



## The right tools for regionalization

Conference paper by Ahmed Chehbouni

Morocco is going through a democratic transition characterized by two main points: the new constitution and the advanced regionalization. In the new constitution, civil society is cited in various articles as a strong independent actor, which would be involved in local and national decision-making. The advanced regionalization will empower the regions by giving them authority over major local decisions, which contrasts with the previous centralized model where regional decisions came only from the capital.

In addition, the number of NGOs in Morocco has heavily increased during these past 15 years (official statistics say 116,000 NGOs nowadays), but civil society actions are still limited by two main problems:

1. Low performance due to a lack of skills and tools: in project development, management, assessment and diagnosis practices
2. Weak coordination within NGOs and with other actors and stakeholders in the same area

Considering this new context and the NGOs' strong willingness to contribute to the development of their territory, the CDRT members believe that the implementation of a civil society strengthening program would reinforce these initiatives by improving the yield of NGO actions and making them ready to be involved in local public policies evaluation and accountability processes.

The advanced regionalization is a huge improvement for local development and governance, but it cannot succeed if there are no enabled human resources to lead the regionalization movement (elected representatives and civil society members).

A non-exhaustive list of topics of the program is: organizational development and management, project design and management, grant application writing, fundraising, evaluation, human rights chart, citizenship, advocacy, territorial diagnosis, gender approach, communication and conflict management.

The basics of efficient international and regional cooperation between states and non-state/non-government actors, municipalities and city councils is to build development projects together which integrate council members and NGO leaders in close collaboration and with support of international cooperation.

These projects must be evaluated periodically to know to what extent capacity-building efforts have been successful. How will this bear on operational sustainability after the project ends? What are implementing partners' plans after the project concludes, particularly vis-à-vis the promotion of the development of their territory and what are the main lessons learned/findings to date (positive and negative) that should be transferred to future cooperation programs between international and regional partners?

This conference matters to me, because it would benefit my organization by providing the right tools for domestic and international decentralisation processes and is a good opportunity to develop and train all stakeholders on decentralisation good practices (NGO leaders, Council members, local government officers etc.), thereby defining the needs of civil society actors.

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