

A MODEL FOR MOROCCAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

INTEGRATING NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR GROWTH BY APPLYING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

This article critically analyses the national developmental model adopted by the Kingdom of Morocco through six policy frameworks that address the major economic and environmental issues and problems affecting Moroccan society, particularly its poorer sections. It points out that many of the declared policies and related projects have failed to meet their objectives due to insufficient popular participation and inadequate administrative implementation. Lack of education and the persistence of top-down methods of governance are largely to blame for the inability to decentralise decision-making and harness widespread grassroots initiatives.

YOSSEF BEN-MEIR

A MODEL TO IMPLEMENT MOROCCO'S FRAMEWORKS FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

Morocco is a nation of immense promise in terms of its human development potential. Its naturally bountiful landscape, if combined with dynamic social development frameworks, could transform the country into a bottom-up haven of community-managed projects and facilitate

change in Africa and the Islamic world. The following six national policy and programmatic frameworks form the pillars of people's development in Morocco. The questions this essay addresses are how can the six frameworks better fulfil their individual purposes? How can the frameworks operate and relate with each other to create human development that is sustained by local community beneficiaries, with the support of decentralised administrations and partnerships? The six government-constructed Moroccan frameworks set out to guide community and national growth are:

1. The Municipal Charter amended in 2010 requires the creation of multi-year community development plans that are formed by people's participation.
2. The National Initiative for Human Development was launched in 2005 to provide access to sub nationally-managed funding for multidimensional development projects in rural and urban communities.
3. The Decentralisation Roadmap first unveiled in 2008 synthesises three pathways—delegation, de-concentration and devolution—to empower regions, provinces and municipalities in development and self-determination.
4. The Green Morocco Plan of 2008 recognises that essential financial grants and technical contributions are needed along the entire agricultural value chain—from nurseries to processing—to overcome the systemic poverty afflicting most rural households.
5. Morocco's Family Code or *Moudawana* based on the Maliki School of Sunni Islam was reformed in 2004 to promote equality and joint responsibility between men and women.
6. Youth leadership programmes have been created by the ministries of national education and vocational training; higher education and scientific research, among others, to increase youth employment and involve young people in decision-making in civil society and the public sphere.

These frameworks are intended to initiate human development that is participatory, decentralised and sustainable. People-driven initiatives that the frameworks could enable include programmes through which women define and achieve what they want within communities, while learning and implementing laws that advance and protect their status in the family and society. The frameworks could help youth overcome the risks of an exceedingly difficult life, such as the likely of being employed improving, the more they are educated.

(United States Agency for International Development, *Morocco Fact Sheets: Employability of Youth Enhanced*, 22 June 2018, online at <https://www.usaid.gov>) The Moroccan development approach also provides a basis for innovative (and organic) agriculture to grow while aiding rural civil associations to plan and create new projects that meet local needs. There are other important and forward-thinking national developmental approaches as well, such as Morocco's push for a regional bloc and African unity; the formalisation of laws to promote civil and cooperative organisations; renewable energy actions (which should be realigned to be more household-driven); the idea of preserving culture while incorporating human development benefits and a trade outlook that attempts to balance free trade, integrated regional markets and rewarding domestic markets for good products. (Yossef Ben-Meir, "The Moroccan Approach: Integrating Cultural Preservation and Sustainable Development", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, vol29, no2, June 2018) Nonetheless, the six frameworks listed above layout exemplary guidelines needed for these and other programmes and policies to be implemented productively, inclusively and equitably.

Sadly, essential human development outcomes have not been realised in Morocco as hoped and needed. After 25 years of observation and engagement there is still an abysmal pace of rural sustainable development. There are few examples in which government agencies and officials have successfully applied participatory development methods, even though these methods are codified in national charters and policies. This is largely not the fault of the personnel and officials, but the result of their lack of training to facilitate inclusive community planning. There is a severe lack of development progress in rural areas, where 75 per cent of all impoverished Moroccan people reside—they experience close to five times the national poverty rate. (Ahmed Idrissi Noury, "Lifting Moroccans out of Poverty", *Fair Observer*, 5 April 2017) The social discontent from chronic poverty has boiled over into disruption and localised demonstrations, mostly in the north, with widespread empathy. Considering the overall ineffectiveness of Moroccan development programmes—no matter how progressive their founding visions—there is reason to be concerned that growing civic dissatisfaction will continue to outpace the rate of fulfilment.

For the majority of people, applying the combined national initiatives for development is not consequential. The urban–rural stratification remains alarming and is growing in Morocco even as both groups generally experience economic hardship. Rural communities have great agricultural and human development possibilities with regard to the range of potential organic and endemic food

products, niche artisanal crafts and available markets. Yet in recent years there has been a 15 per cent rise in households that consider themselves poor. (World Bank and Morocco High Commission for Planning, *Poverty in Morocco: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2017, online at <https://www.worldbank.org>) They lack basic amenities such as water for irrigation and clean drinking, rural women's and children's education, completion of the agricultural value chain from tree and plant nurseries to processing and commercialisation of products and people's empowerment to implement their own initiatives. Morocco's programmes for national growth and development through people's participation are not being orchestrated in tandem. Integrating these programmes would enable their mutual reinforcement to promote accelerated growth and success of development initiatives. In response to the public calls by King Mohammed VI for the nation to reconsider its development model, it is the implementation process that requires a major re-evaluation and overhaul. (Tamba Francois Koundouno, "King Mohammed VI Call for New Development Model, Accountable Civil Service", *Morocco World News*, 27 February 2018, online at <https://www.morocoworldnews.com>)

The model to advance human development—focusing on disadvantaged people and regions and resting on participatory democratic methods and decentralisation—is transferable to other countries. The successful unfolding of Morocco's development approach, guided by its frameworks, bears existential consequences for itself, its position on the larger African and Middle Eastern stage and potentially other nations by exemplifying a decentralised participatory development course. To Morocco's lasting credit, key laws, policies and programmes already exist, like the constitution to promote development projects that reflect locally shared priorities and have democratic decision-making and governing arrangements. The lack of rural development is predominantly due to the poor implementation of existing frameworks, the continued pervasive poverty and widespread gender bias, not to lack of opportunities. Morocco has declared positions on sustainable development that could result in successful,

The urban–rural stratification remains alarming and is growing in Morocco even as both groups generally experience economic hardship. Rural communities have great agricultural and human development possibilities with regard to the range of potential organic and endemic food products, niche artisanal crafts and available markets. Yet in recent years there has been a 15 per cent rise in households that consider themselves poor.

scaled community movements engaging and improving life within the society if applied correctly. The outstanding potential of Morocco's agricultural economy is that it could become the financial engine to create projects in education, health, new businesses and capacity-building in management and technical areas to implement the change that local communities and their associations determine. The organisation and process necessary to achieve sustainable, revenue-generating enterprises are supported by Moroccan laws and prototypes of community initiatives have proven successful. Fortunately, social conditions and economic opportunities—coupled with a sense of necessity, if not urgency, to fulfil it—are such that a significantly more accomplished Moroccan model could potentially be at hand in the not-too-distant future.

MOROCCO'S MUNICIPAL CHARTER

The first framework, Morocco's Municipal Charter, requires locally elected representatives to create one-, three- and five-year development plans derived from people's participation in the determination of local projects. This could give a major chance for sustainable development to take hold as people's participation and financing are key factors of project sustainability. (Robert Chambers, *Challenging the Professionals: Frontiers for Rural Development*, London: Intermediate Technologies, 1993, pp11–3) However, in Morocco there is a constant challenge—elected members to municipal councils, with the responsibility to carry out community plans, are typically not trained in facilitating participatory project methods. Representatives and other community members would benefit from applied learning workshops organised by government, civil society, universities and socially responsible business to effectively fulfil the development-related articles of the Municipal Charter. Catalysing widespread and inclusive development projects initially means implementing experiential training programmes for university students, school teachers, technicians, civil society members, elected officials and local people to be active agents of participatory development. Through hands-on training, the aforementioned municipal development plans could be carried out in a way that reflects the actual will of the people in regard to the projects and future they most want.

Much of Morocco's development success depends upon dispersing skills to create and assist inclusive community planning meetings as well as implementing

the projects designed by the people, who are the project beneficiaries and managers. The Municipal Charter—directing the administrative tier closest to the people—establishes an avenue for the success of participatory development. People-driven projects instituted in the charter are necessary for the sustainable development and actualisation of other frameworks that compose the Moroccan model. Without local representatives understanding how to implement people's participation in development and without local people being aware of this vital right, plans are typically drafted in a top-down manner with unrealistic levels of uniformity. It has come to the point that the statutory requirement to create community plans through genuine participatory processes now often appears merely rhetorical. Skills-building workshops on facilitating local consensus as well as gender- and youth-based dialogue to understand the different needs among different demographic groups are critical if these dimensions of the Municipal Charter are to be effectively delivered.

The author of this article met municipal council members who cited their charter's statutes but stated that they had not received instructions on how to procedurally accomplish development plans generated from the grassroots. It would be helpful if actual participatory planning methods were included at the annex of the published charter that all council members receive at the approximately 1,500 municipalities. Considering the lack of guidelines on how municipalities should proceed, it is not a surprise that governors of various provinces face the implausible situation of receiving identical development plans from more than a dozen municipal councils. The plans contain the same projects defined by hundreds of villages at the same precise level of priority, having been copied from one another. Effectively training council members and others in real community settings could be the primary remedy against the loss of opportunity and could result in plans for projects that accurately reflect people's ideas.

To Morocco's lasting credit, key laws, policies and programmes already exist, like the constitution to promote development projects that reflect locally shared priorities and have democratic decision-making and governing arrangements. The lack of rural development is predominantly due to the poor implementation of existing frameworks, the continued pervasive poverty and widespread gender bias, not to lack of opportunities.

THE NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The second framework, the National Initiative for Human Development (NIHD), is a national fund for infrastructure projects, capacity-building, social and cultural revitalisation and job-generating activities on the sub-national level. Its budget through 2023 was approved in September 2018 at \$1.9 billion. (“King Mohammed VI Launches Third Phase of the National Initiative for Human Development”, *The North Africa Post*, 20 September 2018, online at <http://northafricapost.com>) In theory, the NIHD is to help actualise development projects designed under the Municipal Charter. Indeed, the first two frameworks would be successful only if they work in tandem. The NIHD is meant to help fund participatory development plans embodied in the charter and finance the projects that local people express they most need and want to implement, thus ensuring their sustainability. If this were the case and if the NIHD’s budget were doubled through 2023, then Morocco would fulfil its development model and vision, instead of remaining ranked at 123 among nations on the Human Development Index despite enormous expenditures with no dearth of good intentions and efforts. (United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Indices and Indicators, 2018 Statistical Update: Morocco*, 2018, online at <http://hdr.undp.org>) If the Municipal Charter does not result in projects properly defined over the course of community-wide meetings, which is unfortunately often the case due to inadequate participatory training and finance, then it may be expected that the NIHD will not have adequate local projects to fund and aggregate results will fall short of national goals, as is currently happening.

Other practical NIHD reforms are also needed to increase its development impact. First, the provincial administrations of NIHD should accept development proposals all year round. As of now, the shifting periods during the year when they receive proposals means that opportunities open and close and most local associations and cooperatives remain unaware of them. Second, the NIHD should be maximally flexible to fund the range of projects communities determine to be most important to them, whether in healthcare, education, construction, etc. The NIHD’s criteria regarding project types they consider supporting often change, while rural community priorities remain consistent. Third, the NIHD should double the funding ceiling for local projects to \$60,000 and reduce the requirement that recipients contribute towards finances requested to 10 per cent from the current 30 per cent. The requirement to co-invest is understandable as it seeks to encourage buy-ins and a deeper level of commitment from beneficiaries. However, the 30 per cent level has become a prohibitive barrier for many people to access the programme. In-kind giving on the part of community applicants,

such as labour and land, should be acceptable by the NIHD in place of financial contributions. Further, there also appears to be a gap of many months between beneficiaries making financial contributions and the NIHD finally disbursing the total grant. In Morocco, it is customary for financial transactions related to goods and services to be immediate upon delivery, just as people's needs are immediate. The NIHD ought not to be an exception to this norm.

Finally and most critically, the NIHD should co-create project proposals among its staff with prospective local beneficiaries. The illiteracy rate in rural areas is nearly double that in urban centres at over 40 per cent and rural women's illiteracy is close to double that of men.

(Amjad Hemidach, "Illiteracy Rate in Morocco Decreases to 32 per cent", *Morocco World News*, 15 October 2015, online at <https://www.morocoworldnews.com>)

Drafting required project proposals and documents is almost impossible for people and communities that could most utilise the NIHD. *Credit Agricole*, Morocco's leading bank that finances professionals in agriculture and the agri-food sector and the United States Agency for International Development in northern Iraq are starting to gain experience in co-creating project proposals with community representatives and beneficiaries and it would be useful if the NIHD adopted this approach.

Incorporating these measures and aligning the NIHD and the Municipal Charter regarding participatory planning and development should result in a sharp rise in the implementation of new local development projects consistent with the requirements of sustainability.

The NIHD should double the funding ceiling for local projects to \$60,000 and reduce the requirement that recipients contribute towards finances requested to 10 per cent from the current 30 per cent. The requirement to co-invest is understandable as it seeks to encourage buy-ins and a deeper level of commitment from beneficiaries. However, the 30 per cent level has become a prohibitive barrier for many people to access the programme.

MOROCCAN DECENTRALISATION

The "roadmap" of decentralisation—derived from a series of public statements of the King of Morocco since 2008—aims to utilise ongoing

national level engagement (devolution) along with sub-national partnerships (de-concentration), to help implement community projects (delegation). (King Mohammed VI, “Speech on the Ninth Anniversary of Throne Day”, 30 July 2008; “Speech on the Fifty-Fifth Anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People”, 20 August 2008; “Speech on the Opening of Parliament Fall Session”, 10 October 2008; “Speech on the Occasion of the Thirty-Third Anniversary of the Green March”, 6 November 2008; “Speech on the Tenth Anniversary of Throne Day”, 30 July 2009; “Speech on the Fifty-Sixth Anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People”, 20 August 2009; “Speech on Occasion of Thirty-Fourth Anniversary of the Green March”, 6 November 2009 and “The King Addresses a Speech to the Nation”, 3 January 2010, *Maghreb Arab Press*, online at <http://www.mapnews.ma>) The Moroccan pathway aims to rally national resources and partnerships for local development. In principle, this is good for sustainability. However, appropriate and lasting construction of decentralised systems must occur in tandem with the implementation of community planning, projects and partnership-building between the public, private and civil sectors. (David C Korten and Rudi Klauss (Eds), *People Centred Development: Contributions towards Theory and Planning Frameworks*, West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1984, pp189–94) These relationships and joint development actions are what decentralised systems are actually made of, requiring sustained community initiatives on a widespread basis. Therefore, without the Municipal Charter and the NIHD working together, adequate decentralised arrangements of public administrations will neither be effective nor enduring.

Morocco’s decentralisation has been referred to as “regionalisation”, meaning that its emphasis is on the devolution of power to the twelve regions. (Sophie Pignon and Stéphane Braconnier, “Regionalisation in Morocco: Progress to be Consolidated”, *Bird and Bird*, February 2017, <https://www.twobirds.com>) Nevertheless, regional public administrative centres in Morocco remain too distant from the dispersed communities under their jurisdiction. This causes considerable delays in basic authorisations needed to carry development initiatives forward. Even provincialisation, which is the breakdown of regions into their constituent provinces, imposes unnecessary limitations on initiatives for sustainable change and growth. Overall, decentralisation has not significantly taken hold in the country, which further suppresses new local development. The national government still decides the parameters, terms, cases and situations for sub-regional actions—too few national administrators are committed to decentralisation measures. During the fall of 2018, the King of Morocco had tasked the government to submit a draft Decentralisation Charter, which has now been developed and ideally affects national and regional government agencies to specific functions for the administration of human services. (“King Mohammed VI Urges Action to Address Morocco’s Social Problems”, *Reuters*, 30 July 2018, online at <https://www.reuters.com>) The human development of the nation and the relationships between public, civil and private institutions depend upon the creation of a meaningful

charter. Its conception and implementation will also determine the extent to which Morocco can inspire its neighbours to adopt a hopeful, modern and yet historic approach to empowering people. However without mentioning the municipal level, the charter will likely fall short of enabling decentralisation to fulfil its development promise for Moroccan local communities.

Here again, informational workshop sessions on decentralised organisation and its bottom-up formation are necessary with national, regional and local leaders. Conducting studies to show the parallels and convergence between localised control over social affairs and Islamic religious concepts would also be helpful. For some leaders, this could heighten decentralisation's appeal by placing it in this cultural-traditional context, where it could be naturally integrated. For example, some writers on Islamic political philosophy describe the notions of *shura*, *ummah*, *baya* and *tawhidi* as involving dimensions of local governance, social justice, leadership and personal empowerment. (Abdul Said, Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Meena Sharify-Funk (Eds), *Contemporary Islam: Dynamic, not Static*, London: Routledge, 2006, pp159–62) **By developing understanding on how Islamic precepts relate to characteristics of participatory decentralisation, supportive coalitions could be expanded by highlighting shared frames of references for furthering sustainable development.**

There are concerns that the process of decentralisation for development may lead to destabilising political outcomes. (Horst Friedrich Rolly, *Participatory Planning of Sustainable Development Projects*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001, p56) With regards to Morocco, the emphasis on participatory approaches by local communities to create projects relates to livelihoods and immediate human needs. Over 25 years of working in community development in Morocco, having directly or indirectly helped bring about local meetings and projects in all 12 regions, the author has not found any reason for concern about political risk for the nation. Communities are focused on meeting their needs, creating and furthering their associations and cooperatives towards their respective goals and addressing stifling difficulties

of progress. There has certainly been ample opportunity to alleviate the needless poverty and there still is, if only Moroccan leadership were to fulfil the model of decentralised participatory development to which it is committed. However, the deference to Rabat of human services departments remains as strong as ever. What compels regional directors of public agencies that oversee different human service deliveries over vast areas to still refer to central administrations for approval of modest initiatives and partnership agreements? Is it that they actually do not have the authority even when the public perception is that they do or is it that the pattern of centralised decision-making is so deeply entrenched, that regional managers do not use the power granted to them? It is likely a combination of these factors that keeps decentralisation an intention rather than a reality.

Executing decentralisation, particularly at this pace, involves a delicate balancing act. The local level is stratified socioeconomically, environmentally and in regards to gender just as it is on the societal level and globally. (John Brohman, *Popular Development: Rethinking the Theory and Practice of Development*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, p235) Advancing decentralisation quickly may be fraught with unhelpful consequences, such as further entrenching the locally affluent and political classes. (Patrick Heller, "Moving the State: The Politics of Democratic Decentralisation in Kerala, South Africa and Porto Alegre", *Politics and Society*, vol29, no1, 2000, p139) However, genuine implementation of frameworks one and two could create the initial participatory and sustainability conditions enabling Morocco to eventually opt for an emerging form of communalisation or decentralised development management at the municipal level. For this to unfold, local communities and their associations require practice in managing projects that incorporate multi-sectoral partnerships through various phases and to directly experience their development benefits.

A critical lesson that public administrators and observers alike have learnt in the ten years since Morocco first announced its intention to decentralise is that it is exceedingly difficult to completely decentralise the centralised government system without a third-party facilitator to forge the productive linkages between the administrative tiers and diverse sectors of society. The necessary arbitrator should have discretionary ability to influence the access to and allocation of financial resources to achieve a municipal and regional balance of developmental opportunities. To be realistic, if Moroccan decentralisation is to reach its full measure, the following need to transpire—His Majesty the King will have to perform an arbitrating role to build decentralisation and the Ministry of Environment that already plays a coordinating role among the ministries

will have to become the main driver of decentralisation or a new Ministry of Decentralisation will have to be established operating at all administrative tiers, furthering sub-national linkages among all sectors and their integration with the national level. The challenge is too big and the implications too important for anything less than a major nationwide commitment.

MOROCCAN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The fourth framework, constituted by Morocco's agricultural development programmes, including the Green Morocco Plan to promote product cultivation, processing and commercialising, has not made a sufficient difference for the majority of farming families that cultivate five hectares or less of land and experience intractable poverty. (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests, *Green Morocco*, 2008, online at <http://www.agriculture.gov.ma>) The social unrest in northern Morocco is a direct reflection of the ongoing rural poverty and a fallout in the application of the country's agricultural, human development and participatory frameworks. Rural poverty—despite immense local and national potential—is the “Achilles’ heel” of Morocco's stability and ultimately national prosperity. Local people are deeply frustrated with the anaemic progress made over the past three decades in implementing rural development projects—a period that saw rural poverty increase in the 1990s (Hernan Levy, *Rural Roads and Poverty Alleviation in Morocco*, World Bank, 2005, online at <http://web.worldbank.org>) and which is currently three times higher than urban poverty. (Hafez Ghanem, *Agriculture and Rural Development for Inclusive Growth and Food Security in Morocco*, Brookings, 25 February 2015, online at <https://www.brookings.edu>) Even with viable projects aplenty, donors and financiers complain of a lack of attractive business and development proposals. How can that be when, for example, farming communities know the exact irrigation infrastructure needed to uplift all village households? Local people

Local crop varieties are encouraged in Morocco's “Green” plan for agriculture. Endangered traditional crops offer a genetic resource for small farmers as they enhance food security in the face of water scarcity and climate change. However, agrobiodiversity remains seriously undermined by a few high-yielding varieties that cause genetic erosion.

consistently prioritise this, yet even when local beneficiaries are gladly willing to contribute their labour in-kind, there has been no construction. Irrigation infrastructure projects are prohibitively expensive, especially in mountainous areas and yet hardly any other project will improve agricultural production, food security and income.

Rural development conditions are extremely problematic. There has been a decrease in the number of fruit tree varieties of apple, carob, clementine, date, fig, grape, pear and others endemic to the northern region as well as in other botanical species elsewhere in Morocco. Local crop varieties are encouraged in Morocco's "Green" plan for agriculture. Endangered traditional crops offer a genetic resource for small farmers as they enhance food security in the face of water scarcity and climate change. However, agro-biodiversity remains seriously undermined by a few high-yielding varieties that cause genetic erosion. In addition, government programmes currently deem crops for export of greater national importance. (Abderrahim Ouarghidi, "Conserving Traditional Crop Diversity and Wild Medicinal Plants in Morocco", *International Policy Digest*, 21 May 2018, online at <https://intpolicydigest.org>) This is occurring in Morocco at a time when billions of trees and plants are needed. Farming families are compelled by the market and population to transition away from traditional staples of barley and corn. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, while these are grown on 70 per cent of agricultural land, they account for only 10–15 per cent of agricultural revenue. (King Mohammed VI, "Speech on the Occasion of the Thirty-Third Anniversary of the Green March", *ibid*) Government tree nurseries have been closing over the years when they should be at maximum production capacity based on the enormous public demand for trees. One simple policy shift would make a profound difference to tens of thousands of farming families—fig and potentially walnut trees (depending on water availability) should be allowed to be planted at high elevations on public domain lands, just as carob is allowed on public domain lands in lower areas.

Rural communities that according to the Ministry of Agriculture, derive 80 per cent of their income from agriculture, consistently prioritise and request irrigation and water containment infrastructure but almost to no avail. The many challenges related to quality standards and quantity processing and sales in wider markets of agricultural products are difficult to overcome. Cooperatives that are vehicles for collective, private and market-based actions exist, though only a fortunate few are able to attain market-success. (Megan Perry, "Moroccan Agriculture: Facing the Challenges of a Divided System", *Sustainable Food Trust*, 10 April 2015, online at <https://sustainablefoodtrust>.

org) Typically, these rare cases are the ones that have benefited from outside development capacity-building assistance in the early stages. Mountain erosion is rampant, even to the extent of causing relocation of homes and even entire villages. New mountain terraces for the cultivation of endemic and resilient fruit-bearing trees with efficient irrigation systems would help secure local livelihoods and natural environments for decades to come.

One of the stark consequences of rural poverty is the sharp school dropout rate among rural girls, particularly between primary and secondary schools, which is three times higher than in cities and 15 per cent higher than among rural boys. (*Morocco: Children deprived of an Education*, Humanium, 26 June 2017, online at <https://www.humanium.org>) In addition to gender role expectations, other contributing factors are insufficient dormitories, affordable transportation and school decentralisation. (Amy Auletto, "Gender Inequality in Moroccan Secondary Education: A Mixed Methods Case Study", *Reconsidering Development*, vol5, no1, 2017, online at <https://pubs.lib.umn.edu>) Many rural families have to choose between sending girls to fetch drinking water miles away and sending them to school. Making safe drinking water available has a bigger effect on the education of girls than on boys. (Shahidur Khandkur, Victor Lavy and Deon Filmer, *Schooling and Cognitive Achievements of Children in Morocco: Can the Government Improve Outcome*, World Bank Discussion Papers, 1994, <http://documents.worldbank.org>)

Agricultural programmes understandably put pressure on the entire upstream value chain from nurseries to markets of raw and processed products. Enormous value is lost by Moroccan farming families due to tree and seed dependency, irrigation inefficiency limiting the size of arable lands, ineffectual or nonexistent cooperatives and as a result of selling raw products through traditional local market channels. These adverse conditions characterise the experience of the vast majority, devoid of the production capacity, partnerships and means to add value and reach a consistent standard and quantity of product necessary to enter more rewarding markets. It has been estimated that the stifling barriers

One of the stark consequences of rural poverty is the sharp school dropout rate among rural girls, particularly between primary and secondary schools, which is three times higher than in cities and 15 per cent higher than among rural boys. Many rural families have to choose between sending girls to fetch drinking water miles away and sending them to school. Making safe drinking water available has a bigger effect on the education of girls than on boys.

ensure that up to five times the average household income is lost as against if a viable cultivation production and management system were in place. Rural people's potential savings, income and revenue for reinvestment—their basis for growth—improve livelihoods elsewhere while they themselves reap no benefit. Agricultural finance programmes have to choose where they can catalyse the greatest possible development with their limited resources. In this regard, priority solutions pertaining to irrigation are widely shared—water canals, basins, towers, pipes, pumps, infrastructure—all of which can conserve water by 50 per cent or more and create the opportunity to expand agricultural cultivation. Meeting the equally widespread need for clean drinking water could be integrated into the technical masterplan. Only 60 per cent of rural Moroccans have access to clean drinking water. Although this has increased from 14 per cent in 1995, access to house connections and good water sources has improved only slightly. (Yassine Benargane, "Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation: The Gap between Urban and Rural Sanitation in Morocco", *Yabiladi*, August 2017, online at <https://en.yabiladi.com>) Clean drinking water projects remain a top priority for rural communities. Too often there is a disconnect, as in this case, between the national human development figures that show marked improvements and the reality of rural communities that have been left behind.

The official response to the recommendation regarding irrigation is that there are already government programmes to subsidise some of these activities for farmers, for example, pressure drip systems. However, the programmes need to be brought to the farmers where they are and the needed partnerships and local institutional growth furthered by facilitating farmers' strategic planning, outreach and experiential learning. Programmes should fund nurseries on public land lent to community associations to reduce risk and cost to farmers, as the Moroccan High Commission of Waters and Forests, public schools, universities and others have done with the High Atlas Foundation, a US–Morocco non-profit organisation headed by the author. Cooperative capacity-building must be carried out in management and technical areas; organic, food safety and other certifications facilitated and revolving lines of credit extended for cooperatives to acquire certified equipment for food processing and sale. The results of these combined actions, as has been observed in rural Morocco, will be a surge in cultivation and market ready production, along with improved local organisation, reinvestment in human development and decentralised partnerships.

How can this be achieved? The first framework on the charter, forming community development plans driven by the intended beneficiaries, women

and men of all ages, is also key for sustainable agricultural project identification and implementation. Facilitation of project development is helpful and needed. In this regard, establishing centres of participatory planning to assist with dialogue and meeting space and coordination will be vital. Provincial governors and other leaders understand the important contribution such centres can make and are open to assigning underutilised public or civilian building infrastructure for this participatory development purpose. The 300 or so agricultural extension centres and the 54 training schools in Morocco under the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forest, should establish endemic and organic fruit trees and medicinal plants nurseries that are also technical skills transference sites for the surrounding areas. Their students and staff should become the future trainers to facilitate participatory planning and development projects with local communities.

Only 60 per cent of rural Moroccans have access to clean drinking water. Although this has increased from 14 per cent in 1995, access to house connections and good water sources has improved only slightly. There is a disconnect between the national human development figures that show marked improvements and the reality of rural communities that have been left behind.

MOUDAWANA AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The fifth framework, *Moudawana*—Morocco's family code—represents a major opportunity for the equality and prosperity of women. As is the case for the other frameworks relative to opportunity, the ground-level application of *Moudawana's* articles—a rights-based approach to sustainable development—have not broadly translated into positive change for the vast majority of rural women. In an action research study conducted by the High Atlas Foundation, 94 per cent of 194 participating women in the rural Al Haouz province said that they had never heard of *Moudawana*. The purpose of the study was to assist the High Atlas Foundation in the conduct of workshops that involve recognising and exercising rights, growing capacities for participatory cooperative development and building the knowledge and skills of citizens as part of empowerment

processes. The lead researcher, Gal Kramarski in an upcoming essay (*Rights, Capabilities and a Sense of Capacity: Rural Moroccan Women's Experience*, unpublished, 2018) states, "All groups mentioned illiteracy as a core obstacle that holds them back from knowing their rights". The distances between communities and their closest middle and high schools create practical infrastructural and cultural barriers for participation in education by rural girls. Without cell phone coverage and independence, one person expressed the sentiment that "No one cares about us, we are neglected here. How could we know our rights"? As Kramarski (*ibid*) observes, "Many women indicated that they are dependent on their relatives and their lack of financial and social freedom prevents their access to rights".

Observations from the aforementioned study and the ongoing empowerment programme it has launched, point to a multidimensional process to advance the status and opportunities of Moroccan women. First, ten urban women from universities in Marrakesh also took part in the above study and all were aware of Moudawana as an issue of political and civil struggle. This awareness presents an opportunity to strengthen the capacities of both rural and university educated women by facilitating women's workshops to teach integrated self-discovery/Moudawana/cooperative development programmes. Second, to expand empowerment experiences and development, it would be helpful to have the theoretical and methodological perspectives of Western and Islamic forms of feminism analysed together to uncover similarities and differences. Their integration could lead to new approaches and outcomes toward a more holistic and spiritually grounded liberation, potentially benefiting both societies and civilisations.

Third, self-discovery and confidence building strategies must also achieve greater financial independence for women through cooperatives, further human development, management and technical capacities and social networks. Just as participatory planning needs to result in measurable improvements in people's lives to be successful, so too should women's empowerment processes result in sustainable development. As a case in point, a 2018 report (Gal Kramarski, "Could Rights based Development Encourage Rural Moroccan Women's Capacity Building", *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 24 September 2018, <http://www.fletcherforum.org>) indicates that initial self-discovery workshops utilising participatory democratic procedures helped identify economic solutions for development. A group of 35 Moroccan women in the Marrakesh region addressed illiteracy by hiring a female university student and started a literacy programme in their village. Sixty-five per cent of participants have joined parent associations and are actively involved in efforts to improve local schools

for their children's benefit. Finally, education alone is not enough to increase women's employment, as evidenced by the fact that in Morocco women already comprise 47 per cent of the population holding a tertiary degree of some kind and yet the vast majority remain marginalised from the workforce. (World Bank, *World Development Indicators Database: Ratio of Female to Male Tertiary Enrolment*, 2010, online at <https://data.worldbank.org>) Education programmes must be combined with empowerment workshops to give women the confidence they need to overcome patriarchal/matriarchal notions that prevent them from entering the workforce.

YOUTH, ACTIVISM AND DEVELOPMENT

The sixth framework—the advancement of youth enterprises and their civil and political participation in decision-making—also enshrines both opportunities and challenges. There are many avenues to engage the youth in community-based volunteerism and internship experiences for human development. It comes down to investment quantity, the will of leadership and implementation management. University based action research and service learning, youth centres and schools demonstrate daily how they can be catalysts for people's projects and social change, while providing students with formative skills. However, a lack of funding makes it hard to maintain these programmes, which form the basis of the strategy to redress the 40 per cent urban youth unemployment and further social development. ("Morocco Poverty Rate", *The Borgen Project*, 22 September 201, online at <https://borgenproject.org>) In the long term, these programmes pay for themselves, especially when considering the hope and sense of purpose the experiences give young people and the development that results in their respective communities.

Capacity building programmes for groups of young people should couple two streams of mutually reinforcing actions. First, an application of participatory methods among youth training participants so that they introspect, plan and

A group of 35 Moroccan women in the Marrakesh region addressed illiteracy by hiring a female university student and started a literacy programme in their village. Sixty-five per cent of participants have joined parent associations and are actively involved in efforts to improve local schools for their children's benefit.

act to achieve self-defined goals while simultaneously learning the participatory approach. Second, as they learn planning methods from self use, students apply the techniques in neighbouring communities to affect change beyond their own schools, centres or neighbourhoods. In this way, student and community projects are identified and implemented whereas skills in participatory planning and project management are built among the youth participants. Learning by doing is cost effective but requires management and integrated programmes involving participant reflection, writing, collaborative learning and critical thinking. Currently, the US government's Millennium Challenge Corporation Partnership with Morocco calls for project proposals that do just this—applied learning for middle and high schoolers that involves investment in necessary infrastructure to meet essential personal and educational needs and prepares students for future vocations in sustainable economic sectors.

To get a sense of project costs, \$200,000 would go a long way towards creating one average sized rural middle or high school of 300–400 students, the transformative infrastructure, curriculum and activities for their education and communities. An initiative funded at this level would include nurseries for endemic fruit and forestry and wild medicinal plants for schools and farming families. Integrating applied learning development projects into environmental, economic and cultural lessons would help shape lifelong outlooks and abilities to achieve sustainable growth. Incorporating information technology into lessons would build understanding about natural resource management and spatial and social mapping and analysis by students. In Morocco there is the critical need for infrastructure, such as classrooms, libraries, water systems and bathrooms, as well as educational resources and materials to support the curriculum. This cost however does not include dormitories, which are vital for girls' participation beyond secondary school.

CONCLUSION: MOROCCO SETTING THE TABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

The Moroccan frameworks for development enumerate what is needed to catalyse sustainable development of marginalised areas and groups. They underscore participatory approaches for defining the most important initiatives. They encourage decentralisation to enable local communities and civilian and public agencies to make decisions and allocate resources for locally

needed projects. The frameworks target women, the rural poor and the youth in recognition of their disadvantaged situations and their potential roles as key drivers of sustainable change. Each framework's individual domain and as a whole is comprehensive and lays down the needed pathways for the people of Morocco to build the future they wish, while providing a course and means to help achieve their human development goals. The Municipal Charter could provide the plans for project development and sustainability that the National Initiative for Human Development may then help accomplish. Decentralised arrangements are subsequently built in the process of community project implementation that involves multisectoral partnerships.

Moroccan agriculture, with its income-generating and environmental enhancing potential should be the engine for self-reliant financing of local projects. Agriculture development schemes must be identified and determined as part of the process of implementing the mandates of the Municipal Charter. The Moudawana embodies a rights based approach and recognises the centrality of sustainable development reflecting human rights. Thus, it not only secures and protects the just and rightful status of women and girls but also charts a course towards autonomy with regard to economic decision-making and empowerment. For the youth, there are national platforms to promote experiential learning, the creation of capacity building community projects and the acquisition of employable skills.

It is not the inadequacy of the principles and guidelines of frameworks that account for the hardships that afflict the Moroccan people, especially those in rural areas. It is their insufficient or faulty implementation stemming from a considerable lack of popular understanding and skills needed to translate them into reality. Key to achieving the Moroccan development model is the transfer of knowledge about how to hold community meetings where members of a community come to agreement on the projects they need. How can people's participation be supported? How can women's empowerment in the context of the Moudawana framework be organised to increase human development? The answers to these questions lie within the frameworks themselves. However, one must learn and apply the lessons from practice and feedback. Often, all that is needed is to give men and women of all ages the chance to come together through community workshops. If successful, these frameworks could ultimately enable them to implement projects that they and their families have desired for long. ❧