

**KINGDOM OF MOROCCO**

**Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training,  
Social Development and Solidarity**

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME  
(UNDP)**

# **URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN MOROCCO**

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# **Urban Poverty Alleviation in Morocco**

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## URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN MOROCCO

### 1. Context of human settlements since Habitat II

The evolution of human settlements in Morocco since the 1996 Habitat II Conference and the adoption of the Habitat Agenda came in a political context marked by the advent of the “Gouvernement d’alternance”. Since 1998, this government has set social development as one of its priority areas of action due to the stark economic and social deficit in urban areas and the increasing level of poverty.

At the institutional level, the departments concerned with human settlements and territory (Ministry of Territory Development, Urban Planning, Housing and Environment) have been clustered, thus enhancing the coherence of actions in line with the will to set up economic zones better integrated within their regional contexts, devolve better targeted and concerted roles on local actors, and devise a new approach to the urban improvement issues, especially in the area of housing.

This new phase was marked by a number of main orientations, namely :

- Promotion of the Region as a new space of economic and social integration ;
- Formulation of the project on reforming the Municipal Charter, a project aimed at fostering decentralisation and the transfer of resources to local communities ;
- Elaboration of the Devolution Charter, aimed at devolving the Administration’s operating capacities on decentralised services ;
- Organisation of a National Debate on territory development through a consultative process conducive to the adoption of the National Charter on Territory Development ;
- Elaboration of the draft law on urban planning aimed at upgrading human settlements ;
- Strengthening of programmes on the reduction of slums, the restructuring of informal housing, and the promotion of low cost housing.

These orientations fall under the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and the application of its objectives, its principles and recommendations. They reflect the commitment of the Kingdom of Morocco to promote human settlements based on equity, social development and poverty alleviation.

This phase was also marked by the consolidation of associative work. The consultative role played by associations, coupled with their participation in social activities, was indeed a fruit of the democratisation efforts exerted by the State.

### 2. Pilot experience of social development and poverty alleviation

At the local level, and in the context of furthering a sustainable development of human settlements, the Pilot Programme on Poverty Alleviation in Urban and Semi-Urban areas (1998-2001), a joint initiative of the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Social Development and Solidarity, and UNDP, with the technical assistance from UNCHS (Habitat), implemented in three cities (Casablanca, Marrakech and Tangier), has tested on validated new approaches to social development, based on partnership among local communities, government departments, civil society

and the private sector. The objective of the Programme is to strengthen the capacities of local actors in the formulation and implementation of integrated action plans to alleviate poverty in urban and semi-urban areas.

In addition to the fund-raising efforts made for the benefit of disadvantaged populations, which constitutes one of the challenges of the Programme, this collective experience, conducted in urban areas, has provided an opportunity to test new practices based on :

- The development of multiform partnerships with all local actors ;
- The establishment of dialogue and consultation forums among the different actors in each municipality ;
- The strengthening of the capacities of local associations and the promotion of proximity actions;
- The formulation and implementation of participatory operational projects which, given their visibility and impact, can serve as replicable practices.

### 3. Institutional context and partnership-building

One of the main indicators of performance lies in the adoption of a partnership-based approach that brings together the local actors (disadvantaged populations, associations, elected representatives, government departments) within a well-planned framework. From project identification to actual implementation, this approach proceeds according to a methodology of close consultation for local development and poverty alleviation purposes. Extending on different scales (neighborhood, municipality, urban centre), it concerns the following actors :

- The beneficiary populations, who, thanks to the proximity actions and concomitant participatory approaches, have made it possible to take into account their priority needs, thus guaranteeing tangible results for the projects implemented ;
- The associations, a key component of the local partnership fostered and a main link with the disadvantaged populations, have set social development and poverty alleviation as one of their mobilising themes. In a political context favourable to the emergence of civil society, their proximity action imparts to their work – so far founded on charity – a dimension of social integration ;
- The elected representatives, being concerned about the problems of local development and poverty alleviation (inadequate basic services, precarious housing, under-employment and delinquency), are gradually acquiring, within the new forms of dialogue and consultation, the urban management skills relevant to their mandate ;
- The government departments, despite persistent obstacles to effective devolution, have taken initiatives and demonstrated a real know-how in building partnerships and implementing projects. Their action aims at opening more to local actors and even play the role of facilitator.
- Other indicators of the existence of an approach favourable to exchange and partnership lie in the strengthening of ties with local communities as direct partners, and the involvement of sponsors in new areas of intervention (Telefonica Foundation for the new information and communication technologies).

#### Intervention of the different partners

Partners	Programme	UNDP	UNCHS	Government departments	Municipalities	Associations	Telefonica Foundation
Contribution							
Financial							
Technical							
Political							
Administrative							
Mobilisation							

#### 4. Fund-raising

The formulation and implementation of integrated priority actions plan revolves around three areas : (i) increasing income ; (ii) improving access to housing and basic services ; (iii) protecting vulnerable groups and promoting social integration.

At the financial level, the Programme acts like a flexible counter that caters and support to project development. Its main function lies, however, in serving as seed fund and project development supporter through the mobilisation of sponsors. for project, generally implemented by associations. Over 50% of the Programme's financial resources are allocated, through this counter, to the operational actions which benefit directly to the targeted populations.

To ensure ownership by local partners, the Programme provides projects funding, representing up to 25% of the total project budget. By associating partners in project development, validation and actual formulation, this pilot approach allows all parties to work within a framework of a contractual partnership. Similarly, it responds to the requirements of local development as it ensures the credibility of the Programme's pioneering framework amongst the local actors and target populations, in addition to its compliance with the new forms of local management.

#### **Partners' financial contribution according to intervention axes** (in millions of Moroccan dirhams)

	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Local partners</b>	<b>Telefonica Foundation</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Area 1</b> Increasing income	3,617	17,152	1,438	<b>22,207</b>
<b>Area 2</b> Improving access to housing and basic services	2,375	31,601		<b>33,976</b>
<b>Area 3</b> Protecting vulnerable groups and promoting social integration	3,232	15,137	0,329	<b>18,698</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,224</b>	<b>63,890</b>	<b>1,767</b>	<b>74,881</b>
<b>Total in %</b>	<b>12.32%</b>	<b>85.32%</b>	<b>2.36%</b>	<b>100%</b>

US\$1= 11 dirhams (DH)

#### 5. Results and local impact

One of the major results of the Programme lies in the creation of an intervention framework which has enabled local actors to take concerted decisions. This practice was conducive to the emergence of a new local culture favouring partnerships, operational project development and support to poverty alleviation projects. Local capacities were thus strengthened at two levels :

- Creation of dialogue and consultation forums through the Municipal steering committees in charge of project formulation and follow-up, a prefiguration of municipal councils more concerned with urban management and social development. Such a framework has been completed by the establishment of a body of municipal coordinators for the three sites, mandated to foster local development actions. Their mission will continue beyond the Programme's timeframe. Finally, the training of elected representatives according to thematic modules developed by UNCHS came to complete this initiation to good local governance.

- The strengthening of associations' capacities through the provision of training in project development and management in order to convey a professional character to their framework of intervention. Such practice has rallied associations around joint proximity actions for the benefit of disadvantaged groups, and facilitated their recognition as city development actors.

At the operational level, the mobilisation of different partners around poverty alleviation projects has made it possible to launch an approach of economic, social and spatial integration aimed at improving the living conditions of disadvantaged populations. This integrative thrust served, *inter alia*, as a rallying cry for women. Being often heads of household and specific beneficiaries of the proximity actions due to the adverse social environment, women cluster around sustainable income-generating activities (micro-enterprises, cooperatives, etc.) through the projects geared towards them – functional literacy, professional training, mother-child integration actions.

At the level of social integration, the following results are worth noting :

- Involvement of all strata of disadvantaged populations, reflecting a gender balance in project participation, in addition to implementing integrated projects for the benefit of children (literacy, training, delinquency prevention), the handicapped (job-qualifying training) and the elderly;
- Complementarity between the different projects (areas of intervention, representativity of actors, gender approach, child component, etc.), based on local environment requirements. Spin-off effects of the projects (job-qualifying work, openings in the labour market, and improvement of basic social services) and sustainability (capacity building and involvement of other partners in projects) are also promoted.

## 6. Follow-up and perspectives

One of the achievements and factors of sustainability of this pilot experience is the broadening of the partnership-based approach and forging of an instrumental framework for local development. Among the noteworthy sustainability factors, there are:

- The recent creation of the Social Development Agency by the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Social Development and Solidarity as an institutional financial counter that provides assistance to projects and local partnerships. This entity is expected to build on the Programme's achievements and assets in order to initiate and support, on nation-wide level, actions and projects aimed at enhancing the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations.
- The preservation and strengthening of dialogue and consultation frameworks within municipalities as vectors of mobilisation and local development, in addition to capacity building of associations.
- The launching of the local development programme in titled "Clean Cities in Morocco : Local Agendas 21 for the Promotion of Environment and sustainable Development in Urban Areas", by the Ministry of Territory Development, Urban Planning, Housing and Environment, in partnership with UNDP and on the basis of operational instruments tested by the Pilot Programme.

With respect to strengthening of local animation, participatory processes and fund-raising activities, the factors of sustainability relate to :

- The incorporation of poverty alleviation as an integral component of the intervention area of the municipality with a view to integrating it within the municipal budget.
- The ability of many associations to deal with more sophisticated financial counters as well as national and international sponsors.
- The mobilisation of funds from national and international institutions operating in the social field and concerned with the promotion of local partnerships.
- The implementation of a project for the benefit of Tetouan city within the framework of Cities' Alliance, a support programme designed to assist cities and reinforce their intervention strategies – programme jointly implemented by the World Bank and UNCHS.

## 7. Main lessons

In a context of political change and opening to social development, a major issue is how to ensure the sustainability of the tested instruments developed by a pilot programme on poverty alleviation. It is imperative that a good local development practice be sustained beyond the UN intervention (UNDP and UNCHS) whose role consists, first and foremost, in the promotion of innovative approaches within the framework of national priority programmes. The first results show that the forging of local partnerships, a practice which moves away from centralised decision-making processes, impacts on local development through the creation of synergies and the promotion of collective participation for the benefit of disadvantaged groups. The sustained diversification of these partnerships reflects a will to hasten the spread of these local governance practices nation-wide.

These results also illustrate the transition from the stage of local type limited experiences to that of regional or national scale experiences involving other partners, such as the private sector. In a context of urban crisis, with urban poverty as one of the most conspicuous manifestations, the preservation of achievements and the transition to broader and more lasting interventions require, indeed, the reinforcement of institutional and financial instruments, and their ownership with local development actors serving as links for the extension and replication of the experience.

### **Pilot Programme on Alleviation Poverty in Urban and Semi-Urban Areas**

**Duration**

January 1998 – September 2001

**Beneficiaries**

- illiterate population
- unemployed
- women heads of household
- street children
- young delinquents
- handicapped

**Intervention areas**

- Increasing income
- Improving access to housing and basic services
- Protecting vulnerable groups and promoting social integration

**Frameworks for dialogue and consultation**

- Orientation and follow-up committees  
coordination : Prefecture
- Municipality steering committees  
coordination : Municipality



**Capacity-building**

- Training elected representatives (UNCHS thematic modules)
- Training associations (project formulation and management)

**Programme's total budget : US\$ 2,160,000**

- Government contribution : US\$ 1 million
- UNDP contribution : US\$ 1 million
- Telefonica Foundation : US\$ 160,000

**Projects implemented in the three sites (April 2001)**

- 75 (seventy-five)

**Total amount invested**

- US\$ 6,800,000

**Programme's contribution**

- US\$ 838,000

**Pilot sites**

• <b>Marrakech</b>	• <b>Casablanca – Ben M'sick</b>	• <b>Tangier</b>
660,000 inhabitants	220,000 inhabitants	560,000 inhabitants
5 municipalities	1 municipality	3 municipalities
<b>34 projects</b>	<b>20 projects</b>	<b>21 projects</b>

**Jbel Guéliz Integrated Project**

<b>City</b>	Marrakech
<b>Municipality</b>	Ménara-Guéliz
<b>Leading institution</b>	Marrakech 21 Foundation
<b>Duration</b>	12 months
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	1,465 households – 7,325 inhabitants
<b>Context</b>	<p>Douar Boulaghraib and the bordering douars are among the most poverty-afflicted areas in the Ménara-Guéliz commune.</p> <p>Characteristics :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High density due to rural migration ;</li> <li>• Sky-rocketing unemployment rate and low income ;</li> <li>• Predominant precarious housing and high rate of promiscuity;</li> <li>• Lack of basic services.</li> </ul>

<b>Main components</b>	<p>The overall objective lies in the improvement of social, economic, sanitary and environmental conditions for the benefit of inhabitants of Boulaghraib, Akiod and Koudia douars.</p> <p>Specific goals :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop basic training and promote the social integration of disadvantaged households ;</li> <li>• Promote vocational training and increase the income of most disadvantaged households ;</li> <li>• Improve the douars' sanitation and environment conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liquid waste disposal for 1,465 households ;</li> <li>• Creation of parks and planting of 15,000 trees ;</li> <li>• 1,500 new literates, 75% of whom are women (National Assistance, Youth and Sports, Association) ;</li> <li>• Vocational training and setting up of cooperatives (manufacturing and carpentry) ;</li> <li>• Awareness-raising and prevention for women, children and youth (legal issues, hygiene, education) ;</li> <li>• Collective work and frontage repairs (of houses and public facilities).</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot Programme on Poverty Alleviation (PPPA)</li> <li>• Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS)</li> <li>• National Shelter Upgrading Agency (ANHI)</li> <li>• Ménara-Guéliz Municipality (MGM)</li> </ul>

**Partners' contribution**

Partne		nt		s)
Associ		ent		
PPPA		coo		
MYS				
ANHI				
MGM				
Popula				
<b>Total</b>		)*		
IUS\$ :	n cc			

