward women candidates from among party members and to seek out women interested in contributing to local affairs. In spite of the fact that the traditional rule in political parties is a guaranteed winning nomination, the addition of constituencies pushed parties to nominate women. Nevertheless, the experience of Moroccan women is not always positive, even among party leadership that claim to be democratic.

Yet, despite the male-centred mentality that prevails in elections and party politics alike, numerous women have won seats on local elected bodies, and some have become city council chairwomen through individual elections in both urban and rural areas.

The electoral code boosted the standing of women in local affairs by way of the "quota" system, or the "additional constituency". It succeeded in electing 3,428 women to local positions. The impact was not limited to expanding representation in elected institutions, but also in the political parties themselves. The nomination of 20,485 women renders parties to be a local women's base that was not previously available.

Women's transformation from mere party activists to candidates and elected officials gave them important leadership standing in their parties. They became executors of their parties' orientations at the local level and trainers of citizenry in civic affairs.

Box 10:

Given this initial acknowledgment of change, we asked male and female government employees and elected officials on the local level their views on whether, and to what extent, women's position within political parties had been enhanced. In response, 60 percent of the men, and 50 percent of the women, stated that women's position within political parties was now better than it had been prior to adoption of the quota system; 30 percent of the women held that the improvement witnessed had been insignificant, while 10 percent of the women stated that there had been no improvement at all. As for the men interviewed, 35 percent stated that the improvement in women's position in political parties had been insignificant, while 5 percent said there had been no change.

In response to a question about the impact of the electoral system on political parties, 40 percent of the female respondents and 37 percent of the male respondents stated that the electoral system perpetuates control by the major political parties. Of the women interviewed, 60 percent defended the ongoing use of the list system, while

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[17] Since 2003, Morocco has applied a dual electoral model in communities: the single name ballot model and the list ballot model.

> 63 percent of the men interviewed held that the list system should be discontinued.

If the attitudes reviewed here are reflected in the prevailing culture and even in the focus groups, the regional meetings and the national meeting held in the course of preparing this report, there is clearly a need to develop approaches to local community action that help to advance women's rights by developing the skills of elected officials, both women and men, in how to incorporate the gender-based approach into local policies; to adopt and implement strong programmes to advance women's rights, and, in particular, to eliminate prejudices against women and their abilities in the area of managing public affairs.

Of the men and women questioned about the impact of the current electoral system on women's representation, 73 percent[n3] replied that it does have an impact; of these, 37 stated that the elections law provides more space for women; 12 percent considered it beneficial to local communities; 7 percent replied that it has an impact, but not enough of one; and 12 percent stated that it has a negative impact, in that it provides a "give-away" to women who are relatives of party leaders. By contrast, 27 percent[n4] of those polled stated that the current electoral system has no impact on women's representation.

Of these respondents, 10 percent explained this lack of impact as a result of illiteracy among women; 7 percent stated that the women's quota wasn't large enough; and the remaining 15 percent explained the perceived lack of impact on the basis of the small numbers of women in local elected bodies.

Impact of current electoral system on women's representation			
Impact	73%	Positive impact on the community and population	12%
		Provides more space for women	37%
		Some impact although not enough	7%
		Negative impact – caused the "added list" to be a mere give-away to women who are relatives of party leaders	12%
No impact	27%	Illiteracy among women	10%
		Quota is not large enough	7%
		No impact because of the limited number of women in local elected bodies	15%
Total	100%		100%

3.3 How political parties address gender equality in elections programmes and campaigns

Local elections in 2009 came in tandem with a media campaign, the first of its kind regarding electoral communication. Political parties allocated some of their electoral shares to women in response to the joint resolution to use public audio-visual means during electoral campaigns. The resolution allowed for each party to make its own choice of one new additional electoral constituency in urban and rural communities.

Other practices should be taken into account to explain the perpetuation of stereotyping and the lack of women's political marketability. Sexually discriminatory expressions were used against women candidates during election campaigns. Also, the added lists were placed on electoral brochures below the regular lists, giving an impression of inequalities between male and female candidates.

Box 11:

With regard to highlighting women's issues in local discussions and the discussion focusing around political parties and their programmes, 34 percent of those polled said that the system has no impact; 12 percent stated that progress has been made in this direction; and 54 percent hesitated to respond in either the affirmative or the negative.

In answer to the question of whether gender equality figures as a theme in election campaigns, only 7 percent of the men and 3 percent of the women replied in the affirmative, whereas 66 percent of the men and 80 percent of the women said that the topics most frequently discussed in election campaigns were infrastructure, employment, health and housing. Moreover, 17 percent of the women and 27 percent of the men said that election campaigns stress direct services to voters, such as providing employment for relatives and day-to-day services.

In connection with the developments that have been witnessed by women's representation in local elected bodies, 66 percent of the men active in political parties stated that their parties had adopted the strategy of promoting women's representation on the national level, whereas only 40 percent of the women polled affirmed the same. Only 34 percent of the men polled stated that their political parties had no strategy for promoting women's representation on the local level, whereas 60 percent of the women polled said that no political party had adopted such a strategy.

Based on a review of the positions taken by various political parties, particularly those with strong representation in local elected bodies, it became clear that all these parties had issued statements in support of women as part of their election platforms, endorsing the principle of gender equality, advancement of women's rights, and combating all forms of discrimination against women. However, they do not have concrete programmes to translate such statements into action, including plans to work with female members of local elected bodies.

This situation is no doubt attributable to both the newness of Morocco's electoral experiment and the fact that women only recently began gaining access to decision-making positions in elected institutions.

3.4 The impact of positive discrimination on expanding women's representation in locally elected councils and changing mentalities

The stated goal behind the electoral system's adoption of the quota system is to advance equality between women and men and to provide women with access to decision-making positions. In this context, 70 percent of the men polled said that people's attitudes toward women have begun to change, particularly in relation to the notion that men and women have equal capacities to bear responsibility in the area of public management; by contrast, only 15 percent of the women polled held this view. Of those polled, 14 percent of the men, and 85 percent of the women, held that there had been no change in people's attitudes, while 6 percent of the men found it difficult to take a position.

Have attitudes toward begun to change in relation to the notion that men and women have equal capacities to bear responsibility in the area of public management?		
Response	*Women*	*Men*
Yes.	15%	70%
No.	85%	14%
Difficult to say.	0%	6%
Total	100%	100[n5]%

Concerning the reasons for the ongoing lack of awareness of women's public management abilities and the slow evolution in people's day-to-day thinking as it relates to the culture of gender equality, 57 percent of the women polled stated that there was a lack of awareness of gender equality on the party level; 30 percent said that this was due to the image of women promoted by the media; and 13 percent held that it was due to educational programmes.

In general, women have been unable to assert their presence in the political arena, even though the national constitution, legislation, and laws have granted women equal rights with men before the law. The right to vote and be nominated in local and national elections has been granted to them since the 1960's. Nevertheless, the actual level of women's participation in voting in various election processes in Morocco since 1960 has been glaringly low. Whether as candidates or elected officials in various authorities and local councils, women's participation is still weak and below their own aspirations and demands. This clearly demonstrates numerous challenges and obstacles that prevent women's true and active participation in general elections and her consequent access to decision-making positions in various government institutions. Such obstacles to women's participation in elections range from the social to the cultural to the legal, etc.

There is a popular understanding that the classification of men and women based on their typical traits is fixed and objective, not a dynamic classification that could be modified by social, economic, cultural, and political factors. People submit to the perception of the differing natures of the two sexes, that the common types and models that define masculinity or femininity are a natural reality, rather, based in values and morals. Moreover, members of society believe that men are by nature

positive beings and prepared for public political life, while women are considered by nature to be negative beings and servile to private home life. Such perceptions create a decisive dividing line between the world of men and the world of women. In turn, society sees woman as unfit for some activities due to her nature and gender, including activities that require strength (she is the weaker sex) and leadership (she is prone to emotionalism). With these perceptions and values, society determines what women may or may not do, and the world of politics remains in the hands of men.

Part IV: Principal causes of weak participation in elections and the main obstacles to women's political participation

4.1 Some causes of weak participation in elections[LW6]

Widespread participation of citizens in voting is one of the principal elements of effective elected institutions. When voters, both men and women, take part in elections in large numbers, they are far more likely to follow up on elected institutions and interact with them on an ongoing basis. Hence, democratic systems throughout the world work to encourage voter participation, and one of the ways in which they go about this is to determine the causes behind a failure to participate in elections.

In this context, we polled a number of party activists concerning the reasons that lead people not to take part in elections. Of those questioned, 32 percent of the women and 27 percent of the men stated that low voter participation is due primarily to a lack of communication, while 27 percent of the women and 46 percent of the men said that it is due to widespread illiteracy (28 percent according to official statistics[18]), but that poverty does not prevent people from voting to any significant extent. By contrast, a relatively insignificant number of respondents, 11 percent of the women and 3 percent of the men, stated that lack of voter participation is due to poverty.

New data that arose during the analysis confirmed that 20 percent of the women and 18 percent of the men stated that people fail to vote for lack of time. Therefore, great attention should be paid to studying time frames and their impact on the elections process.

As for the matter of confidence, which is a critical element in elections and political action as a whole, only 6 percent of the women polled, and 3 percent of the

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[18] Illiteracy rate, HCP (Haut Commissariat au Plan)

men, stated that a lack of confidence underlies people's failure to take part in local elections.

What principle factors underlie a lack of effective voter participation on the part of women and men?		
Response	*Women*	*Men*
lack of communication	32%	27%
illiteracy	27%	46%
poverty	11%	3%
lack of time	20%	18%
apathy	4%	3%
lack of confidence	6%	3%
Total	100%	100%

One notes on the basis of these responses that communication represents the basic means of promoting voter participation. According to those who took part in the focus groups, communication needs to be an ongoing process, and not simply something that happens when elections are approaching; communication, moreover, is linked to the high illiteracy rate, which is a major hindrance to political participation.

The fact that a lack of confidence has little impact on voter participation is a positive factor which can facilitate work in other areas to increase the rate of participation in future local elections.

What are the principle factors underlying a lack of participation on the part of women and men?		
Response	*Women*	*Men*
lack of communication	32%	27%
illiteracy	27%	46%
deteriorating economic conditions	11%	3%
lack of time	20%	18%
apathy	4%	3%
lack of confidence	6%	3%
Total	100%	100%

4.2   Socio-cultural obstacles that hinder women's political representation

The cultural heritage that is promoted and usually inherited by women through upbringing, customs, and social traditions lay the foundations for typical, traditional roles for women and men. The role triangle[19] has not changed in most Moroccan families. The man generally remains detached from the home and any relationship with the children or housework. The overriding nature of these roles is the lack of equality between spouses in terms of family matters. This inequality extends to the distribution of roles in spite of women taking paid jobs outside the home and the occurrence of fundamental changes in the family structure and the relationships among each other.

Women's daily activities or actions tied into gender (and the division of roles in the private sphere) exhaust women's physical and mental energy. Being occupied with housework as dictated by typified roles that are ingrained by the family through

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[19] Role triangle: Reproductive role – Productive role – Community role

upbringing and by society through customs and traditions convinces women that they are solely responsible for the internal management of the home. This includes attention to each family member: children, husband, elderly individuals, and the sick or disabled. This burden is doubled especially in remote, desert areas since there are no means to reduce it such as washing machines or electrical kitchen appliances. Supplying such items is usually not considered a worthwhile investment because it is linked to women's reproductive work which the society sees as natural and easy. At the same time, the state views it as expenses disbursed in vain because they are accounted for in the crude national product and does not fall under the national accounts system. To illustrate, if a woman without a profession is asked about the type of work she does, she will answer, "I don't work. I am a housewife."

The time that women invest in the family's welfare and comfort, called the welfare economy, is usually accompanied by productive activities inside and outside the home. Such work includes sewing, raising and selling poultry and eggs, working in the fields and grazing pastures, and work for wealthier families to cover family expenses and meet the children's needs. This stressful daily agenda causes emotional and physical fatigue with no free time in return. Such free time could be dedicated to social or public activities, but there is a lack of facilities such as nursery schools and illiteracy eradication programmes for women, and women are hindered from joining activities in local associations that serve the population. Naturally, women's political participation is limited to elections at specific times. Moreover, the decision of who to vote for or not vote for depends on women's situation in the household and their ability to express their own opinion and to make a free decision in selecting their preferred candidate without the pressure or influence of the men of the home or authorities. Women also have to take account of their proximity to voting centres and their ability to move safely, because there is an ever-present feeling of lack of safety, fear of sexual harassment, aggression, or theft. These are some hidden factors to take into consideration with regard to women's political participation in remote desert areas.

The rate of illiteracy among women is high in the rural world. This causes women to be absent or concealed from various realms. The political realm, for example, is monopolised by men due to the intellectual incapacity to promote the basic concepts that allow people to comprehend the rules of the democratic game (the constitution, parliament, voting by majority, the electoral system, left/right, Islamic/liberal, etc.). Thus, women's illiteracy is an impediment to establishing real participatory democracy that contributes to individual and community development.

With the lack of autonomy, freedom of movement and decision-making, it is difficult to establish broad and varied social relationships and participate in social, civic, and political activities. Traditions, challenges, resistance, and social pressures are still major obstacles that limit women's freedom and prevent them from gaining autonomy in decision-making.

A sample of male and female elected officials in urban and semi-urban settings were asked about the role triangle. They responded as follows:			
Role Triangle	Number of hours per day in reproductive work	Number of hours per day in productive work	Number of hours per day in community work
Female elected	10 hours	8 hours	One hour

officials			
Male elected officials	One and a half hours	8 hours	4 hours

4.3 Institutional and legal obstacles that hinder women's political representation

Political parties are an organised form of exclusion. Women object to many obstacles such as the timing of meetings that end at late hours of the evening. Women are usually absent from such meetings. The public sphere is not safe for them at night because they are vulnerable to aggression or sexual harassment just because they are women.

Women's sectors of the parties tends to be an isolated area where women's problems are discussed but no official party stances result because women are excluded from positions of responsibility within the party. This should be translated in the almost complete absence of women and their problems in parties' political concerns. Furthermore, women do not master the political game because they are still in the formative stage of a future project to ensure true participation of women in politics. Since their experience thus far has not accumulated enough to be depended on or benefited from, they have not yet succeeded in forming special women's coalitions within parties, mobilising support for women's issues, and forming a pressure group to enhance women's presence in decision-making positions.

What could be concluded from the focus group discussions is that the injustice and inequality heaped onto gender relationships is a reality whose manifestations, determinants, and consequences on women and their access to political participation and decision-making positions should be examined. All researchers, male and female, and development actors have come to the agreement that achieving development, in the comprehensive meaning of the word, cannot occur without the participation of women on an equal standing with men in formulating plans, strategies, and mechanisms that address the community's future.

However, women's familial and social roles imposed on them in the work, political, and civil society arenas are still defined by polarised male-female standards and values. Moreover, certain deep-seated socio-cultural barriers and requirements permit only a limited group of women to reach positions of responsibility and decision-making. Thus, enabling some women to penetrate these barriers is often the result of painstaking long-term efforts.

Moroccan society is, to a great extent, a traditional society. It is characterized by feeble socio-economic and political development, low levels of education and culture among its citizens, and high rates of illiteracy, particularly among women. Traditional institutions effectively form the social structure and the key social mediums for the nurture and education of individuals and determining their social and political loyalties and affiliations. Therefore, political parties have only a minor influence on this structure and in propagating alternative cultures.

This social structure is distinctly exclusive in nature; it excludes and marginalizes the poor – mainly women, preventing them from participating in public life, especially political life. Such structures fortify the elitist, masculine culture and perpetuate underlying affiliations and traditional loyalties, while hindering the development of affiliations based on citizenship. As a result, social values that ingrain

social, economic, and political differentiation and inequality based on gender, as well as cultural and political orientations that conflict with human rights values and principles, continue to burn unabated. On top of all this are other factors related to the economy and low incomes, and so on.

Part V: Problems of governance and the role of city councils in the management of local affairs

5.1 Citizens' accountability of decision-making processes in local councils

One sign of citizens' interest in community affairs is their criticisms of, or support for, the actions of the local elected body. Such criticism and support may be viewed as a type of participation in community management if the local elected body takes them seriously, studies them, and responds to their content, especially when it relates to such input in a positive manner by studying it and making decisions on matters that have been the focus of criticism.

Have citizens criticised the decision-making process in the city council?		
Response	*Women*	*Men*
No.	38%	28%
Yes.	54%	72%
No response.	8%	none
Total	100%	100%

In this context, 72 percent of the male representatives of the civil society organisations that took part in this study and 54 percent of their female representatives said that citizens had criticised the decision-making process in the city council. Of these individuals, 28 percent of the men and 38 percent of the women said that there had not been any criticisms, while 8 percent of the women gave no response.

As for the question of whether these criticisms had raised the issue of women's presence in government positions, 27 percent of the women and 15 percent of the men stated that the criticisms had related to topics of concern to women, while 65 percent of the women and 72 percent of the men denied that the criticisms had related to topics of concern to women. Of those polled, 14 percent of the men and 8 percent of the women did not respond.

Have citizens criticised the decision-making process in the city council[n7]?		
Response	*Women*	*Men*
No.	27%	15%
Yes.	65%	72%
No response.	8%	14[n8]%
Total	100%	100%

5.2 Role of the council president in managing local affairs

Among the positive and fundamental changes effected by the Community Charter is delineation of the elected community council president's responsibilities. When questioned on the accountability mechanisms during the president's term in office, 70% of males and 60% of females said that the annual discussion and voting on the administrative account is the most effective mechanism of accountability. At the same time, 20% of men and 10% of women believed there were no set mechanisms, and only 2% of men and 1% of women thought that the Accounts Council had a role in this. Another 8% of men and 29% of women felt that citizens' complaints helped in keeping the president accountable.

As for whether political parties and media outlets contribute to open criticism of the council, 70% of women replied in the negative along with 60% of men. On the other hand, 30% of women and 40% of men replied in the affirmative.

When asked whether transparency exists in community work, especially when discussing the budget, 43% of females and 47% of males stated that this is guaranteed by open sessions. Another 20% of women and 25% of men stated that this takes place during council meetings. The remaining respondents are split between those who state that the continuous monitoring of the community promotes transparency in community work. This is confirmed by 37% of women and 28% of men.

In a question on whether the electoral system produces a strong president for the council with sufficient autonomy from the council or the political parties represented within it, 91% of female and 50% of male political party activists state that the electoral system does not allow such. Explanations ranged between the adoption of the relative distribution of seats under the electoral system, subjection of the president to pressure by members who might not vote in favour of the administrative account, even if they belong to the president's own party. At the same time, 40% of men and no women at all stated that the president could be strong considering the powers vested in his position, especially in comparison with the past where the president had been subjected to various forms of blackmail and extortion in order to stay in office. Finally, 9% of women and 3% of men refrained from answering the question.

Does the electoral system in effect result in a strong president for the council?		
	Women	Men
No.	91%	50%
Yes.		40%
Somewhat.		7%
No answer.	9%	3%
Total	100%	100%

The discrepancy between the answers of women (91%) and men (40%) with regard to the president's powers could be interpreted as the result of men's cumulative experience and involvement in political work, in contrast to women's actions. Males acquired the competencies and functions that the Charter has conferred on the community council president, including those that the president practices according to a legal text without the need to confer with the council. Such actions are stipulated in Articles 49, 50, 52, 54, and 55 of the Charter. In contrast, women have not had the same opportunities to develop a frame of reference or receive political education. They also have not gained the experience of holding political office. This percentage could also be explained in the elected women's lack of knowledge of legal texts and regulations relevant to community activities, the content of the Community Charter, as well as ongoing tasks to manage the functions of the elected councils. These are some of the constraints facing elected women in managing local public affairs with all its various developmental dimensions.

5.3 Selection criteria for candidates in local elections

When asked about how candidates are selected in local elections, 55% of female activists in political parties stated that the party sets clear criteria that all comply with, although only 40% of males in the same category affirmed this. It is

worth noting that the ratio of respondents who stated that influential and wealthy individuals were sought out as candidates was no more than 9% of females and 10% of males. On the same question, 18% of women and 27% of men said that candidates were chosen based on their effectiveness and dynamism. In contrast, 9% of women and 17% of men stated that some candidates are selected just for the sake of competing without being concerned with their precedence on the electoral list.

A significant ratio of respondents confirming the existence of candidate selection standards is a positive indicator of progress in political parties handling of election matters.

How are candidates selected in local elections?		
Subject	Women	Men
Competitive candidacies	9%	17%
Clear criteria set by the party office	55%	40%
Usually select wealthy/influential figures	9%	10%
No selection criteria	9%	0%
Effectiveness and dynamism	18%	27%
Out of context		7%
Total	100%	100%

5.4 Measures taken by the local councils to encourage women's participation in local affairs

When asked whether there are rules of operation which take women's needs into account, 30 percent of the women polled and 40 percent of the men polled answered in the affirmative; 70 of the women and 50 percent of the men answered in the negative; and 10 percent of the men said they did not know.

When asked whether the local budget took women's needs into account, 80 of the men, in contrast to only 10 percent of the women, answered in the affirmative; of the men, 20 percent answered in the negative over against 90 percent of the women.

When asked whether this budget contained measurable indicators of the degree to which gender equality had been achieved, all respondents, men and women alike, answered in the negative. Similarly, when asked whether a transverse vision of the various sectors had been defined when preparing the plan and the budget, all responses were in the negative.

Part VI: Challenges of local participatory democracy and development communication

6.1 Role of civil society in management of local affairs:

Associations are a fundamental actor in Morocco due to their numbers and various functions and activities on both the local and national levels. The number of active associations (that comply with updating their general assemblies in accordance with the law) is approximately 54,000 associations.

Associations mostly operate at the local level in direct communication with local elected bodies and projects under the national human development initiative that often intersects with community work.

On the subject of participation by local actors from outside of the city council in decision-making on local affairs, 94 percent of the women and 80 percent of the men said that they had not participated at all. Of those polled, 6 percent of the women and 20 percent of the men said that they had influenced decisions made by the local elected body.

When asked whether women's and human rights organisations work on women's issues at the local level, 61 percent of the men and 83 percent of the women active in civil society organisations answered in the affirmative, while 17 percent of the women and 39 percent of the men answered in the negative.

When asked about the ways in which they seek to influence local elected bodies, 13 percent of the civil society organisations polled said that they did so by preparing projects and taking part in decision-making; 20 percent said that they engage in the defence of women's rights; 12 percent exert pressure of all types; 23 percent engage in development and organisational work; 29 percent engage in action in partnership with local elected bodies; and 3 percent resort to various forms of protest.

As mentioned above, the community development plan is one of the most important new developments that have come about as a result of the community charter, especially its emphasis on the need for this plan to be drawn up within a participatory framework, which includes engagement of civil society in the preparation process. When civil society actors were asked about this matter, 53 percent of those polled stated that they knew of the existence of the community plan, while 47 percent said they had no knowledge of it.

Of those who stated that they knew of the community development plan's existence, only 29 percent said that the local elected body had prepared the plan through participatory action; 26 percent stated that there had been no participatory action whatsoever; and 45 percent said that they were not aware of any participatory action.

When asked whether women's associations had been invited by local elected bodies to attend any function, including preparation of the community development plan, 61 percent answered in the negative, and 39 percent answered in the affirmative.

With regard to activation of the equality and equal opportunities committee, associations confirmed that it is a mere illusion. No such committee has been established. Only in rare cases have they been ceremoniously opened in associations affiliated with the president.

It is important to note the absence of the equality and equal opportunities committee in preparing the community development plan and the role it could play in giving suggestions on how to integrate the gender approach and rights approach in the diagnosis, planning, monitoring and evaluation stages of the community plan.

When asked about the existence of mechanisms to ensure the participation of associations in decision-making, the focus group participants confirmed intense participation in meetings to prepare the community development plans of civil society organisations. The participatory approach was used on a broad scale but the efforts of civil society organisations in cooperation with the communities did not result in setting up institutional mechanisms which would be a frame of reference for work between the two sides.

6.2 Assessment of private sector participation in the management of local affairs

The private sector represents a fundamental component of community life. As such, this sector needs the local elected body, and the local elected body needs this sector in its capacity as a stimulant to local economic activity.

When asked about the role of the private sector in communication with local elected bodies, 72 percent of the male respondents working in the private sector denied having engaged in any work with the local elected body; this was confirmed by 90 percent of the female respondents employed in the private sector. Of those polled, 28 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women stated that there were companies that had provided some basic services such as water and electricity for their local elected bodies.

As for whether the private sector had offered suggestions relating to the community development plan, all respondents stated that they had offered no suggestions relating to the plan, that the local elected body had not invited them to do so, and that they knew neither how to take part in the process, nor when it had taken place.

6.3 Lack of a development communication strategy at the local level

Morocco's local media has taken shape to a large extent through networks of reporters working with media establishments (daily and weekly newspapers, the Morocco News Agency), regional and local newspapers, and the electronic press. This variety makes it possible to speak of a self-sufficient local media. But to what extent do local elected bodies make use of these opportunities?

When the local media were asked what sources citizens rely on for information about local affairs, 25 percent of those polled said that citizens obtain information through announcements and/or the local elected body's website, and/or the audio-visual media; 11.8 percent said that they obtain information through public communiqués and circulars; 5.9 percent stated that this took place by word of mouth; and 41.2 percent said that citizens inform themselves about community affairs through websites other than that of their local elected body.

6.4 Weak gender-sensitive developmental communication

In connection with women's place in the local media, we approached media personnel, particularly correspondents working with the press and the audio-visual media; of those polled, 11 percent of the women and 15 percent of the men said that women's topics are highlighted at special events; 13 percent of the women and 19 percent of the men said that such topics are present in general; while 76 percent of the

women and 66 percent of the men stated that women have a weak presence in the local media.

When asked about local activities and/or initiatives targeting the local media that seek to change the negative stereotype of women's political participation, 80 percent of the women polled stated that they exist in the form of seminars organised by civil society organisations, and this was confirmed by 92 percent of the men. By contrast, 10 percent of the women and 8 percent of the men said that no serious action was being taken in this area.

We conclude from the respondents' answers that women's presence in local media entrenches traditional roles and typical images of women. They are seen mainly in programmes on cooking, childrearing, and family matters and rarely in media events as political, community, or union actors such as the 8th of March, International Women's Day, or the 10th of October, Moroccan National Women's Day. On the contrary, local media is not concerned with confronting violence against women, presenting awareness-raising programmes, providing legal and rights guidance for women, highlighting civil society organisations' work to get closer to women who live in poverty and vulnerability, and implementing sensitisation and training programmes to encourage women's political participation.

Furthermore, communities do not make use of local media for communication with citizens, for example, to inform them of development projects, submit progress reports, and provide information on available services to encourage women's access to information, justice, health care, and administrative matters.

As for the rates of women's participation in the communication processes organised by local elected bodies, 74 percent of the women polled stated that they had never communicated with the local elected body or any of its members; 12 percent stated that they had gone to city hall to take care of administrative business and communicate with members of the local elected body; and 14 percent stated that they had communicated with the local elected body indirectly through civil society organisations.

When asked what factors they viewed as explaining women's low rate of communication with their local elected bodies, 40 percent of the women polled said that it was due to widespread illiteracy among women; 35 percent attributed it to apathy; 15 percent attributed it to prevailing societal values that reduce women's role to domestic work; and 10 percent attributed it to the fact that most members of local elected bodies are men.

The lack of use of a participatory approach in preparing the community plan negatively affects the citizenry, especially women who depend on women's associations to defend their rights and advocate for their immediate needs and strategic interests. Most of the development projects that the community implements work towards creating women's clubs to learn sewing and beading, illiteracy eradication, childrearing, and aiding women's economic productiveness by providing spaces for exhibiting women-manufactured traditional products. Nevertheless, this is without a systematic approach to assimilate women in development and thinking, for example, of how to reduce the domestic burden. Possible solutions include setting up nurseries and recreation centres for women at symbolic prices for those with no solid income. Another suggestion is facilitating women's access to training in marketing, management, and accounting, especially for women who work in farming and rug

manufacturing cooperatives. This will make them more independent and help them to become involved in the political and collective realm. Preserving security in public spaces also gives women greater opportunities to move about and participate in activities organised by the community, associations, parties, and syndicates, etc.

When asked whether they knew how the city council operated, 88 percent of the women polled responded in the negative, and the same response was received by 76 percent of the men. Only 12 percent of the women and 24 percent of the men polled said that they knew how their local elected body functioned.

Part VII: From assessment to development

7.1 General observations

Based on the data we have gathered, the following points are clear:

First: The state has made significant efforts toward the development of community action via legislation, particularly though the official adoption of a number of approaches that include programming, planning, the participatory approach, and gender-sensitive budgeting.

Second: There is some degree of change in public perceptions in that bribery is not seen as posing a fundamental hindrance to citizen participation in elections (only 2.4 percent of those polled viewed corruption as a hindrance).

Third: Existing levels of citizen participation, though weak for the most part, are nevertheless significant indications of tangible progress.

Fourth: Women have gained access to decision-making positions and have taken their place as genuine actors in community action; moreover, these developments have met with approval on the part of a significant percentage of the population (46.3 percent of those polled stated that attitudes toward gender equality have begun to change).

This positive trend is reinforced by the state's commitment since 2003 to announcing figures on voter turnouts exactly as they are, as confirmed by testimony from national and international observers (54.16 percent in 2003 as compared with 52.4 percent in 2009), whereas in the years where there was reason to doubt whether the elections were actually free, the figures released on voter turnout were 71.94 percent in 1983; 62.75 percent in 1992, and 75.14 percent in 1997.

In the same vein, this assessment yields a number of indications that can serve as the basis for efforts to improve the work of local elected bodies.

7.2 Activation of integrated development and gender approaches

*The community development plan***:**

One of the most significant developments witnessed by community management is the requirement that local elected bodies approve a community development plan in keeping with a participatory, gender-based approach. However, it became clear in the course of our research that the fulfilment of this legal requirement has faltered at all stages of the process: from diagnosis, to engagement of the community in the preparation process, to implementation. At some stages of the research it was necessary to ask whether a community development plan even existed. As mentioned earlier, 47 percent of the civil society actors polled stated that they were unaware of the existence of a community development plan, and this despite the fact that the plan was supposed to have been the talk of the town, as it were. In other words, it was supposed to have involved all residents of the community, be it rural or urban, since its preparation was to take place in the public sphere, not behind closed doors. The importance of drawing attention to this issue is confirmed by the fact that 44.55 percent of those who knew of the plan's existence denied knowledge of any participatory action in this connection. Similarly, 61 percent of the civil society activists polled said that groups representing women's interests were not invited by the local elected body to any event, including opportunities to take part in preparing the plan, while 72.3 percent of the private sector actors questioned also denied having

taken part in its formulation. Here also no mention is made of the absence of the equality-equal opportunity committee in preparing the community development plan and the role it could play in providing suggestions of how to incorporate the gender approach and the rights approach in community plans at the diagnostic, planning, follow-up, and assessment stages.

The fault lies in the absence of special guidelines for creating and implementing the community development plan, training actors, and following up on the effects of such training, that is, assessing it based on its outcomes. The city council chairperson's leadership role in this process is critical, as is that of the general secretary and the local elected body's administration, which needs to be trained to keep abreast of current developments in its field and, in this way, to be transformed from an institution with no will of its own into an effective agent of change, particularly in the sphere of local development.

Respondents from civil society and female rights activists concur on the lack of adoption of the participatory approach in community plan preparation. This negatively impacts citizens, especially those who depend on women's associations to defend their rights and advocate for their immediate needs and strategic interests. Most of the development projects that the community implements work towards creating women's clubs to learn sewing and beading, illiteracy eradication, childrearing, and aiding women's economic productiveness by providing spaces for exhibiting women-manufactured traditional products. Nevertheless, this is without a systematic approach to assimilate women in development and thinking, for example, of how to reduce the domestic burden. Possible solutions include setting up nurseries and recreation centres for women at symbolic prices for those with no solid income. Another suggestion is facilitating women's access to training in marketing, management, and accounting, especially for women who work in farming and rug manufacturing cooperatives. This will make them more independent and help them to become involved in the political and collective realm. Preserving security in public spaces also gives women greater opportunities to move about and participate in activities organised by the community, associations, parties, and syndicates, etc.

The gender-sensitive budget:

The guide to gender-sensitive budget preparation has not been distributed among local elected bodies. Moreover, although this guide stipulates adoption of a gender-based approach, it gives no details concerning what this involves, which may explain the fact that 49.4 percent of those questioned on this matter indicated that a gender-based approach had not been integrated into budget preparation.

Such a guide can clarify the technical aspects of how to prepare a budget in keeping with a gender-based approach. It can also help move local communities in the direction of adopting a transparent approach as the most comprehensive means of engaging citizens in budget preparation. This kind of engagement is the basic means of guaranteeing effective participation by members of the local community in budget implementation and assessment. The Gender Approach Integration Guide available at women's associations could also be applied.[20]

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[20] Gender Approach Budgeting Guides (2), issued by the Women's Democracy Association of Morocco, 2009-2012.

7.3 Bolstering the gender-sensitive approach to development communication

Communication between local elected bodies and citizens constitutes an important mechanism of community action for several reasons:

(1) It helps citizens to become aware of what the local elected body is doing so that it can obtain their buy-in on its actions, and on this basis build bridges of trust between citizens and elected officials. (2) It enables citizens to offer suggestions and gain access to the local elected body as a means of solving already existing problems or preventing problems that might arise. (3) It can enable the local elected body to call upon citizens to bear additional burdens in the service of clear goals within the community.

When asked about specific communication mechanisms that local elected bodies could employ, some focus group participants said that they preferred direct, face-to-face encounters with citizens, while others voiced a preference for corresponding with individual households. Only a small percentage placed importance on communicating via the internet, whether through a website created by the local elected body or through social communication networks. Those who discounted the importance of internet communication did so because of what they considered to be widespread "digital illiteracy."

Representatives of civil society organisations said they preferred that local elected bodies prepare monthly newsletters that could be distributed both electronically and on paper to members of the community, and that brief telephone messages be sent out, stating that local elected bodies' communication with the citizenry, and sometimes among the members of the local elected body itself, stood in need of improvement.

Accordingly, it is clear there is a high degree of deficiency in terms of local community communication and contradictions in approaches, such as between elected officials on the one hand and civil society on the other, in evaluating the importance of modern technological [communication] means.

Local frameworks and elected officials have testified to the fact that they still communicate with local residents by posting announcements on the walls of city hall. Some local elected bodies in Morocco have created websites and published magazines, but with minimal effect.

Consequently, local elected bodies need integrated communication strategies based on establishment of an infrastructure as well as a human network which supports the work of local elected officials and develops their ability to communicate effectively with residents and impact public opinion, including the media.

It should be noted that communication is a two-way process in which content flows back and forth between the community and the local elected body. The aim of such communication is interaction between the local elected body and its environment in an atmosphere of openness and with a desire to involve citizens in community affairs, not to engage in propaganda which, as we all know, flows in one direction only.

7.4 Strengthening openness to all actors and support for partnerships

Developing partnerships with civil society and the private sector:

A basic principle of good governance is to involve civil society and the private sector in decision-making. The reason for this has to do with the nature of the information which these two groups are capable of providing, and the possibility of feeding such information into the decision-making process in such a way that decisions become easier to implement in an effective, concrete manner.

Such engagement would not rob these two components of the community of their own particular aims; on the contrary, it is in the best interests of the local elected body for civil society and the private sector to promote their aims through community action. As a consequence, the local elected body can better respond to citizens' needs by engaging them in decision-making, which will encourage them to own the community projects that are implemented and thereby ensure these projects' sustainability.

Fostering women's participation as a means of enhancing the value of community action:

Engaging women and giving them access to community decision-making positions is crucial, since representing women (half of society) on the level of local policy formulation and implementation helps to ensure that such policies reflect women's demands and needs, both those that pertain exclusively to women and those they share with men, for the sake of advancing women's rights and combating all forms of discrimination against them.

To involve women is to involve the half of society that was once excluded from decision-making. However, real involvement by women is not achieved simply by virtue of their becoming members of city councils but, rather, by virtue of their working alongside men to fulfil the aims for the sake of which they were elected.

Particularly in conservative societies such as Morocco's, women's presence on local elected bodies grants access to a social group that was once excluded from public action. Such access not only promotes what local elected bodies seek to accomplish, but goes beyond this to engage women in community decision-making.

7.5 Adopting a policy of continuous monitoring and evaluation:

It is clear from the work of local elected bodies thus far that they have no clear assessment policy. Despite the development that has taken place in the area of local budgets, such budgets are not readily assessable. Nevertheless, it is possible to assess the performance of local elected bodies by examining the extent to which they have implemented the budgets they have approved and the impact this has had on local development. Herein lies the importance of proper analysis when preparing community development plans, which monitor the real-life situations which then become the starting point for further change and development. The aim of the programmes that are approved within the framework of such plans is to achieve progress in specified areas of the life of the community. Once the programmes have come to an end, their impact can be measured by looking at data derived from concrete situations that have been converted to statistics. The inventory carried out on these data then becomes the starting point for a new analysis which lays the groundwork for new programming.

Within the framework of the assessment policy adopted, periodic and annual indicators can be established, and a new project management style can be introduced into the work of the local elected body, including the implementation of programmes' executive plans. Monthly programme reports can be submitted to the appropriate body

or made public by being posted on the local elected body's website. In addition, project managers' wages can be linked to their accomplishments and their compliance with reporting requirements.

7.6 Developing human resources

The shifts taking place in community affairs and the transformation of local communities into centres of development require major improvements in community human resource policies.

In the course of its relations with the community, local government has come to provide a number of direct services, including administrative evidence, permits, licenses, sanitation, etc., a fact which has been reflected to a significant degree in the human resources employed by local government offices.

The shift taking place in the work of local communities as centres for development requires important changes in human resource policies, particularly those relating to the development of individual skills and the institutional capabilities of the offices which are assigned—or which are supposed to be assigned—to project management within the realms of development and services that should be clarified in community management.

This in turn requires that ongoing training programmes be upgraded and their effectiveness guaranteed by means of post-training course follow-up which measures the training's practical effects among course participants.

7.7 Clarifying the tasks of male and female elected officials and government employees:

As part of the development referred to above, it would be helpful for local communities to clarify the tasks assigned to both elected officials and local government employees, men and women alike. Such a clarification would help to improve local government employees' technical competence and bolster elected officials' sense of political responsibility.

In this context, technical tasks require local government employees to serve all elected officials equally regardless of their political affiliations. In view of this fact, local government employees may choose to draw up a code of ethics to which they pledge to adhere.

7.8 Institutionalising the equality-equal opportunity committee:

The goal is to contribute to making local management more accessible to the population – men and women, boys and girls, and individuals with disabilities – by way of sensitisation and training programmes to improve their access to basic community services, increase confidence in these institutions, and expand the base of participatory democracy. The committee will be a tool to rouse people against discrimination, exclusion, and the lack of attention to issues of women and girls in local development policies. It is keen to provide continuous suggestions on equality and equal opportunities in all projects implemented by the community or when operating or opening by other parties.

Conclusions:

Citizens' participation passes through numerous stages, including the following:

1) Providing a public forum conducive to the advancement of democracy and human rights;

2) Intensive, conscious, and responsible participation in elections;

3) Contributing effectively to preparing the community plan, including the plan's budget;

4) Keeping abreast of community policies through local public discussions;

5) Following discussions of the administrative account and working to influence these discussions in a manner that is effective in concrete terms;

6) Promoting the culture of participation through implementation of the community development plan;

7) Developing and spreading awareness of the importance of assessing community action;

8) Holding local government accountable through elections that aim to elect city councils which are qualified and responsive to the community's need for development and effective progress; mobilising its potentials and resources by creating means of progress; and ensuring that these processes are reflected clearly in residents' lives;

9) Developing laws in keeping with an effective, participatory approach, opening the way for local communities to adopt measures for putting these laws into action and for enabling communities to activate the approaches contained in said laws (governance, participation, gender awareness, citizen ownership of projects, etc.);

10) Developing awareness of "social unity" at the local level in order to reinforce a sense of community belonging, which can in turn help to ensure more effective use of the community's resources; and highlighting the need for such belonging to be reflected in the city council's action strategy by targeting all members of the community with diverse programmes that address a wide range of social and professional groups, thereby meeting the needs of all components of the community without exception;

11) Increasing the effectiveness of organisation programmes; ongoing organisation of voters and local community frameworks; and cultivating openness to pioneering experiments in community management from elsewhere in the world;

12) Spreading awareness of the fact that national development can only be achieved at the local level, that true development takes place "on the ground" in the lives of local communities, and that this process needs to be programmed and planned for in terms of both time and place with carefully defined, measurable indicators;

The following agents can guarantee such participation by grasping the tasks listed above and organising citizens on this basis:

1) Political parties which participate in the conduct of affairs, parties that form the opposition from within the community, or parties that form the opposition from without;

2) Members of Parliament who belong to the community or in whose electoral districts the community is located;

3) Civil society organisations, including professional societies (representing merchants, manufacturers, artisans, service providers, doctors, engineers), neighbourhood associations, local branches of national organisations, and local organisations that serve as partners to national networks;

4) Trade unions;

5) Community spaces (elementary schools, high schools, universities, etc.);

6) Sports clubs;

7) Individuals with expertise, experience and/or good reputations in the community