



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



CLOSING MOROCCO'S GENDER GAP

Women remain underrepresented in elected office, leave school at younger ages than male students, and continue to be untapped drivers and leaders of economic growth in Morocco.

Morocco has made significant advancements in women's rights, including the reform of the family code, Moudawana, in 2004 and several legal provisions and government initiatives to increase women's political and economic participation. However, out of 156 countries, the country still only ranked 144th overall in the World Economic Forum's 2021 Global Gender Gap Report and 148th in the subindex on Economic Participation and Opportunity.

Women make up a mere 23 percent of the Moroccan labor market, a stark contrast to the average of 47 percent of women participating in the workforce worldwide, according to a 2019 World Bank report. This alarming gender gap represents a notable lack of socio-economic inclusion and voice for Moroccan girls and women. Additionally, women remain underrepresented in elected office, leave school at younger ages than male classmates, and are untapped drivers for economic growth in Morocco. This situation underscores the need for continued effort and partnership to achieve greater political and economic participation among women.

USAID RESPONSE

USAID addresses gender as a cross-cutting theme, focusing on women's political and socio-economic inclusion. Nearly every USAID/Morocco activity addresses gender, and most include significant gender components. As a best practice, gender considerations play an important role in selecting

implementing partners, hiring staff, selecting project beneficiaries, and monitoring and evaluation activities. Training opportunities are designed for gender parity and are organized at convenient times and locations to maximize the participation and voice of female participants. In addition, USAID actively promotes female participants as role models through social media, videos, and success stories that include women in non-traditional roles. USAID programs also advance women's socioeconomic and political empowerment through tailored capacity-building approaches, advocacy- and awareness-raising actions with public authorities, and leadership-promotion initiatives.

PROGRAMS AND RESULTS

USAID's **Inclusive Socio Economic Development** program in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region (ISED-BMK) promotes regional development based on the inclusion and active participation of women, youth, and people with special needs. ISED-BMK developed a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) plan that identifies approaches and activities that will contribute to more inclusive, sustainable growth in the BMK region while reducing gender disparities in terms of income, skills, employment, and levels of participation in governance. Based on this plan, the program has been implementing interventions that enhance women's business activity through targeted technical assistance to aspiring women entrepreneurs (including women cooperatives and micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises). This helps improve their access to markets and funding and enhances business development skills, especially in the agriculture, agribusiness and tourism sectors. In addition, the program has been supporting a number of locally elected institutions to develop inclusive Communal Action Plans that effectively integrate women's needs, including through training in gender budgeting, development of gender-sensitive indicators, and working with elected officials on practical ways to encourage more robust participation of women. Finally, ISED-BMK supports targeted advocacy actions by local women CSOs that promote enhanced access to public funding and training opportunities for women-owned cooperatives, especially in rural and marginalized areas.

The **Cooperative Financing Program (CFP)** provides working capital grants of approximately \$10,200 to 960 vulnerable cooperatives addressing growth needs and mitigating the negative impact of COVID-19 while boosting the local economy. Within its eligibility criteria, CFP prioritizes women's cooperatives or ones whose members are predominantly women, with a target of at least 60 percent of participating cooperatives being women-led. CFP also works closely with organizations to empower women and people with special needs to mobilize cooperatives within their network and provide them with the support necessary to apply for the program.

USAID's **Favorable Opportunities to Reinforce the Self Advancement of Today's Youth (FORSATY)** program, which provides positive opportunities for extremely vulnerable youth in the north of Morocco, treats gender and the inclusion of girls and women as a cross-cutting priority. In this highly-conservative region, traditional norms often deny women the ability to be autonomous, educated, and active participants in public life. FORSATY partners with local community actors to tackle deep-rooted gender issues to encourage greater female participation in school, the workforce, and extracurricular activities. One example of progress can be seen in a gender-focused grassroots activity targeting excluded youths aged 18 and older with a mix of sports, cultural activities, and personal development interventions. In fiscal year 2021, the proportion of female participation in this activity increased by 10 percentage points over the previous year, reaching an overall 40 percent of participants, compared to only 2 percent in 2016.

Gender is a key component of USAID's **Community Oriented Policing Activity (COPA)**. In 2021, women comprised 54 percent of the total beneficiaries of COPA activities. Women leaders

from partner associations and neighborhood core team groups made up 71 percent of participants in the COPA skills development training.

USAID's **National Program for Reading** integrates gender as it applies to teaching practices in the classroom and addresses gender stereotypes from learning materials and teachers' guidelines. USAID promotes equitable learning outcomes and supports reducing high-dropout rates among girls and boys. Teachers are trained to use interactive teaching and learning approaches and understand and address students' gender-specific needs in their classrooms.

Additionally, USAID supports building the Ministry of Education's (MOE) capacity by developing evidence-based curriculum review and techniques based on international standards for teaching and learning. The material developed promotes gender equity and the inclusion of marginalized populations. To this end, in support of equitable deaf education practices, the USAID Morocco **Inclusive Education Teacher Training activity** is working closely with MOE to address differential male/female vulnerabilities and needs by exploring the differences in education practices and achievement for girls versus boys. This program will conduct a gender-based gap analysis of barriers to education for deaf students.

The **Higher Education Partnership-Morocco activity (HEP-M)** supports the work of the Higher Education Ministry's Research and Development Groups (RDGs) for system capacity building in gender equity and inclusive systems. The project ensures a wider representation of gender equity in the RDGs and advises the project stakeholders on best practices in implementing gender in faculty development, staff recruitment, and teacher training modules across Moroccan universities and teacher training centers nationwide.

The **Inclusive Civic Education program (ICE)**, implemented through three direct grants to Moroccan civil society organizations, is partnering with Moroccan civil society organizations to promote citizen participation and engagement in civic life, particularly by focusing on women, youth, and people with special needs. ICE is working with sub-national elected councils, along with local NGOs, students, and educational institutions, to instill a gender-balanced and inclusive approach to sensitize partners and stakeholders to the benefits of reducing gender inequality, empowering women, preventing and combating gender-based violence, and involving men and boys to foster social behavior changes.

The **H2O Maghreb activity** implements cutting-edge solutions to address urgent water needs in Morocco and the region while improving the skills and employability of young Moroccans. The activity has successfully attracted female trainees to the water and wastewater sectors, which have traditionally been male-dominated. While the program initially targeted 50 percent female participation, female trainees ended up representing between 68 and 88 percent of students in four training cohorts from 2019 through 2021. Likewise, the female employment rate has also exceeded initial expectations, achieving 79, 21, and 61 percent employment, respectively, for the three cohorts that finished training. To better understand of female participation in this sector, the activity will conduct a gender study in FY 2022 that will identify and analyze the current and emerging trends that affect women's professional opportunities in the water sector in Morocco.

The **Academy for Safe Truck Driving (ACCES) activity** provides specialized training in the safe driving of buses and trucks. The training program has successfully attracted high rates of female participants despite its focus on the male-dominated transportation sector. So far, 132 young female students have benefited from the program's soft-skills training. Twenty-one female professionals have benefited from the training-of-trainers program, and one female student completed truck driving

training. The project will continue to promote female participation using communications materials featuring female trainees and role models.

USAID's **Interactive Digital Center (IDC) activity** is a public-private partnership designed to train the new generation of experts in the emerging field of augmented and virtual reality (AVR) and provide technology-forward solutions for various vocational skills and professions, education providers, and industrial companies. The activity has reached 38 percent female participation in all categories of the Center's augmented and virtual reality training, exceeding the initially predicted 20 percent overall female participation. This success is due to the project team's efforts to promote this training program among young females using social media and peer recommendations.

Under its **COVID-19 rapid response** program, USAID provided additional funding to the Ennakhil Association (a local partner association in Marrakech) to respond to the spike in gender-based violence (GBV) in the Marrakech-Safi region. With these additional funds, an online platform was created in 2021 that allows GBV victims who are unable to seek in-person help at listening centers to virtually access legal services and psychological counseling. Additionally, USAID strengthened the socio-economic empowerment of GBV survivors through a solidarity restaurant that the Association established and launched in July 2021. The restaurant offers a six-month training in catering services and a tailored soft-skills and coaching program. The first cohort of 21 at-risk women started training in 2021, and 48 more women are expected to participate in 2022. USAID also supported Ennakhil's efforts to enhance the inclusion of marginalized women in local public policies through targeted advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives with local authorities.