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CIVIL SOCIETY INTERMEDIARY SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

While numerous, Moroccan civil society organizations lack the ability to enact systemic change and play the role of broker between citizens and government actors. At the same time, the legal and fiscal environment continues to create significant challenges for civil society.

USAID RESPONSE

In support of the Government of Morocco's efforts to increase civic participation, USAID is providing direct grants to five civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their capacities and become intermediary support organizations (ISOs) that help develop the skills of their entire network and effectively engage with the government on behalf of citizens. The five selected ISOs are long-standing local organizations that are embedded in their communities and work to advocate for citizens' priorities and interests.

Through direct grants, USAID supports the ISOs in promoting locally driven development by:

- **STRENGTHENING ISO INTERNAL CAPACITIES**, organizational and technical practices, subject-matter expertise, and overall skills to become the “go-to” center for other CSOs.
- **BUILDING CORE SKILLS OF PARTNER CSOs** to more effectively influence public policy making and implementation.
- **DEVELOPING NETWORKS** among other CSOs to collectively engage in the public policy process, conduct advocacy work, and enforce accountability of decision-makers in addition to defending a more permissive legal environment for CSOs in Morocco.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Other donors, including the European Union and DFID, are looking at executing complementary capacity-building initiatives for CSOs in Morocco using USAID's model. ISOs are now better positioned to request grant funding from other donors.
- Through USAID's capacity building, ISOs are more able to strengthen other CSOs and advocate for the civil society sector. So far, all five ISOs have improved their internal organizational capacities and have trained more than 200 partner CSOs.
- As a result of a well-organized advocacy campaign with USAID support, ISOs contributed to important civil society-related pieces of legislation, including a law on public fundraising and draft laws on volunteerism and public consultation.
- ISOs influenced the 2019, 2020, and 2021 budget laws, which included an unprecedented provision for private businesses to donate up to 0.2 percent of their annual profit to CSOs, a tax exemption for disability non-governmental organizations on all imported equipment for people with disabilities, and a 36-month income tax exemption for all newly recruited CSO employees below 35 years of age.
- The ISOs are continuing to advocate for the adoption of more empowering legal provisions and a more beneficial tax treatment for CSOs in Morocco.

FACTS & FIGURES

ISO GRANTEES:

- Citizen Alternatives Movement in Fez
- White Dove Association for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Tetouan
- Forum Ezzahra for Moroccan Women in Rabat
- Ennakhil Association in Marrakech
- Moroccan Association of Solidarity and Development in Rabat

REGIONS OF FOCUS:

Tangier-Tetouan, Oriental-Al Hoceima, Casablanca-Settat, Rabat-Sale-Kenitra, Marrakech-Safi, and Fez-Meknes

BUDGET: \$3,029,131

DURATION: 2016-2021

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