



MOROCCO

LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS

Gender equality laws in Morocco are part of a broader effort to achieve justice and equality in society. These laws aim to protect women's rights and enhance their participation in all areas of public and private life. Here is a detailed overview of the key laws and legislations that promote gender equality in Morocco:

1. MOROCCAN CONSTITUTION (2011)

- **Equality and Parity:** Article 19 of the Moroccan Constitution states that "men and women shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms of a civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental nature." The same article also calls for the establishment of the "Authority for Parity and the Fight against All Forms of Discrimination" to promote gender equality
- **Fundamental Rights:** the Moroccan Constitution guarantees equality in rights and duties between genders in several articles, particularly Article 6 and Article 164, emphasizing the need to protect women's human rights.

2. FAMILY CODE (2004)

- **Women's Rights in Marriage and Divorce:** the code introduced significant changes to women's rights concerning marriage, divorce, and custody. It raised the legal age of marriage to 18 for both boys and girls and granted women more rights regarding divorce (especially consensual divorce) and custody
- **Equality in Family Responsibility:** the code states that marriage is a "contract of mutual consent and enduring partnership between a man and a woman," emphasizing the principle of cooperation and equality in bearing family responsibilities.

3. LAW No. 103.13 ON COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (2018)

- **Definition of Violence Against Women:** the Law 103.13 is one of the most important laws protecting women from all forms of violence (psychological, physical, sexual, and economic). It includes specific definitions of violence and recognizes multiple forms of abuse
- **Protection Measures and Penalties:** the law provides mechanisms to protect women, including restraining orders and severe penalties for perpetrators of violence. It imposes financial and imprisonment penalties on those proven to have committed violence against women, emphasizing the protection of women in both public and private spheres.

4. LABOR CODE (2004)

- **Equality in Employment Opportunities:** the Moroccan Labour Code prohibits discrimination based on gender in employment and working conditions and strictly forbids any discrimination that could lead to differentiation between men and women in the workplace
- **Protection of Working Women:** the code guarantees the rights of working women, including maternity leave and protection from unfair dismissal due to pregnancy or childbirth. It prohibits employing women in hazardous jobs.

5. ELECTORAL LAWS

- **Quota System:** the "quota" system has been adopted to enhance women's representation in parliament and local councils. This system allocates a specific percentage of seats for women, leading to a noticeable increase in the number of women elected to various councils
- **Women's Representation in Elected Institutions:** the electoral system aims to ensure female presence in representative institutions by allocating part of the electoral lists to women to ensure their participation in political life.

6. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- **Action Plan:** the Moroccan government has developed several national strategies aimed at promoting gender equality in various fields, including education, health, labour market, and politics
- **Implementation Mechanisms:** these strategies involve cooperation between various ministries, government institutions, and non-governmental organizations to implement programs aimed at improving women's status in society.

CONCLUSION

These laws and legislations represent a significant legal framework for protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality in Morocco. Still, despite the progress made, challenges related to the full and effective implementation of these laws remain, necessitating continued efforts by the state and civil society to achieve the desired goals.

EDUCATION

Efforts to educate the Moroccan community about sexual and reproductive health are multifaceted and aim to improve public awareness on issues related to sexual health, family planning, reproductive rights, and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. These educational efforts involve activities managed by the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and educational institutions.

GOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

- Health Awareness Programs: the Moroccan Ministry of Health plays a significant role in disseminating information about sexual and reproductive health through national programs targeting all societal groups. These programs include media campaigns, distribution of brochures, and workshops aimed at educating the public on topics such as family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, maternal and child health
- Health Services: primary healthcare centers provide services related to sexual and reproductive health, such as contraceptive provision, regular screenings for sexually transmitted infections, and counseling on safe pregnancy and childbirth.

SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMS

- Sex Education: although comprehensive sex education is not fully integrated into the official curricula, some efforts are made to incorporate basic sexual health information into school health programs. This includes providing information on puberty, personal hygiene, and the fundamentals of healthy relationships
- Educational Activities: schools organize educational activities in collaboration with health institutions and NGOs to raise awareness among students about sexual and reproductive health, focusing on preventing sexually transmitted diseases and avoiding unwanted pregnancies.

NGOS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Moroccan Family Planning Association (AMPF): this prominent NGO works in the field of sexual and reproductive health education, offering various services including counseling, contraceptive distribution, and workshops on reproductive health rights
- International Organizations: organizations like the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) collaborate with the Moroccan government and civil society to enhance awareness of sexual and reproductive health through training programs and workshops targeting youth and vulnerable groups.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- Workshops and Community Initiatives: civil society organizations in Morocco organize workshops and community initiatives aimed at raising awareness about sexual and reproductive health issues. These workshops target young people, women in rural areas, and families needing information on family planning and maternal health
- Media Awareness: media plays a crucial role in disseminating information about sexual and reproductive health through radio, television programs and newspaper articles aimed at breaking cultural barriers and increasing public awareness.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COLLABORATIONS

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Joint Projects: in cooperation with international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNFPA, the Moroccan government implements programs aimed at improving sexual and reproductive health by enhancing institutional capacities and providing resources for comprehensive services in this field
- Funding and Support: these organizations also provide funding and training necessary to support local efforts in health education and increase access to sexual and reproductive health services.

RESEARCH AND STUDIES

- Field Studies: numerous field studies on sexual and reproductive health in Morocco have been conducted to identify needs and develop strategies to address existing challenges, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

EXISTING CHALLENGES

Despite the efforts, significant challenges remain in spreading education about sexual and reproductive health in Morocco, including:

- Cultural and Religious Barriers: topics related to sexual health are considered sensitive in Moroccan society, making difficult to discuss them openly or to include them in educational curricula
- Access Disparities: there is a consistent disparity in access to information and services between urban and rural areas, with remote regions suffering from a lack of health and educational services related to sexual and reproductive health
- Funding and Resources: efforts in this field require greater funding and additional resources to ensure their sustainability and comprehensiveness.

CONCLUSION

In Morocco, ongoing efforts to educate the community about sexual and reproductive health are led by the government in collaboration with NGOs and the international community. Despite cultural and logistical challenges, these efforts continue to make gradual progress in raising awareness and providing essential health services to citizens.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society in Morocco plays a crucial role in empowering women and promoting gender equality. This, through a variety of activities and initiatives aimed at improving the status of women in Moroccan society. Here is a detailed overview of the civil society actors in women's empowerment in Morocco:

1. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

- Moroccan Family Planning Association (AMPF): this prominent organization works to enhance women's rights by providing comprehensive services related to sexual and reproductive health, offering counseling and guidance in family planning. The association conducts awareness programs to increase understanding of reproductive health and women's rights
- Association of Women Entrepreneurs: this association supports women working in the private sector by providing training and advice to support them in developing their skills and succeeding in business.

HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATIONS

- Association for the Defense of Human Rights: this organization works to protect women's rights and to promote gender equality by providing legal support, monitoring legal cases related to violence against women, and raising awareness about women's rights
- Women's Initiatives Association: the association aims to promote women's rights through programs that include legal awareness, support for victims of violence, and encouragement of women's political participation.

2. COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

- Workshops and Seminars: civil society organizations organize workshops and seminars to educate women about their legal and social rights and inform them how to access available resources and services
- Vocational Training: some associations provide vocational and technical skills training for women, especially in rural areas, to enable them to integrate into the labor market and improve their economic conditions.

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

- Support Centers: some organizations offer support centers that provide counseling and psychological services to women who have experienced violence or face social challenges, helping them recover and regain their ability to interact with society
- Mentorship Programs: these programs offer personal and professional guidance to women and girls, helping them in achieving their career and personal life goals.

3. LEGAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

ADVOCACY AND POLICIES

- Advocacy for Rights: organizations advocate for women's rights by lobbying policymakers to amend laws and promote policies that support gender equality
- Reporting: these organizations prepare periodic reports and reviews on the status of women in Morocco and present them to government bodies and international organizations, guiding policies, and programs to improve women's conditions.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Encouraging Political Participation: some associations support women in gaining political representation through training programs that prepare them to participate in elections and local councils, helping them in developing their political leadership skills.

4. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Partnerships with International Organizations: civil society organizations collaborate with international bodies like the United Nations and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to implement projects and initiatives aimed at promoting women's rights. These projects include training, funding, and technical support
- Joint Projects: various associations participate in joint projects with international institutions to improve women's conditions in various fields such as education, health, and economic development.

5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES

- Limited Funding: some NGOs face challenges related to the lack of funding, which affects their ability to implement large-scale and long-term projects
- Cultural Barriers: some initiatives may struggle to overcome cultural and social barriers that hinder achieving gender equality
- Coordination Among Organizations: there is a need to improve coordination among different NGOs to avoid duplication, energies' dispersion and to enhance effectiveness.

OPPORTUNITIES

- International Attention: in the last few years it is increased the international interest in women's rights issues, and this fact has provided greater opportunities for collaboration and funding
- Technological Innovation: in the last few years, the use of technology in the awareness raising actions and in trainings, has enhanced the access to a larger audience of women.

CONCLUSION

Civil society in Morocco plays a significant role in empowering women through a variety of activities and initiatives. Through women's associations, awareness programs, social support, legal advocacy, and international cooperation, civil society organizations contribute to promoting women's rights and achieving gender equality. However, consistent challenges remain, and they need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of these efforts and to expand their impact.

RELIGION

Religious institutions in Morocco play a significant role in empowering women through various activities and initiatives, balancing the preservation of religious values with the promotion of women's rights. Here's an overview of how these institutions contribute to women's empowerment:

1. LOCAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCILS

ROLE OF FATWAS AND RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE

- Issuing Fatwas: local scientific councils issue religious rulings (fatwas) on women's issues, such as rights in marriage, divorce, and inheritance. These rulings help to clarify and to interpret the rights Islam grants to women
- Guidance on Equality: these councils can provide religious guidance that supports gender equality by interpreting religious texts in ways that enhance women's rights and empowerment.

ORGANIZING SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

- Awareness Seminars: these councils organize seminars and workshops aimed at increasing women's awareness of their religious and social rights. These events feature religious and academic figures who offer advice and guidance to strengthen women's roles in society.

2. SUFI ORDERS

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Religious Education: some Sufi orders educate women on religious values and principles that support their empowerment, teaching Islamic values related to equality and human rights
- Educational Programs: Sufi orders organize educational programs and workshops to enhance women's skills in social and economic fields.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- Social Initiatives: Sufi orders participate in organizing social initiatives aimed at improving women's conditions, such as creating small projects and funding community initiatives targeting women in rural areas.

3. RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

QURANIC SCHOOLS

- Education and Awareness: Quranic schools provide religious education for women and girls, focusing on Islamic values that support equality and justice. They teach women religious foundations and equip them with knowledge to enhance their roles in family and society

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTES

- Islamic Studies Programs: some universities and institutes offer programs in Islamic studies that address women's issues from a religious perspective, supporting their empowerment through education and knowledge
- Academic Research: Universities and institutes encourage researches on women's roles in Islamic society, contributing to a balanced religious understanding of women's issues.

4. RELIGIOUS REFORMS

COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

- Legal Reforms: religious institutions have collaborated with the government in drafting laws and reforms to enhance women's rights. Notable reforms include the Family Code, which has undergone amendments to improve women's status in Morocco.

MODERNIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Contemporary Religious Interpretations: some religious institutions strive to provide contemporary interpretations of religious texts that align with principles of equality and social justice, addressing issues like domestic violence, inheritance, and women's political representation.

5. WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

WOMEN'S ROLE IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

- Female Participation: despite challenges, some women participate in religious institutions through religious interpretation and education, enhancing awareness of women's issues from a religious perspective
- Female Religious Leadership: efforts are underway to encourage women to take on greater roles in religious leadership, empowering them to contribute to the development of religious policies related to women.

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN THE RELIGIOUS FIELD

- Training and Qualification: some religious institutions offer training programs for women who wish to work in the religious field, helping them develop their skills and enhance their leadership abilities.

6. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES

- Traditional Interpretations: some traditional interpretations may hinder the promotion of women's rights, as older interpretations may not align with modern requirements
- Traditional Society: religious institutions face challenges related to traditional society, which may be resistant to changes supporting women's empowerment.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Collaboration with Civil Society: collaboration between religious institutions and NGOs can enhance gender equality through joint initiatives aimed at improving women's status
- Social Progress: social progress and changes in laws present opportunities for religious institutions to reconsider their interpretations and promote equality through contemporary religious guidance.

CONCLUSION

Religious institutions in Morocco play a central role in empowering women by providing religious guidance, organizing educational programs, and participating in legal reforms. These institutions strive to balance the preservation of religious values with the promotion of women's rights, focusing on improving women's status in society. Despite challenges, religious institutions offer opportunities to enhance equality through contemporary interpretations and productive collaboration with civil society.

LOCAL AREA BACKGROUND

CHARACTERISTICS OF AREAS WHERE THE RESEARCH TOOK PLACE

DRAA - MOROCCO

- **Location:** located in the southeast of Morocco, the Draa valley stretches along the Draa River
- **Climate:** semi-arid, with hot summers and cool winters. Rain is rare
- **Economy:** based on agriculture especially dates palm trees (irrigated crops like dates and citrus fruits) and tourism (historical sites like kasbahs)
- **Culture, community and traditions:** rich Berber, Arabic and Sub Saharian heritage, with traditional festivals and architecture and folk dances. Communities are often close-knit, with strong traditional values and a sense of hospitality
- **Handicrafts:** traditional crafts, pottery, weaving, and jewelry making, often passed down through generations
- **Access to Education:** in general access to education has improved all over the country, but disparities persist, mainly in rural areas as the Draa where girls may be disadvantaged in accessing educational opportunities
- **Economic Participation:** women engage in agriculture and handicrafts, but their contribution is often undervalued and sometimes unpaid, this is the case also with teenagers
- **Activism and Organization:** local organizations are trying to raise awareness on women's rights, promoting their autonomy and participation in community and political decisions
- **Traditional Gender Roles:** women play a central role in household activities and family management, while men are usually the main providers.

SOUSS - MOROCCO

- **Location:** on the Atlantic coast, between Agadir and Taroudant
- **Climate:** Mediterranean, with mild winters and hot summers. More rain than in Draa
- **Economy:** tourism (beaches and resorts), agriculture (citrus fruits, vegetables), and solidarity economy in the field of traditional agriculture, argan oil and handicrafts
- **Culture:** a mix of Berber and Arab cultures, with strong Amazigh presence in language, music, and folk dances
- **Access to Education:** access to education for girls has improved, but cultural and economic obstacles remain, especially in rural areas
- **Solidarity Networks:** women's associations are forming to promote mutual aid and share resources, strengthening their collective power
- **Gender-Based Violence:** even though laws exist in order to protect women, cases of gender-based violence are still actual and spread, needing more community action
- **Evolution of Gender Roles:** comparing to Draa Women in Souss are starting to take more visible roles in society, especially in education and entrepreneurship.

ATLAS MOUNTAINS - MOROCCO

- **Location:** from southwest to northeast of the country, it acts as a separation between coastal regions and desert areas
- **Altitude:** one of the highest in North Africa is Mount Toubkal (4,167 m)
- **Climate:** it depends on the altitude, but generally cold in winters and mild in summers
- **Culture and beliefs:** occupied by Berber communities, preserving artisanal and cultural traditions and organized in social structures, the tribes maintain their ancient traditions, with deep cultural and religious practices, including Sufism in some communities
- **Handicrafts:** traditional knowledge, like weaving and pottery, is valued
- **Intercommunity Relations:** exchanges between different tribes are common, strengthening a social fabric based on solidarity and resources sharing
- **Migration:** a lot of women migrate to big cities such as Casablanca seeking better educational and professional opportunities, but often face adaptation challenges
- **Access to Education:** in rural areas education in general is still increasing but in some situations it remains hard to access especially for girls, while in urban areas, girls usually have better access to education, although social and economic barriers still exist
- **Networking:** women organize within networks to share resources and support female entrepreneurship, though this is still limited by cultural norms
- **Women Political Participation:** in these mountain areas the presence of women in political and decision-making spheres is increasing, but more effort is needed to strengthen their representation and to make their voice louder.