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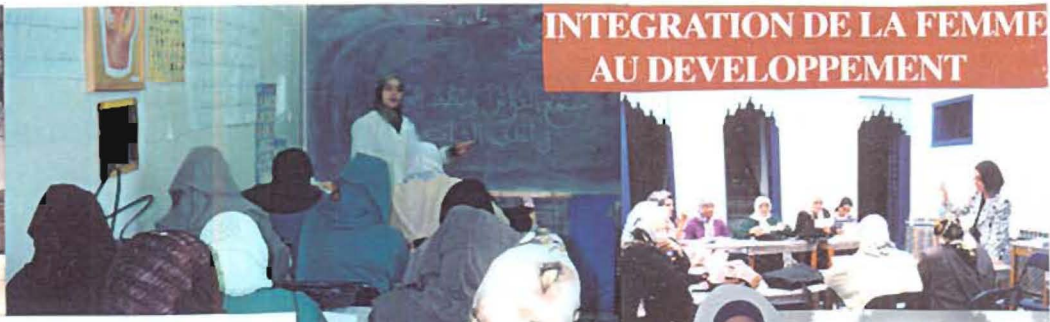
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الرابطة الديمقراطية لحقوق المرأة

*Building Morocco through Literacy –
Women's Participation in Development*

FEMME ACTION



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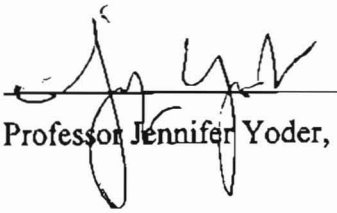
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Elizabeth L. Holmes
International Studies Honors Thesis
Colby College
May, 2004



*Building Morocco through Literacy –
Women's Participation in Development*

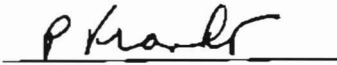
Elizabeth L. Holmes has completed the requirements for Honors in International Studies



Professor Jennifer Yoder, Director of International Studies



Professor Suellen Diaconoff, Thesis Advisor



Professor Patrice Franko, Thesis Reader

Department of International Studies
Colby College
Waterville, Maine
May 2004

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For Andy – *I know you're watching*

Abstract

This thesis examines what factors are important for successful literacy provision in the case of urban Moroccan women. Literacy programs should teach participants not only to decipher symbols on paper, but should provide information relevant to the everyday context of learners' lives. As a result, newly literate individuals should perceive changes in their levels of self-esteem, empowerment, economic status, and health conditions. In Morocco, the government launched a large-scale literacy campaign in May 2003 to lower illiteracy, which currently affects about half of the population. In conjunction with this campaign, the Moroccan government is increasingly cooperating with NGOs, the principal providers of women's literacy training. This cooperation, however, is hampering the independence and ability of women's literacy programs to provide prolonged literacy training. Although, the evidence from this study indicates that urban Moroccan women are not affected by changes in their health or economic status by achieving literacy, they feel strong impacts on their self-esteem and empowerment. The factors most important to assuring successful literacy provision were strong leadership and invested human resources, learner's participation, and the government's mobilization and awareness efforts.

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Introduction

The cost of large-scale illiteracy to society as a whole is the individual tragedy of unrealized potential in personal growth, self-sufficiency, and economic achievement magnified a million times.¹

In Morocco, the consequences of widespread illiteracy are magnified 12 million times, affecting nearly one half of the country's population. On an individual level, this number signifies that 12 million Moroccans are not capable of engaging in everyday activities such as conducting telephone calls, identifying street names, understanding labels of medications, performing basic calculations in the market, and traveling independently. Literacy, on the other hand, provides opportunities for personal and economic advancement and full participation in society. Therefore illiteracy is often tied to the most marginalized and poorest groups of society, who have been denied such opportunities. In Morocco, an Arab-Berber kingdom marked by gender segregation and stark contrasts between lifestyles in highly populated urban centers and the vast countryside, rural women are most affected by illiteracy, leaving their potential for personal growth, self-sufficiency, and economic achievement unrealized.

On a national level, large-scale illiteracy forms a serious obstacle to economic development, social equality, and democratic institutions. For Morocco, located on the

¹ Manzoor Ahmed, "Literacy in a Larger Context" in *World Literacy in the Year 2000*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner and Laurel D. Puchner (Newbury Park: Sage, 1991) 33.

northwestern most tip of Africa, separated from the European continent by a mere 15 kilometers of sea passage, improving the skill level of its labor force will be necessary to withstand the increasing competition facing the kingdom due to free trade agreements with both the European Union and the United States of America. In light of the strong correlation between education and productivity, finding effective strategies to provide more Moroccans with the ability to read and write is essential to the country's economic development process. In fact, King Mohammed VI himself highlighted the importance of individual literacy to the country's progress, stating that a more literate person "will be an active component in the task of development and in economic competitiveness, and will show himself as a complete citizen in the richness of citizenship to create an environment for a modern and democratic society."²

Such advancement, however, will hardly be possible if half the Moroccan population – women and girls – continue to be marginalized and excluded from knowledge and decision-making power. Although efforts by both the Moroccan government and NGOs have raised literacy levels throughout the country, illiteracy rates for women in urban and rural areas remain high: at 46 and 83 percent respectively, compared with 34 and 67 percent of the entire urban and rural population.³ Moroccan women's literacy must therefore increase to enable the creation of the developed, economically competitive, modern, and democratic society envisioned by King Mohammed VI. Furthermore, Moroccan author Ghita El Khayat has stated that "le Maghreb se fera avec les femmes, ou ne se fera pas"⁴ (Morocco will be built with

² "A l'occasion du lancement de "Massirat Nour": Intérêt éminent du Souverain pour le développement humain" *LE MATIN* (Rabat: Oct. 14, 2003).

³ "Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update". World Bank, 2001. See bibliography for full citation.

⁴ Ghita El Khayat, *Le Maghreb des Femmes: Les Défis du XXIème Siècle* (Rabat: Marsan, 2001).

women, or it will not be built), implying that women must actively participate in the construction of Morocco's future. However, to attain this goal, the Moroccan government itself must first target women in their literacy programs, providing them with necessary skills to be participants in the future referred to by El Khayat.

After decades of largely ineffective literacy campaigns with less than satisfying results, the Moroccan government launched a major nationwide campaign to fight illiteracy, *Massirat Ennour* (March towards Light), in 2003. In conjunction with the *UN Literacy Decade 2003-2012*, the Moroccan government committed itself to lowering the country's illiteracy rate by 20 percent annually until 2010 and to completely eradicate illiteracy by 2015, through a revised strategy toward widespread literacy, integrated into the country's overall development agenda. In the past, the Moroccan government subscribed to top-down centralized approaches to both design and implementation of development projects, although the bottom-up grassroots-inspired model of popular participation has now become widely accepted with such international development actors as UNESCO and the World Bank. The Moroccan government's new literacy campaign incorporates these concepts, focusing on the relevance of the learners' needs and interests to their education and to the realization of their potential within the country's larger development process. Moreover, the government's literacy campaign specifically targets women with its new design by cooperating more closely with NGOs providing women's literacy programs. The Moroccan government, however, will only reach its goals of economic development and a more modern and democratic state if these revised strategies for literacy training prove to be effective.

The purpose of this study is therefore to evaluate whether the new government campaign complies with the strategies for effective literacy provision determined by experts in both international development and education policy. Furthermore, this paper will examine whether NGOs, the principal providers of women's literacy programs in Morocco, are adhering to the standards for successful literacy provision set out by literacy experts, and to what extent these factors have, or have not, influenced the successfulness of outcomes. The particular focus will hereby be the influence of women's active participation in the government campaign and NGO sponsored literacy programs, examining whether participation is in fact the most important factor contributing to effective literacy provision. In studying the impact that literacy programs have on Moroccan women's lives, illustrated by the case of several NGO-sponsored literacy programs in Rabat and Casablanca, the results were expected to show that an individual's personal commitment and involvement in the literacy program is the decisive factor ensuring successful literacy provision.

Organization

This study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter discusses the fundamental question of defining literacy, considering the significance and disadvantages of several definitions. Explaining the implications of literacy for economic development, health, human rights, empowerment, participation, and democracy, chapter two relates these impacts to the gender issues, development indicators, and literacy. Chapter three considers the impacts of literacy within the Moroccan context, examining both their extent and relationship to Morocco's socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic

characteristics. The fourth chapter discusses strategies used by international development actors and education specialists to provide effective literacy training at both the governmental and the program level and establishes guidelines for successful literacy efforts.

Chapter five utilizes these guidelines to determine whether the Moroccan government's new literacy strategies comply with the recommendations by development and education specialists. Chapter six examines whether the Moroccan NGOs providing women's literacy classes adhere to the established guidelines, and analyzes 1) whether these programs are successful; 2) what effects these classes have on learners' lives; 3) whether women's participation is a significant determinant in the results. In conclusion, the study makes predictions concerning the level of success produced by the government's new campaign and points to policy recommendations to further improve Morocco's literacy provision and enhance women's participation in the country's development process.

Methodology and Limitations

The field research on the Moroccan government's new literacy campaign and women's participation discussed in chapters five and six was conducted over the course of one month during January 2004 in Rabat (and its sister city Salé) and Casablanca. Information was gathered through on-site observation and in-depth interviews with directors of NGO sponsored literacy programs, teachers, government officials, and, to a lesser extent, program participants. In Rabat, *Jossour – Forum des femmes marocaines*, *Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF)*, *Femme Action*, *Ribat Al Fath*, and the *Secrétariat*

d'Etat chargé de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education non formelle (State Secretariat of Literacy and Non Formal Education) were consulted. Through visits to the *Ligue Démocratique pour les Droits de la Femme (LDDF)* and *Solidarité Féminine* in Casablanca, and the *Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de la Jeunesse* (State Secretariat of Youth) in Salé additional data was collected. Furthermore, information gathered through interviews was complemented by written materials provided by the above-mentioned institutions and the Rabat office of the World Bank.

Questionnaires for government officials, program directors, and learners, as shown in Appendix B, were uniform for all interviewees within their respective groups. Teacher input was obtained through informal conversations and by questionnaire in cases where program directors also taught classes. Interviews were conducted in French and were translated from Moroccan Arabic by literacy program directors or teachers when necessary, as generally the case with learner interviews. While this may have caused bias and inaccuracy for the study, such effects can be reduced to discrepancies in exact wording, rather than content. Moreover, the translation efforts between literacy providers and learners often introduced opportunities for dialogue about the program structure and its impacts in participants' lives, a positive side-benefit, given that communication between providers and learners is normally restricted due to differences in personal status or lack of time.

Because research was solely collected in the urban environment of Rabat and Casablanca, where the principal language spoken is Moroccan Arabic, this study cannot draw conclusions about rural Berber populations, whose contexts, needs, and interests are significantly different from their urban counterparts. Although the population most

affected by illiteracy in Morocco is rural women, the decision to focus field research in Rabat and Casablanca was made due to time constraints and logistical difficulties. Nevertheless, the data collected do provide significant insights into the situation of women's literacy in urban Morocco where demands for literacy are high and newly acquired skills of literacy are easily applied to everyday activities, unlike rural situations where written materials can be difficult to find.

The most significant drawback of this project is that only a limited amount of information could be obtained from program participants themselves. The original research design intended that NGO program directors would be questioned, classes would be visited and observed, and learners would be interviewed. However, due to time constraints, logistical scheduling difficulties, and linguistic barriers, program participants could not be interviewed from every literacy NGO visited. Neither could classes be observed at every organization. Thus, the evaluation of several programs remains incomplete and the impact and extent of learner participation could not be established. Nevertheless, the responses received from participants across programs were very uniform and thus appear to supply representative indications of urban Moroccan women's literacy experiences.

Furthermore, little information concerning the success levels of programs could be obtained from literacy NGOs and government officials. Responsible NGO personnel were usually unable to provide exact information on such success determinants as attendance, drop out, and completion rates. Moreover, literacy programs did not usually have set objectives to enroll a specific number of learners or to attain specific completion rates in predetermined timeframes. Therefore, the effectiveness of individual programs

and comparisons between programs on the grounds of attendance, drop out, and completion rates could not be established, leaving questions on the successfulness of programs open.

This study's small scope and short time frame undeniably hinders it from drawing larger conclusions on the new government literacy campaign launched in May 2003 – both concerning its effects on the country's literacy rate and on Morocco's overall development process and resulting socioeconomic impacts. Such outcomes will be seen only in the long run. Nevertheless, this limited project provides an optimistic outlook for Morocco's future –especially for the increasing role of women in its construction. Additionally, this project hopes to inspire further interest in literacy in Morocco, the complexities of which will be unraveled more carefully throughout the succeeding chapters, beginning with the challenge of defining the very term underlying this study – literacy.

1. Conceptualizing Literacy

*Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words and syllables – lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe – but rather an attitude of creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context.*⁵

Before examining the larger implications of literacy and, more specifically, the role of literacy in Morocco's development process and in the lives of female learners, this section will offer a brief exploration of how to define "literacy." In fact, there is no single accepted definition of this concept that can provoke such significant life changes, as will be seen later in this study. The traditional dictionary explanation would simply describe literacy as "the ability to read and write."⁶ However, such a simple definition neither refers to a specific skill level to be attained for a person to be considered "literate," nor does it take the specific context of an individual into consideration. Furthermore, the definition neither indicates what is to be read or written, nor does it explain how "literacy" is achieved.

In counter distinction, Jack Goody states that "literacy is essentially a matter of interaction between internal mental processes and external products in the shape of words

⁵ Robert Mackie, ed. *Literacy and Revolution: The Pedagogy of Paulo Freire* (New York: Continuum, 1981).

⁶ *The American Heritage Dictionary* (New York: Dell, 1994).

(or graphics) on paper.”⁷ Reading and writing therefore involve recognition of symbols and mental identification of their meaning. What an individual reads and writes is moreover inherently tied to a specific language, since each language is represented, and thus read and written differently. In fact, there are three principal alphabetical systems: logographic scripts individual signs bear significance (such as Chinese characters); alphabetic scripts utilize individual phonemes to form words; while the third type of literacy system represents whole syllables as individual phonetic signs.⁸ It is through recognition of the significance of these differing scripts that information is transmitted and knowledge is stored for other literate persons. However, the mere recognition of these signs is still not an adequate indicator of literacy.

In fact, to determine literacy a variety of indicators have been used, such as the ability to sign one’s name, to read and write a short paragraph about one’s daily activities, or to pass a test at a level equivalent to the completion of primary school. The criteria to define literacy thus span a range of levels, starting with the most basic capabilities of reading and writing. However, as UNESCO pointed out in a publication from 1956, “In the opinion of many educationalists, a minimum level of literacy is not enough to enable a person to participate effectively in the collective life of a modern community.”⁹ Thus, although a person may acquire the basic reading and writing skills to be considered literate –to learn to decipher the meaning of certain symbols – these minimal abilities may neither enable him or her to lead life independently, nor to engage effectively in public life. Furthermore, the level of literacy required of each person to go

⁷ Jack Goody, “The Implications of Literacy” in *Literacy – An International Handbook*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner, Richard L. Venezky, and Brian V. Street (Boulder: Westview, 1999) 31.

⁸ Goody 29.

⁹ UNESCO, *World Literacy at Mid-Century* (Paris: UNESCO, 1957) 20.

about his or her daily activities often changes throughout a lifetime. More relative concepts of literacy have therefore been adopted that take into account an individual's literacy skills in conjunction with the needs incurred by his or her specific environment.

The U.S. government, for example, has implemented a definition of literacy that encompasses the skills necessary for an individual's employment, as well as for his personal life and his community. According to the National Institute for Literacy, "The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defines literacy as 'an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.'"¹⁰ This statement transcends the classical view of literacy to include the specific needs and the environment of the individual. Literacy therefore is not only linked to reading and writing skills and the command of a specific language, but also to the successful management of a person's employment and family life, plus relations with the greater community.

The traditional concept of literacy, which involves only learning to read and write, on the other hand, is often seen as hardly useful in situations where the knowledge gained is not pertinent to a learner's situation. As Krystyna Chlebowska of UNESCO illustrates in *Literacy for Rural Women in the Third World*, "Experience shows that the acquisition of literacy in the narrow sense of simply learning to read and write does not mobilize women of the Third World unless it is accompanied by the acquisition of the further basic knowledge and skills genuinely adapted to their daily existence and needs."¹¹ The type of literacy described by Chlebowska, which surpasses minimal reading and writing skills, is referred to as functional literacy. A functionally literate individual describes a person

¹⁰ National Institute for Literacy, "What is literacy" <<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/faqs.html#literacy>>.

¹¹ Krystyna Chlebowska, *Literacy for Rural Women in the Third World* (Paris: UNESCO, 1990) 14.

“who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community development.”¹²

Functional literacy is thus a dynamic concept that relates every person to his own country, culture, and individual context. In addition, functional literacy is tied to a greater objective of furthering personal and collective well-being and highlights literacy’s importance in the development process of a country.

Because functional literacy is relevant to both individual and community development, it is the definition most commonly referenced by global organizations such as the World Bank and UNESCO. Literacy rates, on the other hand, are not determined from the principles of functional literacy. Moreover, the criteria used to determine literacy statistics are not uniform across countries. Literacy rates therefore neither indicate a specific level of reading and writing attained by a country’s population, nor do they imply that literate persons have reached a level of literacy which will enable them to live their daily lives without restrictions while engaging in the advancement of their communities. Although skill levels required to become “literate” vary widely among countries and even among literacy programs, the general acquisition of reading, writing and basic math skills is nevertheless considered to be highly important to individuals, societies, and the global community. This definition thus sets the context for a broader examination of literacy’s impacts on the lives of learners and its role in molding the future of Morocco, where the consequences of widespread illiteracy could be detrimental to the country’s development process, as will be closely examined later on in this study. The next chapter will first provide a brief historical overview of some impacts of literacy

¹² UNESCO, “Records of the General Conference”, *Resolutions Vol 1* (Paris: UNESCO, 1978).

and discuss literacy's relationship to today's challenges of economic development, poverty, health, empowerment, gender equality, human rights, and democracy and political participation, before returning to the specific case of Morocco.

2. The Implications of Literacy

*If you can work the land and work the books, you can never go wrong.*¹³

A Historical Perspective

Learning to read and write is considered the most basic form of education, the starting point for a life-long learning process, and a prerequisite to higher learning. Despite its basic nature, literacy has had a profound impact on societal structure and family life. For example, Jack Goody writes that before the existence of widespread literacy promotion in schools, learning primarily took place within the home or through working. The shift to educational institutions moved large parts of the learning process outside the home and away from the family. Children spent long segments of the day outside the home and, as Goody explains, “their socialization (moral as well as scholastic) was handed over to non-kin.”¹⁴ These tendencies continued in industrialized countries to include most of society’s children in universal education during the 19th century. Thus, although historically located within the family, children’s education in large parts became the responsibility of the modern state, which itself benefited greatly from literacy.

¹³ Fatema Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales from a Harem Girlhood* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 1994) 89.

¹⁴ Goody 30.

Reading and writing enabled the rise of highly structured states and the advancement of knowledge and technology. Goody further states, “writing enhances the means of accumulating information over time and communicating it over space. It provides a storage system that is not dependent upon memory alone.”¹⁵ This storage and transfer allowed literate individuals and communities greater access to information, while increasing their range of activities and knowledge. In fact, Goody also argues, “many of the intellectual achievements of the Greeks, as with other major civilizations, rested on their command of writing,”¹⁶ which enabled more sophisticated research and invention. Furthermore, literacy became a decisive factor in commerce and administration in economic and governmental transactions. For example, official documents of credits and loans, titles to land, treaties, marriage licenses, and testaments could be created. Written laws moreover made official explicit rules of society, the organization of the state, and the rights and obligations of its citizens. Literacy thus provided the means through which modern states and more broadly modern life function. Hence, exclusion from literacy, or illiteracy, can signify denial of opportunities for both the individual and the greater community, which, as will be discussed in detail at a later point in this thesis, is especially true in the case of Moroccan women.

Literacy in Economic Development

In industrialized countries, which have a longer history of universal education, literacy skills are not only expected but assumed, despite the fact that illiteracy exists even in the most developed countries. In less developed countries, however, illiteracy

¹⁵ Goody 31.

¹⁶ Goody 32.

remains a serious concern. Throughout the world one in five adults does not know how to read or write. In addition to the 860 million illiterate adults worldwide, more than 113 million children do not attend school.¹⁷ Thus, adult illiteracy will likely continue to be a problem, as unschooled children grow up to join the ranks of uneducated adults. The inability of such large populations to read and write is cause for concern in itself, indicating exclusion from all types of written information and limited access to knowledge. Consequently, one must examine the broader implications that literacy and illiteracy are associated with to fully comprehend the relevance of learning to read and write for individuals, nations, and the global community.

As stated above, literacy historically enabled the establishment of basic capitalism and thus supported economic activity. Today literacy is still thought to be an important factor for economic development. Whether literacy is a requirement for economic development, or whether increased economic development is a precondition for widespread literacy, remains in dispute. Daniel A. Wagner, Director of the International Literacy Institute, states, “with few exceptions, countries with high economic growth rates are those with a highly educated and literate population. The flaw in such arguments is that we cannot be sure of the direction of the relationship between literacy and economic growth. Is literacy cause or consequence of economic growth, or simply unrelated?”¹⁸ On the other hand, Douglas Windham argues that literacy and economic development work in cooperation in that “literacy skills help determine the rate and form of economic development at the same time that the nature of economic development

¹⁷ Horst Rutsch. “Literacy as Freedom: The United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012)” *UN Chronicle*, No. 2 (2003) 29.

¹⁸ Daniel A. Wagner, *Literacy, Culture, and Development – Becoming Literate in Morocco* (New York: Cambridge University, 1993) 5-6.

creates opportunities for and puts limits on the economic value of literacy skills for the individual and the society.”¹⁹ Thus, the connection between economic prosperity and the acquisition of reading and writing skills is complex and cannot be summarized in simple cause and effect relationship. Nevertheless, international organizations such as the United Nations have defined literacy as a “primary requirement for economic well-being.”²⁰

In theory, increased literacy builds a country’s human capital, and a more educated and skilled population will further the country’s economic status. In Windham’s summary of literacy’s economic benefits, “the most important measurable forms would appear to be the following: employment, earnings, enhanced general productivity, consumption behavior, fiscal capacity (including tax revenues and the demand for social services), and intergenerational effects.”²¹ Literacy thus benefits individuals by increasing opportunities for employment and revenues, likewise benefiting employers, the state, and the larger population. Therefore the regional report on *Literacy and Adult Education in the Arab World* by UNESCO Institute for Education considers literacy to be the “prerequisite to all development programmes.”²² Indeed, the inclusion of literacy training as a principal component of development policy is especially important, according to this report, because illiterate populations are often the most marginalized and impoverished groups of society.

While there is a strong correlation between illiteracy and poverty, illiteracy does not necessarily cause poverty, and being poor, in turn, does not automatically imply that a person is unable to read and write. However, most illiterates are not well off financially

¹⁹ Douglas M. Windham. “Literacy and Economic Development” in *Literacy – An International Handbook*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner, Richard L. Venezky, and Brian V. Street (Boulder: Westview, 1999) 342.

²⁰ Rutsch 29.

²¹ Windham 343-344.

and many poor populations do not have strong reading and writing abilities. As the World Bank states, “literacy and quality education are integral parts of a multi-dimensional concept of poverty.”²³ Instead of attending school, children of poor families might be forced to work from an early age or may not be able to afford school materials. Because the short-term needs of food and shelter are immediate, the poor are less likely to invest valuable time in literacy, which is often perceived to have no immediate tangible results. The opportunity cost of education is too high for those who must spend all their time earning enough to feed themselves and their families. However, despite the constraints of poverty, such disregard for literacy can reinforce cycles of exclusion, and undermine the opportunity for intergenerational economic impact. Windham declares that the intergenerational “effect of literate parents upon the nutritional, health, values, and educational aspirations and achievements of their children produces powerful long-term benefits from the present investment in basic education and literacy.”²⁴ Thus, one such intergenerational impact, which is widely established, includes the positive correlation between literate parents and the nutritional well-being and health of their children, although this ramification was not mentioned by the Moroccan women consulted for this study, as will be seen further on.

Health Impacts

The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning states, “Investment in education is investment in health. Lifelong learning can contribute substantially to the promotion of

²³ UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), *Literacy and Adult Education in the Arab World* (Hamburg: UIE, 2003) 9.

²⁴ World Bank, *Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update*. Report No. 21506-MOR (Rabat: World Bank, 2001) V.

health and the prevention of disease.”²⁵ The link between parental literacy and children’s pre and postnatal health has been established repeatedly and demonstrates a strong relationship. Especially women’s increased knowledge of hygiene, nutrition, and family planning in rural areas has been shown to have strong positive effects on reproductive health, as well as the well-being of women’s families. In *Women and Literacy* Marcela Ballara states, “studies in several developing countries have pointed out that women’s education plays an important role in reducing infant mortality, increasing the life expectancy of future generations, and improving child rearing and development. It also has a positive impact on reducing birth rates, especially when supported by family planning projects.”²⁶ On the other hand, the effects of adult literacy on *adult* health do not show the same uniform results. It should also be pointed out that some of the health benefits mentioned can partially be attributed to the higher economic status of educated individuals. In summary, Susan Jayne finds, “Education does not improve health automatically” and draws the following conclusions regarding the impacts of adult health:

Thus prenatal care, assisted delivery by trained personnel, child immunization, household hygiene, and health seeking behavior are responses that more educated people undertake in response to well-established health information and with increased ability to afford preventative aids such as soap, good water, mosquito nets, and so on, and to gain access to services and to negotiate the relevant bureaucracies. Other responses to health risks are more tentative and depend on information available, environmental risks, and preventative curative technologies, as well as the enjoyment and convenience of shorter breast-feeding, more sexual partners, smoking, and so forth.²⁷

²⁴ Windham 346.

²⁵ UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), *The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* (UIE: Hamburg, 1997).

²⁶ Marcela Ballara, *Women and Literacy* (London and New Jersey: Zed, 1992) 33.

²⁷ Susan Jayne, “The Effects of Education on Health” in *Literacy – An International Handbook*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner, Richard L. Venezky, and Brian V. Street (Boulder: Westview, 1999) 298.

One might conclude that while increased education does not unconditionally translate into improvements in the health of adult learners, nevertheless, a mother's literacy has proven positive impacts on her *children's* well being. Despite these benefits to children from women's education, however, female illiteracy remains significantly higher than male illiteracy in most countries. In the Moroccan case, where only 35 percent of all women can read and write, this phenomenon is particularly pronounced, closely resembling the disproportionately high figures of women's illiteracy worldwide.

Gender Divisions

According to Louise Fréchette, UN Deputy Secretary General, two-thirds of all illiterate adults are women.²⁸ Furthermore, Nelly Stromquist has found "although the proportion of illiterates in the world is decreasing, the proportion of women among the illiterates is not."²⁹ Due to traditional practices enforced in many cultures, girls are often confined to the home and are denied access to education, while schooling of male children of the same family may be encouraged. Lind and Johnston argue in *Adult Literacy in the Third World* that "the traditional sexual division of roles in the family, as well as in the society, excluded most girls from learning literacy through school."³⁰ Traditional gender roles in many countries assign women domestic responsibilities, while men are more likely to be formally employed and to engage in public life. As heads of the household and principal decision-makers for the family, men will be educated because their instruction is perceived as an essential asset to the family, while women's education

²⁸ Rutsch 29.

²⁹ Nelly P. Stromquist. "Gender and Literacy Development" in *Literacy – An International Handbook*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner, Richard L. Venezky, and Brian V. Street (Boulder: Westview, 1999) 271.

is not a priority. Ballara declares that “in most societies women have lower status than men. From childhood on they have less access to education, and sometimes food and health care. As adults, not only do they frequently receive less education, but work longer hours, have lower incomes and little or no access to ownership of property.”³¹

Even girls who do attend school are more likely to drop out at an early level. In *Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development*, the authors explain that the opportunity cost of sending girls to school is often higher than for boys: “In general, girls perform more chores at home than boys do: girls cook, clean, fetch water and wood, and care for their siblings. Between the ages of 10 and 15, girls may work up to 8 to 10 hours a day on activities inside and outside the home.”³² Thus girls are often kept in the home to tend to domestic duties, while their brothers go to school to acquire the skills for their future roles. Furthermore, some parents are reluctant to send their daughters to schools with no female instructors or to allow them to travel long distances to attend school.

For adult women the obstacles to acquiring literacy are similar to children's disadvantages. Stromquist argues “the process of literacy is gendered because women face more problems becoming literate than men: failure to receive their husband's approval for attending classes, their need to be at home to perform continuous domestic chores, and their responsibility vis-à-vis children and sick family members. This set of duties tends to make women's attendance record irregular and subject to interruption

³⁰ Agneta Lind and Anton Johnston, *Adult Literacy in the Third World: A Review of Objectives and Strategies* (Stockholm: SIDA, 1990) 112.

³¹ Ballara 4.

³² World Bank, *Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1994) 29.

when domestic responsibilities intensify.”³³ Thus, women are not only more likely to be denied access to education during childhood, but are also more likely to face barriers to education later in life and to be excluded from its benefits.

Women’s illiteracy reinforces their lack of knowledge, and undermines both the financial viability and decision-making power over their own lives, their children, and their communities in societies dominated by males. Providing literacy training can therefore contribute to furthering their independence and to breaking the cycle of inequality. As Jayne describes, “One of education’s main effects is to change a woman’s worldview and self-image. Thus she is more willing to challenge conventional beliefs, practices, and authority figures and is more confident...”³⁴ By increasing knowledge, both men and women acquire the necessary means to recognize and take advantage of their rights as citizens to participate in public and private decision-making, and to promote democracy, goals promoted by Moroccan King Mohammed VI himself, with important implications for recent developments in the promotion of women’s rights, and specifically, women’s literacy, as will be discussed at length in chapter five.

Rights, Empowerment, Participation, Democracy

Because even basic education can provide essential skills that enable a person to take responsibility for his life and to participate fully in his community, education is viewed as a fundamental human right. *The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* argues that, “the right to education and the right to learn throughout life is more than ever a necessity; it is the right to read and write, the right to question and analyze, the right to

³³ Stromquist 272.

³⁴ Jayne 295.

have access to resources, and to develop and practice individual and collective skills and competences.” The Declaration asserts that “women have a right to equal opportunities; society, in turn, depends on their full contribution in all fields of work and aspects of life.”³⁵

Literacy has furthermore been associated with empowerment, increased participation in public life, and advancing the goals of democratization. As the *Declaration of Persepolis* of the 1975 International Symposium on Literacy states, “literacy is therefore inseparable from participation, which is at once its purpose and its condition.”³⁶ Furthermore, it has been suggested that literacy increases participation, empowerment, and democratization because it has the potential to produce greater equality. As Ila Patel and Anita Dighe of the Institute for Rural Management argue, “Illiteracy is not merely a problem due to lack of parental motivation to educate children or a problem of access to education. It doesn’t occur at random, but is typically the plight of poor and powerless people. Illiteracy is essentially a manifestation of social inequality, the unequal distribution of power and resources in society.”³⁷ Literacy, on the other hand, has the potential to contribute to the reversal of this social inequality and powerlessness of the poor and marginalized by providing the means to participate in democracy.

In addition to its role in the participatory process of democracy, literacy has been characterized as contributing to freedom, due to education’s potential to liberate individuals from gender, economic, and social inequality. Lind and Johnston suggest that a literate woman “becomes able to manage new skills, which give her a new potential

³⁵ UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE).

³⁶ UNESCO, “Declaration of Persepolis” (Paris: UNESCO, 1975).

³⁷ Ila Patel (IRMA) and Anita Dighe (NIAE), “Gender Issues in Literacy Education” (Institute for Rural Management: Anand, 1997) <http://ginkgo.cisti.nrc.ca:8080/collect/hdl/import/irma/iw108e/iw108e.htm>.

role in the family. The mastering of new skills may also give her greater opportunity for paid employment, leading to relative economic liberation.”³⁸ Such an outcome is also the heart of the recently initiated United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), which “was designed to ‘free people from ignorance, incapacity and exclusion’ and empower them for action, choices and participation,” as UNESCO Director General Koïchiro Matsuura has stated.³⁹ These ideals, as will later be examined, closely relate to the experiences of newly literate Moroccan women in Rabat and Casablanca.

The functions and objectives of literacy thus include a variety of social issues transcending the traditional view of literacy as a skill acquired to decode symbols. It should be noted, however, that various scholars have warned against labeling literacy as the panacea of economic and social problems. Lind and Johnston, for example, advise against assuming too strong an impact of literacy:

Illiteracy is a symptom, not a cause of underdevelopment, injustice and poverty. Nor should literacy be treated as a “medicine” for the complaints of society; we do not believe that the simple provision of literacy training in itself will transform the lives and social and economic relations of the illiterate population. Without literacy being integrated into a general process of social change, or into a social movement dedicated to creating social change, it is clear that it will have little chance of changing the fundamental parameters of life.⁴⁰

One must therefore use caution not to rely solely on raising literacy rates to improve social indicators and the population’s well-being. As Lind and Johnston stated, literacy should be used as a component of a policy designed to bring about societal and economic change. Describing the requirements and ramifications for such change, Wagner moreover argues, “literacy transforms the behaviors and beliefs that define

³⁸ Lind and Johnston 118.

³⁹ Rutsch 29.

individuals, cultures, and nations. The economic dimension of that change always deserves consideration, but only in the context of full range transformation – good and ill – that literacy will bring.”⁴¹ Thus, literacy does not automatically translate into social cure and economic well-being and must be undertaken in the context of greater societal change.

This chapter has discussed the correlation of literacy rates and important development indicators. In chapter three, the focus will be on the case of Morocco, where illiteracy is unusually high compared to its neighbors and countries with similar socioeconomic performance. The specific circumstances of Morocco’s literacy environment are therefore subject of the next chapter.

⁴⁰ Lind and Johnston 19.

⁴¹ Daniel A. Wagner, “Literacy as Culture: Emic and Etic Perspectives” in *Literate Systems and Individual Lives: Perspectives on Literacy and Schooling*. Ed. A.C. Purves and E. M. Jennings (University of New York: Albany, 1991) 11-19.

3. Literacy in Morocco

*Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created –
Created man out of a germ cell!
Read – for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One who has taught [man] the use
of the pen –
Taught man what he did not know.⁴²*

With these words, conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad through the Angel of Prophecy in the seventh century A.D., Allah began to reveal the Qur'an, which would spread from the Arabian Peninsula throughout the world and reach Morocco by the eighth century. In fact, Morocco has a long history of literate and highly educated *elites*. It was not until the 20th century, however, that literacy became accessible to larger segments of the Moroccan population. Originally, private Qur'anic schools (*kuttab*) for boys, which were not subject to government regulation, were the sole providers of literacy and entry points to education. Government supported public schooling was not introduced until French colonial rule (1912 to 1956), which was followed by the implementation of a national school system for universal education by the Moroccan government after independence.⁴³ Because formal education, the principle means of acquiring literacy, was not widely accessible, illiteracy rates during Morocco's colonial period have been estimated at 85 to 90 percent of the population. Of the total adult population of 5.1 million adults above the age of 15, between 4.3-4.6 million were

⁴² Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, (Gibraltar: Dar Al-Andalus, 1980) 963, The Ninety-Sixth Surah.

believed to be unable to read and write in 1950.⁴⁴ In 2003, however, the Moroccan government declared that the country's illiteracy rate had dropped to 48 percent of the population, a positive development despite the fact that illiteracy remains comparatively high with respect to the kingdom's neighboring countries. Table 1 provides further information about the evolution of illiteracy rates in Morocco, including estimates for the next decade.

Table 1: The Evolution of Moroccan Illiteracy Rates

Country	Year	Illiteracy Rate (%). 15 Years and older. Total	Illiteracy Rate (%). 15 Years and older. Male	Illiteracy Rate (%). 15 Years and older. Female	Illiterate Population (000). 15 Years and older. Total	Illiterate Population (000). 15 Years and older. Male	Illiterate Population (000). 15 Years and older. Female	Total Population (000). 15 Years and older. Total
Morocco	1970	80	68	92	6,439	2,680	3,759	8,028
	1980	71	58	84	7,861	3,146	4,715	11,009
	1990	61	47	75	9,090	3,465	5,624	14,825
	1995	56	42	69	9,584	3,593	5,991	17,097
	2000	51	38	64	9,988	3,702	6,286	19,523
	2005	47	34	58	10,261	3,779	6,482	22,044
	2010	42	31	53	10,401	3,820	6,579	24,539
	2015	38	28	48	10,324	3,796	6,527	27,087

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics www.uis.unesco.org

Although Morocco's illiteracy rate has decreased significantly during the past decades, the population unable to read and write remains relatively high in comparison to other Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) nations, as Table 2 indicates. Morocco follows Iraq, Mauritania, and Yemen on the list of least literate MENA countries, while Jordan, Bahrain, and Lebanon have the most literate populations. Even Tunisia and Algeria, which had similar historical legacies and are commonly associated with

⁴³ Wagner, Messick and Spratt. "Studying Literacy in Morocco" in *The Acquisition of Literacy: Ethnographic Perspectives*. Ed. Bambi B. Schieffelin and Perry Gilmore (New Jersey: Ablex, 1986) 234.

⁴⁴ UNESCO, *World Literacy at Mid-Century* (UNESCO: Paris, 1957) 38.

Morocco to form the Maghreb region, report illiteracy rates of 29 and 33 percent respectively, which are low compared with 48 percent of Moroccans.

Table 2: Illiteracy Rates for MENA Countries

Population over 15	Illiteracy Rate (%) for 2000		
Country	Total	Male	Female
Algeria	33.3	23.7	43.0
Bahrain	12.5	9.1	17.4
Djibouti	35.4	24.4	45.6
Egypt	44.7	33.4	56.2
Iraq	60.7	45.1	76.7
Jordan	10.2	5.1	15.7
Kuwait	18.1	16.1	20.4
Lebanon	14.0	7.9	19.7
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	20.1	9.2	31.9
Mauritania	59.8	49.3	69.9
Morocco	51.2	38.2	63.9
Oman	28.3	19.9	38.4
Palestine	N/A	N/A	N/A
Qatar	18.8	19.6	16.9
Saudi Arabia	23.8	17.0	33.1
Sudan	42.3	30.8	53.8
Syrian Arab Republic	25.6	11.7	39.6
Tunisia	29.0	18.6	39.4
United Arab Emirates	23.8	25.2	20.9
Yemen	53.6	32.5	74.7

UNESCO Institute for Statistics www.uis.unesco.org

Although the methods used to determine literacy rates differ from country to country, thus undermining accuracy of comparisons across countries, there is a strong indication that Morocco continues to be an underperformer in literacy. Furthermore, the World Bank office in Morocco estimates, “in light of the method used to calculate the illiteracy rate (a simple statement by respondents in censuses or surveys of household

living condition), the proportion of the adult population with a low literacy level (i.e. neither reading nor writing well enough to improve their living conditions or well-being) is certainly higher than 50%.”⁴⁵ Moreover, illiteracy among Moroccan women is higher than among men, indicating a stark gender divide.

The Moroccan government reports a female illiteracy rate of 62 percent, although male illiteracy is as low as 34 percent of the population over the age of 10. Furthermore, gender trends of illiteracy in Morocco during the past three decades indicate “the gender gap in literacy among the present younger generation is even larger than that of their grand parents or even parents,” says UNESCO Institute for Education, which “clearly shows that males have received more education than females during this time period.”⁴⁶ As examined in chapter two, continued educational disadvantages for women can carry significant ramifications, because according to Jennifer Spratt, “as elsewhere, literate and educated Moroccan women tend to have fewer children, lose fewer children to disease, and use more modern health care practices.”⁴⁷ Moreover, women’s low literacy rates have strong implications for their socio-economic status, especially considering the correlation between literacy and poverty, which is especially pronounced in rural regions and in the growing outskirts of urban areas of Morocco.

As in most developing countries, illiteracy in Morocco is not only tied to the female population but also characteristic of both poor and rural areas. Morocco’s rural population tends to be both less educated and poorer than the kingdom’s urban dwellers,

⁴⁵ World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Learning and Innovation Loan in the Amount of EUR 4.2 Million to the Kingdom of Morocco for an Alpha Maroc Project*. Report No: 23918-MOR (World Bank: Rabat, 2002) 3.

⁴⁶ UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), *Literacy and Adult Education in the Arab World* (UIE: Hamburg, 2003) 25.

⁴⁷ Jennifer E. Spratt, “Women and Literacy in Morocco” in *The Annals of the American Academy*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner (Newbury Park: Sage, 1992) 121.

as can be seen in Table 3. In rural areas, 67 percent of the total population is illiterate, compared with 34 percent of urban Moroccans.⁴⁸ Furthermore, about one in four rural Moroccans is poor, in comparison with only one in ten in urban centers. As urban areas are growing, however, the World Bank report, *Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update*, states, “poverty in urban areas is rising. The share of urban poor increased from 27 to 34 % during this period [1990/91 to 1998/99], almost four times faster than rural/urban population shift.”⁴⁹ Urban poverty is thus increasing more rapidly than rural populations are migrating to the cities.

Table 3: Selected Social Indicators for Morocco

	1990/91		1998/99	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Incidence of poverty (%)	7.6	18.0	12.0	27.2
Number of poor (in thousands)	912	2.448	1.811	3.496
Activity rate, those aged 15 or more (%)	48.8	64.8	52.4	66.3
Women who had a prenatal visit (%)	65.4	24.4	75.9	36.8
Women who gave birth at home (%)	43.0	84.0	28.0	78.7
Population living in shacks (%)	10.9	71.6	10.4	71.4
Population with piped potable water (%)	76.0	6.3	90.9	12.0
Population with electricity (%)	90.4	12.7	85.8	15.9
Population with garbage pickup (%)	84.8	2.0	85.1	2.4

Source: Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update

Furthermore, Morocco continues to underperform in important socioeconomic indicators compared to its neighbors and countries of similar economic status, illustrating the severity of poverty’s implications. The World Bank found “Morocco’s indicators continue to lag behind comparable regional/income level countries and significant

⁴⁸ Direction de la lutte contre l’analphabétisme, “Niveau de l’analphabétisme au Maroc” (Royaume du Maroc: Rabat, 2003).

disparities remain between urban and rural areas. The primary school enrollment rate remains 20 % below average enrollment rate in low middle-income countries (LMI); infant mortality and maternal mortality are high; and access to potable water and electricity in rural areas remains one of the lowest in the region.” The negative impact of such indicators affects women most directly not only through high infant and maternal mortality, but also in their domestic roles, by the lack of electricity and water, as suggested by Chlebowska in the preceding chapter. Hence women are harmed the most by the state’s insufficient socioeconomic performance.

Rural women represent both the poorest and least literate group of the Moroccan population. With their lives focused on domestic duties and agricultural work, 83 percent of rural Moroccan women can neither read nor write. Moroccan scholar Loubna Skalli of Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra concludes, “poverty has many faces and dimensions. Its dominant face in Morocco is becoming increasingly female, rural, illiterate, and unskilled. Among the total population declared poor in the country, women are disproportionately over-represented.”⁵⁰ Thus, as education continues to be predominantly a privilege of the urban male elite, Morocco follows a strong gender and urban/rural division marked by poverty.

Prospects for Morocco’s future prosperity appear difficult in light of the kingdom’s economic slowdown in recent years. Morocco’s sluggish economic growth and slow job creation throughout the 1990s have created significant social and economic challenges to the country’s development process. As Guilain Denoeux argues, “Some of the kingdom’s major problems – poverty, unemployment, social disparities – seem to

⁴⁹ World Bank, *Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update* Volume I (World Bank: Rabat, 2001) i.

have worsened in the past several years,"⁵¹ attributed largely to a reduction in agricultural output and directly impacting rural areas. The kingdom's economy is dominated by the agricultural sector, which employs about 40 percent of the labor force. Economic performance is thus highly dependent on rainfall, which was scarce in the 1990s, as Morocco faced prolonged periods of drought. Agricultural production dropped by 1.2 percent in the 1990s, increasing rural poverty. Additionally, manufacturing exports declined from 20 to 6 percent due to exchange rate appreciation. Decreased textile and clothing output coupled with slowed employment creation caused unemployment to rise in urban areas, while lower worker remittance from Moroccans living abroad contributed to higher urban poverty.⁵² Moreover, Denoeux points out slow implementation of privatization and integration of Morocco into the international economy and lack of a strong government strategy for economic reforms. He questions the sustainability of public finances and criticizes overall inefficiencies caused by lengthy bureaucratic procedures. However, while Denoeux faults the partial nature of economic reforms, Skalli argues those very reforms have in fact exacerbated women's poverty in Morocco:

Although research on the implications of the feminization of poverty in Morocco is scarce, existing evidence suggests that economic crises and restructuring phases have adverse implications for women in low-income households. In Morocco, as elsewhere, the restructuring of the economy over the last two decades has resulted in the disengagement of the state from and reduction in its investment in the social services (health, education services). Cuts in public expenditure and/or occasional cancellation of subsidies on essential goods exacerbated women's vulnerability and their exploitation.⁵³

⁵⁰ Loubna H. Skalli, "Women and Poverty in Morocco: The Many Faces of Social Exclusion." *Feminist Review* No. 69 (Routledge: UK, 2001) 73.

⁵¹ Guillaín Denoeux, "Morocco's Economic Prospects: Daunting Challenges Ahead." *Middle East Policy*, Vol VIII, No. 2, June 2001.

⁵² World Bank, *Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update Volume I* (World Bank: Rabat, 2001) iii.

⁵³ Skalli 83.

Skalli thus criticizes the reforms by the Moroccan government and suggests that they are a cause, rather than a solution, to the country's socioeconomic difficulties, as Denoeux argues. Incorporating both Denoeux's arguments for economic reform and Skalli's critique of structural adjustment, the World Bank advocates poverty alleviation policies that promote economic growth through a more liberal and flexible economy, while investing public expenditures in the social sector. One of the World Bank's priorities for Morocco to reach its goal of overall development is therefore the improvement of education:

Effective delivery of quality education services is critical for building the strong human capital base that Morocco needs in order to (i) achieve rapid economic growth and job creation in an increasingly competitive international environment, and (ii) address domestic income disparities by enhancing opportunities among the less well-off. Despite substantial public spending on education (about 5% of GDP), (i) outcomes remain unsatisfactory and serious inequities persist between urban and rural enrollment rates, particularly for girls, and relevance of the quality of general education has suffered from lack of investment and materials and outdated curriculum and teaching methods.⁵⁴

According to the World Bank, improvement in the Moroccan education sector is thus a precondition to increased economic growth and prosperity. Literacy should spur economic growth, and economic growth, in turn, can have positive effects on poverty reduction, increase public finances and education spending. Though acknowledging that the Moroccan government has made significant efforts by targeting education through public spending, the World Bank concludes that results have been disappointing. It can therefore be inferred that the causes of Morocco's repeated underperformance on education indicators relative to its neighbors and countries of similar socioeconomic status is not exclusively rooted in a lack of government spending. Instead, broader

⁵⁴ World Bank, *Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update* Volume I (World Bank: Rabat, 2001) 29.

linguistic, demographic, and cultural themes should be examined to understand Morocco's education deficit.

A Kingdom of Language

One of the principal characteristics of Morocco's literacy environment is its multilingual nature. Due to the country's unique geographic position on the edge of the African, European, and Arab civilizations, and subsequent invasions, the kingdom is marked by pronounced linguistic pluralism today. Originally Morocco's population belonged to nomadic Berber tribes, which inhabited most of the North African Mediterranean region. Arabic was not brought to the region until the eighth century, when Islamic invaders from the East introduced both the Qur'an and its sacred language. Finally, French and Spanish colonization added a European component to Morocco's linguistic mosaic through the occupants' national education policies. Under the French Protectorate, French language, which is still commonly used in the media and the government and widely taught in school, assumed elite status. Following independence, however, the Moroccan government sought to Arabize the education system.

As a result of these historical legacies, the predominant languages in Morocco today – Berber (a Hamitic language), Arabic (a Semitic language), and French (an Indo-European language) – are from three distinct language stocks. Moreover, the use of Spanish is still widespread in the former Iberian occupation zones of Northern Morocco. The Berber language is subdivided into three main dialects within Morocco. And finally, adding to the complexity of the kingdom's languages, the Moroccan dialect of Arabic (*Darija*) differs significantly from Modern Standard Arabic (*Fusha*). Many Moroccans

therefore speak more than one language. However, due to the *oral* nature of Morocco's colloquial languages, Moroccans cannot be considered literate, according to prevailing theories of literacy (see chapter one), in their native languages.

Moroccans are usually native speakers of either Moroccan Arabic or one of the Berber dialects. However, both Moroccan Arabic and Berber are primarily oral languages. Although an ancient alphabet of Berber exists, it is not widely used and has only been introduced to the school system recently. Therefore the Berber alphabet remains unknown to the majority of the population. Nevertheless, Wagner estimates that "Berber, in three dialectal forms, is spoken as a native language by perhaps half of the Moroccan population, though exact demographic statistics are not available."⁵⁵ Moroccan Arabic, on the other hand, is almost entirely an oral dialect also believed to be spoken by half of the Moroccan population. Although one newspaper in Moroccan Arabic exists, it has a small circulation and most Moroccans believe that Moroccan Arabic cannot be written. Therefore Modern Standard Arabic is the official written language of the kingdom, next to French, which is still widely used in the media and in education (sometimes even exclusively, as in the sciences, at the university level).

Modern Standard Arabic and its Moroccan dialect are of course related. But Moroccan Arabic has been strongly influenced by French, Spanish, and Berber and is therefore not interchangeable with Modern Standard Arabic. Modern Standard Arabic in its oral form is exclusively used for formal occasions, such as political speeches, university lectures, and in news broadcasts. Informal communication is conducted in one of the Berber languages or Moroccan Arabic, the population's native languages, while

⁵⁵ Wagner, Messick and Spratt. "Studying Literacy in Morocco" in *The Acquisition of Literacy: Ethnographic Perspectives*. Ed. Bambi B. Schieffelin and Perry Gilmore (New Jersey: Ablex, 1986) 235.

literacy pertains to the ability to read and write in Modern Standard Arabic, the language of official government documents, literature, newspapers, and the Qur'an. For native speakers of both Berber and Moroccan Arabic, learning how to read and write thus usually entails learning a foreign language or acquiring an unfamiliar dialect. Being illiterate in Morocco therefore implies overall exclusion from information and participation, because even oral access may be denied through the linguistic barriers of French and Modern Standard Arabic. This exclusion is particularly pertinent in the case of Moroccan women and is deeply rooted in Morocco's larger societal structure.

A Culture of Oral Exclusion

Traditionally, Moroccan society was strictly divided between the public sphere, the domain of the man, and the private sphere, woman's territory. The house was the designated area of the woman, while the street, mosque, political activity, formal employment, and education were realms of men. While young boys were sent to school, girls were generally kept at home to help in the household. In *Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development*, the World Bank suggest that reasons for girls' confinement to the home go beyond traditional cultural assumptions to include financial considerations. The authors found that "especially because of cultural norms... costs are often higher for girls than for boys; for example, parents' reluctance to send daughters to school without proper attire increases the cost of girls schooling. Evidence from Morocco confirms that the direct costs to the family of sending girls to school exceed the direct cost of sending boys,"⁵⁶ consistent with the findings of Marcela Ballara discussed in

⁵⁶ World Bank, *Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development* (World Bank: Washington D.C., 1994) 29.

chapter two. Nevertheless, girls' primary school enrollment rates have increased during the 1990s, as Table 4 indicates.

Table 4: Female Rural and Urban Literacy and Primary School Enrollment Rates

	1990/91		1998/99	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Female literacy rate, aged 10 or more (%)	51.4	12.8	54.5	17.0
Female net primary enrollment rate (%)	78.7	28.3	82.8	46.8

Source: World Bank, *Kingdom of Morocco Poverty Update*. Volume I (World Bank: Rabat, 2001) 29.

However, despite higher rates, Moroccan girls' enrollment remains low, and formal enrollment does not equal actual attendance, suggesting that the future female generation will continue to be undereducated and excluded from the public sphere. Linguistically, lack of female education indicates that women will continue to be limited to Moroccan Arabic and Berber, languages traditionally associated with the domestic sphere, and thus with women. Standard Arabic, in turn, is perceived to be the man's language, the language of the public sphere, of religion and politics, and of power. In *Gender and Language in Morocco*, Fatima Sadiqi summarizes:

Four major languages are used in Morocco: Berber, Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, and French. As an oral indigenous language, Berber is associated with oral tradition, illiteracy and, thus, women. Being a powerful and high language, Standard Arabic is more of a male language. As for French, it is a symbol of modernity and is, thus, associated with urban middle and upper class women. Being a lingua franca, Moroccan Arabic is the language of both sexes, but more of a male language in rural areas.⁵⁷

Language is thus linked to gender in Morocco, while specifically the non-written languages are associated with women, the traditionally illiterate. However, learning in Morocco in general has a strong oral tradition. The highest scholarly achievement was considered the memorization and recitation of the entire Qur'an. Although not as

prevalent today, the practice has instilled the value of memorization in Moroccan society, which still persists. Furthermore, literacy has not traditionally been perceived to be necessary for every individual, although Wagner indicates that Moroccan's views on literacy are changing:

Historical and ethnographic data lead to the conclusion that in traditional times (up until perhaps the mid-twentieth century), Moroccans did not conceive of literacy as something that ought to pertain to every individual. Now, however, the ideology of personal literacy has gained a remarkably strong hold on public consciousness at all levels of Moroccan society. As one primary school teacher told us: "A person without literacy is like a soldier without bullets."⁵⁸

Both Moroccans' expectations and ideas about literacy are thus in transition and the value of individual literacy is becoming more accepted. In fact, the Moroccan government has sponsored numerous campaigns to improve adult literacy nationally, starting in 1956. Nevertheless, Morocco's illiteracy rates remain high and previous government spending and national literacy campaigns have not had the expected widespread effects. The Moroccan government attributes this situation primarily to high demographic growth and the necessity to use resources to improve the country's infrastructure, which creates a disequilibrium between resources and population size.⁵⁹ These conclusions suggest that a lack of finances has been the primary factor in the unsuccessfulness of the government campaigns. However, the success of a national literacy campaign or literacy program depends on numerous other factors, such as cooperation of the government with NGOs and learner-based curricula, which will be explored further in the following chapter.

⁵⁷ Fatima Sadiqi, "Gender and Language in Morocco" *Women and Gender in the Middle East and the Islamic World Today* (Berkeley Electronic Press: California, 2003) Abstract.
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/editedvolumes/4/1061>

⁵⁸ Wagner, Messick, and Spratt 241.

⁵⁹ Royaume du Maroc, "Alphabétisation des adultes au Maroc: Bilan de la période 1997-2003" (Royaume du Maroc: Rabat, 2003) 3.

4. Components of Successful Literacy Promotion

...there are still around 30 countries that, by 2015, are unlikely to achieve any more than a 30 percent improvement over their 2000 literacy rates. This list includes: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Iraq, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, United Arab Emirates. Without major additional efforts to fight illiteracy, these countries will account for 92 percent of the world's illiterate population in 2015.⁶⁰

As discussed in earlier chapters, at the country level, literacy is believed to have important ramifications for economic development, equality, and political participation, especially affecting women and other marginalized populations. Furthermore, literacy demonstrates benefits to improved health, self-esteem, empowerment, and economic means, at the individual level. To achieve these benefits, however, literacy programs need to be successful – the programs should attract the desired number of participants, the percentage of learners who start and complete the program should be high, learners should feel that classes teach them ways to improve the conditions of their daily lives, and, ultimately, individual programs' efforts should raise the country's literacy rate. However, some observers question the necessity for *adult* literacy training in the endeavor to increase low literacy. For example, Lind and Johnston argue that, "Universal Primary Education will eventually do away with illiteracy, such as has been done in most

⁶⁰ UNESCO, "Statistics show slow progress towards universal literacy" (Paris: UNESCO, 2002) http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=5063_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

European countries,”⁶¹ implying that adult literacy programs are not essential for universal literacy and the benefits derived thereof.

Universal Primary Education (UPE), on the other hand, is unlikely to be achieved without motivating large segments of the population. As Manzoor Ahmed explains, “Effective primary education for children and the use of all channels of communication and education to create a learning society are essential conditions for nurturing a culture of literacy.”⁶² Children’s primary education must therefore be accompanied by societal change to have a meaningful impact. Furthermore, Lind and Johnston agree, “Primary schooling will not improve its quality, as long as school children live in illiterate environments with illiterate parents. The fact that parents’ educational background influences children’s school achievement is an important argument for adult literacy...”⁶³ Especially women’s literacy is argued to be highly beneficial to their children’s education. However, how to achieve women’s literacy effectively, and thus foster the necessary culture of learning mentioned by Ahmed, is a complex issue involving participation of all segments of society. As Stephen Heyneman points out, “there is such a wide consensus on the virtues of literacy that debate about when and under what circumstances to advocate its promotion is not a primary concern. Errors can be made, however, when advocacy of literacy ignores political realities and programmatic trade-offs,”⁶⁴ for example, when too little funding is allocated to literacy programs. Such arguments call for increased efforts on policy design and implementation methods to

⁶¹ Agneta Lind and Anton Johnston, *Adult Literacy in the Third World: A Review of Objectives and Strategies* (Stockholm: SIDA, 1990) 43.

⁶² Manzoor Ahmed, “Literacy in a Larger Context” in *World Literacy in the Year 2000*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner and Laurel D. Puchner (Newbury Park: Sage, 1991) 32.

⁶³ Lind and Johnston 44.

⁶⁴ Stephen P. Heyneman, “Universal Adult Literacy: Policy Myths and Realities” in *World Literacy in the Year 2000*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner and Laurel D. Puchner (Newbury Park: Sage, 1991) 28.

ensure that learners and thus society in general attain the benefits which literacy can foster instead of wasting resources on ineffective programs. Specifically, in their analysis of relevant literature, Malone and Arnove have identified the following general factors that caused literacy programs to fail:

- They lacked strong leadership.
- They did not have the committed and ongoing support of their stakeholders [defined as “all those individuals and entities involved in and affected by the literacy effort – planners, implementers, managers, donors, supporters, and the adult learners themselves.”⁶⁵]
- There was poor co-ordination of the supporting entities’ efforts.
- Teachers were not adequately trained.
- Instructional methods were inappropriate.
- There was an inadequate supply of relevant and interesting reading materials.
- Infrastructure had not been established for the different components of the program.⁶⁶

Thus, although the importance of literacy is generally recognized by scholars, international policy makers, and national governments, literacy programs have not always had the anticipated positive results due to such factors as lack of learner’s involvement, ineffective teaching methods or poor teacher training. This chapter will therefore identify the principal factors and establish guidelines deemed essential for successful attainment of widespread adult literacy, while specifically underlining aspects relevant to women’s literacy training, later to be applied to the Moroccan case.

The Government’s Role

It is widely accepted among policy makers and scholars that large-scale increases in adult literacy skills are attained through a high level of government involvement.

⁶⁵ Susan E. Malone and Robert F. Arnove, *Planning Learner-Centered Adult Literacy Programmes* (Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 1998) 16.

According to Lind and Johnston “the state has to be the prime mover in promoting such [widespread] literacy activities,” adding that “numerous writers have recently put the emphasis on national commitment or political will,” to promote literacy effectively.⁶⁷ However, the justification for high state involvement is neither exclusive to human and financial resource contribution, nor does it suggest total government control. As Ahmed argues, “Rather than attempt to control and run the education programs, the main tasks of governments should be to create a national learning environment in which all sectors of society can participate.”⁶⁸ Moreover, many scholars underline that the government should fulfill its role in conjunction with national or local NGOs. As Wagner states, “Clearly, some blending of top-down and bottom-up needs and values must be achieved if successful interventions are to be made.”⁶⁹ Further illustrating how centralized and local organizations complement each other’s strengths, Susan Malone and Robert Arnove argue in *Planning Learner-Centered Adult Literacy* that government and NGO cooperation is optimal for widespread adult literacy acquisition:

By co-operation with the government, NGOs are able to reach a broader segment of the population than they could on their own and, in partnership with NGOs, government agencies are able to participate more effectively in grass-roots development and to provide the institutional and policy frameworks that encourage and support self-reliance. The most productive arrangement, then, is one in which government agencies, NGOs, outside donors, and local communities each take responsibility for specific aspects of the literacy programme and all share in its planning, decision-making, and support.⁷⁰

Large-scale literacy provision should therefore be a product of centralized state agencies and the government’s larger development agenda in conjunction with donors and NGOs

⁶⁶ Malone and Arnove 64.

⁶⁷ Lind and Johnston 121.

⁶⁸ Ahmed 34.

⁶⁹ Daniel A. Wagner, “World Literacy: Research and Policy in the EFA Decade” in *World Literacy in the Year 2000*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner and Laurel D. Puchner (Newbury Park: Sage, 1991) 25.

who work with communities at the national and local level. However, Eisemon, Marble and Crawford warn, “although NGOs are often effective literacy providers, they usually require strengthening to become executing agencies for donor projects,”⁷¹ underlining that NGOs often fail to account for their use of financing, one of the difficulties they have in cooperating with highly bureaucratic governments. Nevertheless, through cooperation the state should have a primary role in mobilizing all parts of the population and providing organization, resources, and infrastructure to create an overall environment that will foster sustainable universal literacy. In addition to these characteristics necessary to the creation of an environment conducive to adult literacy acquisition, Lind and Johnston have identified the aspects explained below as necessary requirements in government’s policy towards effective literacy training:

- “*Popular mobilization and participation, social equality and equal rights.*”⁷² As part of a country’s overall development process, literacy programs need to be promoted as a priority by the government and should especially target underprivileged groups of society to further equality. Furthermore, large-scale mobilization activities targeted at the general public, such as awareness campaigns, should be long-term efforts, as Wagner proposes:

A well-known problem in development work is the usual brevity in the funding of programs that fall outside the national educational system. Campaigns and nonformal programs may only have one to three years to prove themselves. For this reason, planners sometimes opt for large-scale programs – for example, campaigns – before adequate preparations and planning can be provided.”⁷³

⁷⁰Malone and Armove 68.

⁷¹ T.O. Eisenmon, K. Marble, and M. Crawford, “Investing in Adult Literacy: Lessons and Implication” in *Literacy – An International Handbook*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner, Richard L. Venzky, and Brian V. Street (Boulder: Westview, 1999) 366.

⁷² Lind and Johnston 122.

⁷³ Wagner 25.

Therefore, commitment to literacy mobilization should be a continuous effort to ensure regularity of attendance and thus not only initial success but also sustainability of a program.

- *“A broad conception of literacy – including its economic, social, political and cultural dimensions.”*⁷⁴ Literacy programs should be designed for broad based learner needs instead of fixed and standardized concepts, which are not relevant to everyone’s economic, social and cultural context. For example, when literacy classes for rural women include learning materials for urban primary school children, the content of the course is not applicable to the learners and is more likely to lead to disinterest.

Furthermore, Wagner suggests, “Since the motivation of people to learn new skills will be a function of what they want and need to learn, we should be particularly cautious about top-down approaches that predetermine the meaning of such terms as “minimum skills,” “functionally literate,” and “educated.”...Rather than a focus on a single-minded presumed need for a literate citizenry, consideration should be given to a broad range of learning as evidence of people’s expressed needs.”⁷⁵ Learner’s motivation should therefore be encouraged through relevant curricula.

- *“Mobilization of available resources of the state, socio-political organizations and the people.”*⁷⁶ In addition to the government and NGOs, other active supporters, such as the media, funding agencies, and volunteers need to be involved in fostering an environment for sustainable literacy. As Ahmed states, “Participation of all segments of society and additional resources are needed to promote literacy as an integral part of the

⁷⁴ Lind and Johnston 122.

⁷⁵ Wagner 24.

⁷⁶ Lind and Johnston 122.

effort to meet basic education needs.”⁷⁷ Literacy efforts should therefore mobilize supporters from different socioeconomic and cultural groups. Malone and Armove moreover suggest recruiting and making wise use of these individuals because “Committed and well-equipped people are the most important resource for sustaining any literacy programme.”⁷⁸ Furthermore, material resources and financing are essential to provide classroom space and materials for the courses and ensure ongoing literacy programs, especially for large-scale programs.

- “*Central coordination of various ministries, institutions, trade unions, organizations, etc.*”⁷⁹ To further cooperation of multiple government agencies and therefore increase mobilization for widespread literacy, efforts need to be centrally coordinated. Centralized planning and execution should ensure more harmonious and effective coordination of stakeholders in promoting literacy as a uniform entity.

- “*Post-literacy and other follow-up opportunities.*”⁸⁰ Once a person has become literate, it is necessary not only to sustain but also to enhance their abilities through post-literacy training or the provision of materials to further their education. Otherwise it is likely that newly acquired literacy abilities and their benefits will be lost. As Adama Ouane states, “The fact is that many newly literate learners relapse into illiteracy after painstakingly investing their valuable time and scarce resources in the acquisition of basic literacy skills.”⁸¹ Thus, without practice, retention is difficult and relapse into illiteracy likely, making post-literacy activities an essential component of literacy provision.

⁷⁷ Ahmed 32.

⁷⁸ Malone and Armove 65.

⁷⁹ Lind and Johnston 122.

⁸⁰ Lind and Johnston 123.

- “A dual strategy, combining the universalization of primary education and adult literacy.”⁸² As mentioned above, UPE and adult literacy training should go hand in hand to ensure the achievement of sustainable universal literacy for future generations. Because learning takes place not only in school but also in the home, parents play a significant role in the education process of their children. Women’s education is especially significant because they are more likely to stay at home with the children and are often the principal care givers. As Ballara explains, “the higher the educational level of the mother, the more effectively she is able to transmit the knowledge required for her children to achieve a better quality of life...In both industrialized and developing countries it has been observed that improving mothers’ educational levels increases their interest in enrolling and supporting their children in school.”⁸³ UPE should therefore be complemented not only by adult literacy programs, but also by programs targeted directly at women.

According to Lind and Johnston, the role of the government is therefore to integrate literacy training (for both adults and children) into a broader program for the promotion of development and equality through mobilization of resources and societal groups and the provision of an organizational framework, while ensuring sustainability through post-literacy. On the other hand, the state should not be in control of all processes and should engage with other actors to provide successful adult literacy programs. However, the effectiveness of such programs is not only dependent on the cooperation of actors in designing such large-scale policy solutions, as discussed above,

⁸¹ Adama Ouane, “Post-Literacy Materials” in *Literacy – An International Handbook*. Ed. Daniel A. Wagner, Richard L. Venezky, and Brian V. Street (Boulder: Westview, 1999) 337.

⁸² Lind and Johnston 123-124.

⁸³ Marcela Ballara, *Women and Literacy* (London and New Jersey: Zed, 1992) 42.

but also on technical questions, such as teacher training and curriculum. A number of aspects, such as funding and language of instruction, have been shown to be important factors of successful literacy programs. Most recently, however, policy makers and scholars have identified the participation of the learners in the various components of literacy programs as having the most impact on the successfulness of programs, which will be discussed in the succeeding section.

Participation

The notion that input from learners, or beneficiaries, is an important component of literacy programs or other development projects in general, has become largely accepted and is often named as the most significant factor for the successfulness of a program. As Ahmed states, "In promoting literacy as an integral element of a basic education thrust, a participatory approach has developed, both because the job is large and complex and everybody's help is needed and because the beneficiaries themselves must put their hearts into it if they are going to succeed."⁸⁴ Thus, in addition to ongoing cooperation of different actors, such as governments and NGOs, literacy programs should be driven by learners themselves.

Moreover, not only is the motivation of learners described by Ahmed essential for personal achievement, but their direct involvement is also necessary in the planning, implementation, management, and evaluation of the program, as well as the design of the curriculum. Furthermore, as discussed briefly by Wagner above, programs should be tailored to learners' needs to ensure their active participation and inspire a sense of

⁸⁴ Ahmed 34.

ownership, as the following excerpt from a document by the World Bank of Morocco illustrates:

Experiences throughout the world have demonstrated the great importance of the participatory approach to design and implementation of social reforms, including in the literacy sector. In order for local stakeholders to take ownership of the new tools and methods, the DLCA [Literacy Department of the Ministry of Labor] must listen effectively to their ideas, criticism, needs, motivations, and aspirations...for example, by involving learners in curriculum preparation and offering management training sessions to Government and NGO personnel alike.⁸⁵

Thus, it is necessary to obtain information directly from the learners, so that the opinions and choices of the beneficiaries can be incorporated in the design of the literacy program. Furthermore, Krystyna Chlebowska, education expert at UNESCO, explains, “The decentralization of literacy operations and their integration into regional or local development programs will encourage local initiatives and make for more independent action, closer identification of the needs and features of the different social groups, and easier collection of more reliable data.”⁸⁶ The information obtained can thus be used to design literacy programs that adapt to a learner’s specific environment and situation. Furthermore, the International Literacy Institute argues, “general lack of success [of literacy efforts] is most often due to the fact that they do not take into account the social and cultural reality of the populations they are trying to teach.”⁸⁷ By contrast, teaching knowledge relevant to a learner’s context is argued to increase the successfulness of literacy programs.

⁸⁵ World Bank, “Project Appraisal Document for an Alpha Maroc Project” Report No: 23918 – MOR (Rabat: World Bank, 2002) 10.

⁸⁶ Krystyna Chlebowska, *Knowing and Doing: Literacy for Women* (Paris: UNESCO, 1992) 16.

⁸⁷ International Literacy Institute, “Literacy and Civic Education” *International Literacy Explorer*. <http://www.literacyonline.org/explorer/> (March 2004).

Incorporating feedback gained from learners, for example through evaluations by participants, instead of relying solely on the policy decision of a centralized governing body, can moreover be used to design curricula, which address learners' needs and interests and can directly improve the beneficiaries' situation. As the International Literacy Institute states, "Recognizing the need to teach basic skills, such as reading, writing, and math, governments have spent considerable sums of money on formal literacy programs often with disappointing results. What has proven successful are comprehensive nonformal education programs where learners participate in the creation of the educational program and link lessons to their everyday life."⁸⁸ Literacy programs should therefore include training in practical skills according to needs as defined by participants, in addition to teaching basic reading and writing to make direct improvements on learners' daily lives. Furthermore, post-literacy activities should be approached in the same manner. Specifically for women, Krystyna Chlebowska explains, "The basic principles underlying the training of newly literate women are the same as those of their illiterate counterparts, in that they aim at catering for the women's needs and at involving them in all stages of the programme, from identifying the problems, finding solutions and putting those solutions into practice, to evaluating the efforts undertaken."⁸⁹ To incorporate learners' need and interests in literacy programs, however, program directors, and more importantly, teachers must be able to adapt their classes to learners' specific contexts.

Teachers are important components of literacy programs because they form the link between theoretical policy designs and their practical application in the classroom.

⁸⁸ International Literacy Institute, "Participatory Nonformal Education" *International Literacy Explorer*. <http://www.literacyonline.org/explorer/> (March 2004).

Therefore teachers should ideally be chosen carefully. However, funding shortages frequently make it impossible to recruit formally qualified teachers. Heyneman moreover explains, "Literacy teachers are often volunteers or low-paid service personnel. Quality control is low; personnel turnover is high."⁹⁰ Teacher drop-out and lack of salary have often led to failure of literacy programs. Lack of teachers with formal teaching qualifications, however, should not necessarily be seen as a negative aspect of literacy programs. As Lind and Johnston state, "Several studies have concluded that the teachers' attitudes to their work, and their rapport with their community, are more important than their formal qualifications or pedagogical training."⁹¹ Instead of emphasizing teachers' formal teacher training, it is therefore more important that their instruction methods be based on the participatory approach and focus on teacher-learner interaction.

On the other hand, more severe problems for female literacy programs frequently occur when ideological discrepancies between highly educated teachers who are often more modern in their dress code and opinions, and the illiterate and usually more traditional learners exist. Therefore Chlebowska recommends, "It is preferable for the literacy instructors themselves to come from the same region or community as that in which the literacy classes are organized. Familiar with the environment, they will be more warmly welcomed and accepted by the women."⁹² When teachers understand their students' contexts and take them into account in their lessons, learners are more easily motivated, will be more likely to prioritize literacy, attend classes more regularly, and therefore improve their literacy skills more successfully.

⁸⁹ Chlebowska 43.

⁹⁰ Heyneman 29.

⁹¹ Lind and Johnston 128.

⁹² Chlebowska 41.

In addition to teacher qualifications and curriculum design for both literacy and post-literacy, there are a number of other factors that should be tailored to the learners' needs and interests to ensure greater participation. Drop-out rates are often high for adult literacy programs and attendance sporadic. This is especially true for women who will often need to stay at home to care for sick children or older family members, or prepare for special feast days. Therefore programs should be responsive to participant's needs to minimize irregular attendance or prolonged absence. Class times should be set according to learners' schedules and the location of classes should be easily accessible. An even greater convenience to women is the provision of childcare at the site of the literacy program during class time.

Literacy programs should furthermore adapt the language of instruction to the learners' specific environments, as well as their expressed needs and interests. Languages of literacy campaigns and universal primary education are usually designated by the state and are political decisions. As Wagner states, "Government literacy programs are often provided in a single national language and script, ignoring the often strong social and historical linkages that people have with other languages and other literacies."⁹³ In multilingual countries, choice of language instruction can therefore become politically charged, create tensions, and lead to difficulties for the literacy program.

Moreover, ignoring participants' desire to become literate in a language other than the accepted official national language, can lead to discouragement and frustration of learners. Wagner therefore adds, "If a government wants to promote literacy, then literacy training ought to be built on the languages and scripts people have most motivation to learn. Such languages and scripts may not be the same as those of the

government elite, and care will have to be taken to support minority language needs.”⁹⁴

However, once literacy has been successfully achieved in a language of choice, it can be highly beneficial for participants to also learn the official national language. Therefore Chlebowska suggests, “In order to give women access to the outside world, if that is what they want, it will be advisable that, once literacy in their mother tongue has been achieved, they then be taught the official language.”⁹⁵ In fact, learning the official language can have positive implications for learners (as discussed by Wagner in chapter two) and can be implemented where the official language is useful to learners without compromising their will and thus motivation to achieve literacy.

This chapter has given an overview of some of the most important components of effective literacy programs and has attempted to establish guidelines for successful literacy promotion. It should neither be considered complete, nor is it meant to argue that there is a set formula for increasing literacy of a population or even for eradicating illiteracy completely, as many of the criteria discussed are rather broad and general. Promoting effective literacy is an extraordinarily complex process, as Ahmed explains the difficulties of total illiteracy eradication:

The complexity and social ramifications of illiteracy make it inappropriate to talk about eradication of illiteracy by a certain date. Literacy is not merely learning the mechanics of decoding the alphabet. To be meaningful, literacy must help meet people’s basic learning needs, and, to that end, it must be reinforced and supplemented by a network of opportunities for diverse and continuing education and post-literacy learning.⁹⁶

⁹³ Wagner 23-24.

⁹⁴ Wagner 24.

⁹⁵ Chlebowska 35.

⁹⁶ Ahmed 32.

Respectful of these limitations, this chapter has discussed a variety of factors that should help people meet basic learning needs and successfully attain individual and collective goals. The fact remains, however, that illiteracy is high in many countries despite significant literacy efforts. As discussed in chapter 3, Morocco is one country where illiteracy, especially women's illiteracy, remains disproportionately high. The next chapter will therefore offer an analysis of whether the success factors presented above have been adapted in the context of Moroccan women's literacy programs and how the implementation of these aspects has shaped Morocco's literacy environment.

5. Government and the Guidelines

A strong mobilization, a participative approach, and a well thought out partnership between public sector and civil society, so that light will clear the path of darkness...⁹⁷

The Shortcomings of Past Literacy Campaigns

Since the Moroccan government's first literacy campaign after independence from France in 1956, national literacy efforts have reached an average of 100,000 individuals per year. According to the Moroccan government, one million Moroccans took part in the first campaign, while this number increased to two million during the subsequent year. The government also published a magazine for newly literates during these first two years of literacy campaigns, titled *Manar Al-Maghrib* (Lighthouse of Morocco). Although illiteracy decreased by eight percent per decade on average from 1960 to 1980, results were unsatisfying to the Moroccan government. Therefore the late King Hassan II addressed the nation in conjunction with the *U.N. International Literacy Year* in 1990 and called for all segments of society to participate in the fight against illiteracy. A national literacy commission was organized and regional commissions were set in place to coordinate and promote the government's literacy strategy locally. It was not until 1997 that the *Direction de la Lutte Contre l'Analphabétisme* (Program to Combat Illiteracy) of the *Ministère de l'Emploi et des Affaires Sociales* (Ministry of

Labor and Social Services) was created. The *Program* was promoted to the *Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education Non Formelle* (or SLIE⁹⁸) in 2002, nomenclature that reveals its higher institutional status.⁹⁹

As discussed in detail in chapter three, however, the overall outcome of these efforts was unsatisfactory in yielding desired rates of literacy, especially for women and rural populations. The Moroccan government cites the following reasons for its strategy's failure to achieve universal literacy during the past 50 years of repeated literacy campaigns:

At the program level:

1. The programs were too monolithic; they addressed the entire population without taking into account the specific needs, expectations and characteristics (gender, age, region, occupation, etc.) of targeted populations.
2. They conveyed general concepts of literacy, copied from concepts based on models from childhood education and pedagogy.
3. Programs did not address the professional and cognitive experiences of the adult learners, and in this respect, were disconnected from daily lives and environment.
4. Program goals did not target means for income generating activities and professional training. In other words, they were not conceived to be tools, among others, to fight poverty.

At the pedagogical level:

5. Since program contents derived from those intended for children's schooling, literacy teachers were bound to childhood pedagogy, not adapted for adults.
6. The lack of education in interpersonal relations rendered the communication with the beneficiaries very difficult, creating a situation of rejection of learning.

At the organizational level:

7. The duration of the cycle of literacy training was long (two years divided into two parts). The rhythm of literacy training was tied strongly to the school rhythm, without concern for particularities of availability of learners, especially in rural areas.

⁹⁷ "Un Maroc sur deux est analphabète: une campagne nationale pour que la lumière soit," *Le Matin* (Rabat, May 28, 2003) <http://www.lematin.ma/rech/rsarticle.asp?tb=article&id=23016>

⁹⁸ Throughout the remainder of this paper I will refer to the *Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education Non Formelle*, or Secretariat of Literacy and Informal Education, as SLIE.

⁹⁹ Royaume du Maroc, "Alphabétisation des adultes au Maroc: Bilan de la période 1997-2003" (Royaume du Maroc: Rabat, 2003) 3-4.

8. The cooperation of all actors remained inefficient, in terms of organization and coordination, as well as motivation and awareness raising of the beneficiaries.
9. The absence of a true pilot project at the national and local levels led to nonexistence of reliable information about the campaign, preventing permanent and rigorous evaluation.
10. The lack of attainable, measurable, and assessable objectives.¹⁰⁰

In addition to these factors identified in a document by the Moroccan government, the national minister in charge of literacy and informal education, Najima Ghazali Tay Tay, “ascribed the weak results of past years’ literacy campaigns to pedagogical reasons, lack of means, infrastructure and supervisors, in addition to program incompatibility with people’s needs. She also deplored the quasi-total absence of the business sector’s support to literacy programs and the ‘weak contribution’ of the civil society and governmental partners...”¹⁰¹ To counter the deficiencies mentioned, which are largely compatible with the guidelines for successful literacy promotion, established in chapter four, the Moroccan government reworked its literacy strategy and launched a new nationwide campaign in May 2003.

March Towards Light

The new campaign, *Massirat Ennour* (March Towards Light), was announced only 12 days after the tragic Casablanca terrorist attacks of May 16th, 2003, which left more than 40 people dead. According to the Moroccan daily newspaper *Le Matin*, “Because it was held up by the disastrous events of Casablanca, the launch of this large campaign to fight illiteracy – one of the very first development projects of the [Prime Minister] Jettou government – the long-standing plan was a first response to the type of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid 4-5.

¹⁰¹ “Over 400,000 people benefit from nationwide literacy campaign,” (ArabicNews.com, Oct. 10, 2003) <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/030710/2003071024.html>

religious extremism that can grow in the breeding grounds of illiteracy, far, very far from knowledge and from its light.”¹⁰² Due to the Casablanca terrorist attacks, the initiation ceremony of “Massirat Ennour” was marked by urgency to combat ignorance and extremism. Prime Minister Driss Jettou underlined the government’s responsibility to accomplish widespread literacy and acknowledged “if illiteracy is the duty of the state, [to combat] it is a right for the citizen and an obligation for everyone.”¹⁰³ The government has therefore set a goal to provide literacy training to about one million Moroccans every year from 2003 to 2015, at which time illiteracy in Morocco will be largely eradicated, according to SLIE.

Under centralized control of the national Secretariat for Literacy and Informal Education, the new campaign is divided into four programs. To more effectively reach groups that are especially affected by illiteracy, explicitly women, each of the campaign’s four programs is tailored to impact a different segment of the population. The *General Campaign*, the largest of the four programs, targeted 570,000 beneficiaries from the general population of illiterates (ages 15–45) in 2003. This program includes populations without defined socioprofessional status and is carried out by the Ministry of National Education and by the Ministry of Youth. The program by *Public Providers* targeted 146,000 persons in the first year of the campaign and works through ministries and public institutions to educate groups facing particular economic hardship. For example, this program is directed at fishermen, farmers, and prisoners. The smallest program aimed at 15,000 beneficiaries, will be undertaken in conjunction with *Private Enterprises*, such as

¹⁰² “Un Maroc sur deux est analphabète: une campagne nationale pour que la lumière soit,” *Le Matin* (Rabat, May 28, 2003) <http://www.lematin.ma/rech/rsarticle.asp?tb=article&id=23016>

¹⁰³ “Un Maroc sur deux est analphabète: une campagne nationale pour que la lumière soit,” *Le Matin* (Rabat, May 28, 2003) <http://www.lematin.ma/rech/rsarticle.asp?tb=article&id=23016>

dairy cooperative and textile clothing trade, and includes general basic and professional education for employees, as part of the government's strategy to increase the economy's competitiveness. The fourth program was launched in 1998 and is administered through NGOs that provide literacy training. SLIE aims to improve the NGOs' professionalism through this program,¹⁰⁴ which is intended to service 269,000 learners in 2003 and especially tries to reach women.¹⁰⁵

As SLIE official Abdellatif Kissami says, in these collaborative efforts SLIE sees its role as coordination, evaluation through independent supervisors, research of funding sources and direct funding, teacher training, creation of literacy manuals for learners and provision of classroom space in schools.¹⁰⁶ In this endeavor SLIE is supported by a Learning and Innovation Loan from the World Bank, enabling the Moroccan government to test its literacy programs, through a pilot project, *Alpha Maroc*, aimed at testing "new approaches to teaching quality and adult literacy program management, which if proven effective, will enable the government of Morocco (GOM) to implement nation-wide programs that result in lasting outcomes."¹⁰⁷ The "Alpha Maroc" project is not separate from the "Massirat Ennour" campaign, but a component of the literacy campaign funded by the World Bank loan making it possible for the Moroccan government to engage in a trial period and evaluation of its programs.

Furthermore, the Alpha Maroc pilot "focuses on the NGO program because it will accommodate the majority of learners in the medium term (see table five), and because

¹⁰⁴ Abdellatif Kissami, official of the Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'alphabétisation et de l'Education non formelle, Personal interview, Rabat January 14, 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Royaume du Maroc, "Alphabétisation des adultes au Maroc: Bilan de la période 1997-2003" (Royaume du Maroc: Rabat, 2003) 8-9.

¹⁰⁶ Abdellatif Kissami, personal interview, Rabat, January 14, 2004.

the NGOs tend to target the poorest population, particularly rural women and girls.”¹⁰⁸

Through the collaboration of the Moroccan government with different partners (state ministries and institutions, private enterprises, and national and international NGOs),

“Massirat Ennour” aims to reach different societal groups to promote equality. In

reference to the country’s development, Abdellatif Kissami, explains that since “women do not [presently] have the capacities to participate in this process”¹⁰⁹ they remain

excluded from both determining their personal and their country’s future.

Table 5: Original Projected Enrollment in the “Massirat Ennour” Programs

Program	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
NGOs	80,000	198,000	269,000	352,000	899,000
Public providers	95,000	122,000	146,000	158,000	521,000
General campaign	120,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	330,000
Private enterprises	5,000	10,000	15,000	20,000	50,000
Total	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	1,800,000

Source: World Bank Report No: 23918-MOR

Through the NGO program the Moroccan government targets the underprivileged – the poor, women and rural inhabitants – with its new campaign, rather than having one blanket strategy for Morocco’s entire illiterate population. In fact, cooperation of all societal groups is one of the main factors leading to improved literacy provision, as identified in the guidelines for success in chapter four, thus marking an improvement in the government’s literacy policy. In practice, how do “Massirat Ennour” components overall measure up to the strategy guidelines for successful literacy promotion described in chapter four and to the Moroccan government’s own criticism of its prior literacy training efforts? The following sections will analyze this question, focusing on the NGO program, which is most relevant to women’s literacy.

¹⁰⁷ World Bank, “Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Learning and Innovation Loan in the Amount of EUR 4.2 Million to the Kingdom of Morocco for an Alpha Maroc Project,” Report No: 23918-MOR (Rabat: World Bank, 2002) 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid 2.

Integration into a Larger Development Agenda

In addition to increased cooperation with stakeholders (learners, government, NGOs, World Bank, etc.), “Massirat Ennour” meets the requirement that literacy be part of a larger government development agenda. In accordance, the Moroccan Secretariat of Literacy and Informal Education explains the role of literacy and education in the government’s development policy:

Investment in human beings is imperative for the development of society as a whole. It is a matter of guaranteeing chances to every member of society for their personal growth and the opportunity to participate in the development effort and bring about economic growth. Education and literacy training represent important dimensions of this investment in the sense that they have a direct impact on development, growth, and employment. They [education and literacy training] are the fundamental pillars of any policy aimed at socioeconomic well-being and lasting human development.¹¹⁰

Recognizing the importance of education in the kingdom’s development process, the Moroccan government refers to literacy training as a priority in its overall development strategy, along with other goals, such as promoting electrification, preventing deforestation, privatizing public enterprises, and decreasing barriers to free trade. In reference to the country’s high illiteracy rate, Moroccan minister in charge of literacy and non formal education, Mme Ghozali, states, “the challenge is among the priorities of the Moroccan government which has already worked out a project based on proposals of King Mohammed VI and the national charter of education and training, focusing on education, employment, health and housing.”¹¹¹ Literacy training is thus

¹⁰⁹ Abdellatif Kissami, personal interview, Rabat, January 14, 2004.

¹¹⁰ Royaume du Maroc, “Campagne national d’alphabétisation pour l’année 2003” (Rabat: Ministère de l’éducation nationale et de la jeunesse chargé de l’alphabétisation et de l’éducation non formelle, 2003) 1.

¹¹¹ “Morocco calls for more efforts to eradicate illiteracy,” (ArabicNews.com, Sept. 9. 2003)

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/030913/2003091319.html>

explicitly integrated into the government's development policy. However, to ensure success, a government strategy for literacy provision must be accompanied by activities to mobilize the general public to participate in the literacy classes provided, as explained below.

Awareness and Mobilization

In light of the immensity of the government's goals – to teach one half of the Moroccan population to read and write by 2015 – Minister Ghozali emphasized that “participation and mobilization are the watchwords” of the campaign and are necessary to “mobilize all components of society: ministries, public institutions, local groups, professional chambers and organizations, NGOs, commercial enterprises, cooperatives, unions, ...”¹¹² to achieve the government's goals by the target date. The Moroccan government has therefore launched a publicity campaign to increase participation, gain widespread support, as well as raise awareness of Morocco's literacy deficit among the groups and institutions mentioned above and the general population.

The government's objective is to encourage potential program beneficiaries and convince their families and Moroccan society in general, of literacy's value through publicity in the mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, etc.). For example, a television spot (in both French and Moroccan Arabic) explaining the importance of literacy for all segments of society in a country's development process is broadcast at strategic times of day when families are most likely to be gathered together, such as after lunch or tea and in the evenings. Through the organization of national literacy days and local promotional events, the awareness campaign furthermore intends to increase

participation of the government's partners. Thus raising awareness, mobilizing support and encouraging participation in its literacy programs are clearly defined components of "Massirat Ennour." Once participants are motivated, the next step is to ensure the quality of curriculum design and teaching methods of a literacy program.

Definitions, Methods, and Teachers

The Moroccan government states that it bases its definition of literacy on the learner's needs and interests and recommends adapting the course content according to learners' daily activities and specific environment. "Massirat Ennour" not only targets participation of diverse groups of society through its four programs, as discussed above, but SLIE also intends that the curriculum design be modified depending on the learners' contexts. SLIE provides the manuals (workbooks), free of charge to each learner. These materials are differentiated in accordance with the needs of each group and its level. Given the importance SLIE attributes to women's education, the government has designed three volumes of literacy manuals specifically targeting women. These manuals aim to teach literacy through the provision of information relevant to women's lives. Therefore the content of the manuals is based on a variety of topics, including lessons on the Qur'an, state institutions, official documents, civic rights, sanitation, health care, nutrition, banks, and post offices. Excerpts from these lessons can be found in Appendix C.

Not all information in the manuals for female learners is necessarily relevant to the entirety of the targeted populations. For example, information about agriculture may not be as applicable to urban women, while it may be very valuable for rural women. The

¹¹² "Un Maroc sur deux est analphabète: une campagne nationale pour que la lumière soit."

Secrétariat therefore suggests to NGOs and other partner institutions providing literacy training that the materials generated by SLIE be modified and complemented to meet the beneficiaries' needs and directly apply to their situations.¹¹³ Hence, the teachers form a critical link between the government's strategy and its practical implementation. Teachers for the NGO program therefore undergo weeklong training during which they are briefed on the merits of the participatory approach of teaching. However, they are not subject to extensive pedagogical training, and many have had no prior teaching experience. As discussed in chapter four, lack of formal qualifications of literacy personal may not necessarily be a drawback in light of their abilities to adapt their curriculum to learners' needs and to engage with the community.

On the other hand, it remains unclear to what extent learners were involved in the overall design, implementation, and evaluation of the "Massirat Ennour" campaign. The manuals were created by SLIE in cooperation with independent Moroccan literacy experts, while the literacy programs are evaluated by SLIE itself on a regular basis. When prompted, Abdellatif Kissami of SLIE was quick to point out that Minister Ghazali regularly visited and spoke with participants in literacy programs throughout the country. However, there appears to be no formal process through which participants are incorporated in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the government campaign.

For example, learners do not have a choice as to the language of instruction. NGO programs teaching Berber or using Berber in the classroom do exist. The language the government is trying to teach literacy in is clearly Modern Standard Arabic. The manuals distributed by SLIE are available neither in Berber nor in French. This is purely a government decision, which does not take learners' opinions into consideration. SLIE

¹¹³ Abdellatif Kissami, personal interview, Rabat, January 14, 2004.

explains that Arabic is the language of the Moroccan state and of the Qur'an and should therefore be the language of instruction, although it is a second or even foreign language for the native Berber speaking population.

Thus, in addition to the beneficial changes to the Moroccan government's literacy strategy under "Massirat Ennour," the new campaign continues to show numerous deficiencies, which are apt to have a negative impact on the government's goal to fully eradicate illiteracy by 2015. The next section will describe these shortcomings.

Persisting Deficiencies and New Challenges

Although the Moroccan government has greatly improved its literacy strategy, the new campaign lacks long-term commitment for sustainable universal literacy of the population. As literacy scholar Manzoor Ahmed was quoted in chapter four, total eradication of illiteracy by a certain date is an inappropriate goal in light of the complexity and social ramifications of illiteracy.¹¹⁴ This is all the more true in a country that has a long history of inefficient literacy strategies and a culture of non-reading and gender exclusion. In addition to set objectives and the commitment of government resources in the short term, permanent universal literacy will require real commitment to a more equal society, particularly with regard to gender and rural-urban divisions in Morocco. Moreover, societal changes are based on long-term time frames. Nevertheless, Abdellatif Kissami of SLIE believes that the government could even accelerate its time line for literacy eradication to reach its goal by 2012 – three years earlier than formally stated.¹¹⁵ However, even if it were possible for SLIE to reach half of the Moroccan

¹¹⁴ See conclusion of chapter four.

¹¹⁵ Abdellatif Kissami, personal interview, Rabat, January 14, 2004.

population with its literacy programs by 2012, literacy training must be reinforced by provision for continued education and post-literacy learning, a stipulation absent from the “Massirat Ennour” campaign.

Literacy training under the government programs lasts for only 10 months and covers 200 hours of classes. After this time period, learners have officially completed the program and have acquired enough knowledge to be declared literate, implying a level of literacy that should allow graduates to fully participate in all activities in which literacy is required for their daily lives and for advancing their personal and their community’s development.¹¹⁶ For adults unfamiliar with formal education and additionally burdened through work and family commitments, however, 10 months is often an insufficient amount of time to acquire such reading and writing skills. The most frequent criticism of the government’s new campaign voiced by the NGOs cooperating with the SLIE program and consulted for this study was the insufficiency of the program’s length. Most teachers and directors of literacy programs thought that programs should run for a minimum of two years to enable learners to become literate. In addition, there is also no official post-literacy training under “Massirat Ennour.”

After 10 months of training and the completion of a qualifying exam, participants are declared literate, thus raising the country’s literacy rate. However, retention of literacy after the completion of classes can be difficult without follow-up classes and opportunities to practice acquired skills.¹¹⁷ At this point, the Moroccan government has no strategy for post-literacy training or adult education. Abdellatif Kissami states that the government had to choose between allocating more resources to basic literacy training

¹¹⁶ See chapter one for a full explanation of functional literacy.

¹¹⁷ See post-literacy in chapter four under *The Government’s Role*.

and implementing a program for post-literacy. The government opted to educate more of the population rather than giving fewer participants the opportunity to read and write and continue their education.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, research indicates that post-literacy is an essential component of literacy training and significantly influences the successfulness of literacy programs. Although SLIE acknowledges the importance of post literacy, it has no plans for the implementation of such programs in Morocco, perhaps because continuing adult education has never been a part of the Moroccan culture. Many of the program directors consulted for this study criticized that lack.

Instead, SLIE appears to be allocating its resources for increased control and evaluation of the NGO programs. For the cooperating NGOs, however, this process often means added work and increased levels of bureaucracy for the very programs that often had been running successfully for many years before the government launched "Massirat Ennour." If NGOs wish to cooperate with the government and receive resources (teacher salaries, manuals, classrooms), they must provide information about their literacy program and sign a convention with SLIE. This procedure is perceived as a tedious and highly bureaucratic process by numerous NGOs consulted for this study. Typically most staff members of the NGOs are unpaid volunteers who feel additionally and unnecessarily burdened by the new campaign's restrictive guidelines. Furthermore, the NGOs expressed concern that the government's new procedures shift control of the programs from the NGOs to SLIE itself, restricting input from the NGO on their own projects. NGOs with literacy programs, on the other hand, have their own policies within the government's larger literacy strategy, which significantly influence the successfulness of literacy programs and will thus be examined more closely in the following chapter.

¹¹⁸ Abdellatif Kissami, personal interview, Rabat, January 14, 2004.

Due to the recent establishment of “Massirat Ennour,” it is not possible to determine conclusively the campaign’s effects on Morocco’s literacy rate or on the country’s overall development process and thus, economic growth, poverty, equality, and other national socioeconomic indicators discussed in chapter two. From the analysis of this chapter it can nevertheless be inferred that the Moroccan government’s new literacy strategy largely conforms to the guidelines for effective literacy promotion established in chapter four, as summarized in Table 6, which should result in more successful outcomes than those of previous Moroccan literacy efforts. However, whether the new campaign meets its ambitious goals of illiteracy eradication by 2015, and more importantly, whether a more literate population will bring about the desired development effects, remains to be seen throughout the coming decade.

Meanwhile, an analysis of the program level, rather than the national level discussed in this chapter, is useful. NGOs’ compliance with the suggested guidelines can be evaluated, as well as the effects of these programs on individual women’s literacy and what impacts literacy acquisition has had on the participants’ lives. The next chapter will therefore provide a comparison and evaluation of the components attributed to successful literacy programs and several women’s literacy programs of Moroccan NGOs located in the urban centers, traditional quarters, and outskirts of Rabat and Casablanca.

*Table 6: Government Strategy versus Guidelines for Successful Literacy Provision
Established in Chapter Four*

Critical factors	Policy guidelines	Moroccan Government Strategy	Consistency of Policy and Moroccan strategy
Political will	-State has to be the prime mover.	-Literacy is a priority to public authorities.	+
Cooperation of state and stakeholders	-State should cooperate with all segments of society.	-SLIE cooperates with other ministries, public institutions, private enterprises, and NGOs.	+
Government control (and strengthening of NGOs)	-Essential but balanced.	-Stronger under SLIE but too strong according to NGOs.	+ -
Integrated development agenda	-Literacy should be part of a larger state development agenda to go hand in hand with economic and social changes.	-Literacy as a means to increase economic competitiveness and overall development.	+
Goal of Equality/ target of underprivileged groups	-Literacy classes and development agenda should target underprivileged.	-SLIE programs are designed to reach most marginalized populations – women and rural areas.	+
Central coordination	-Essential for government control and integrated strategy.	-Centralized under SLIE.	+
Human and financial resources	-Strong commitment	-Provision of manuals, classrooms, teacher salaries, and limited teacher training.	+ -
Mobilization activities (awareness campaigns)	-Essential to create literacy friendly environment and promote participation.	-Publicity campaign to mobilize potential participants and support of general public.	+
Continuous commitment/ sustainability	-Strategy should include long-term.	-One year of classes per learner.	-

Table 6 continued

Critical factors	Policy guidelines	Government Strategy	Accordance
Post literacy and follow-up opportunities	-Essential to avoid relapse into illiteracy	-None.	-
Input/feedback from learners	-Learners should evaluate program.	-No formal process of incorporating learners feedback.	-
Language choice	-Language should be chosen according to learners' interests.	-Modern Standard Arabic is dictated by the government.	-
Instructional methods	-Should be specific to adult literacy training and take characteristics of target group into account.	-Adapted to learner's needs and characteristics, diversified according to each target group.	+
Conception of literacy	-Based on broad learner needs.	-Literacy should pertain to learners' daily activities and specific environment.	+
Teacher training	-Positive work ethic and good rapport with the community are more important than formal qualifications. -Instruction methods based on participatory approach.	-Little training in participatory approach. -Formal qualifications not required. -Unclear basis for teacher selection.	+/-
Attainable, measurable, and assessable objectives	-Flexible yet specific targets attainable within the program's time frame.	-Detailed plan of action and objectives. Attainability questionable.	+/-
Pilot project	-Programs should prove sustainability before large-scale implementation.	-Alpha Maroc pilot project with the World Bank.	+
Income-generating activities	-Include to promote independence, empowerment, and economic well being.	-Incorporated in SLIE literacy programs.	+/-

6. Program Level Strategies – Compliance and Impact

*I knew that if you moved around, your mind worked faster, because you were constantly seeing new things that you had to respond to. And you certainly became more intelligent than someone stuck in a courtyard. Mother was completely convinced of this too, and said that much of the reason why men kept women in harems was to prevent them from becoming too smart. 'Running around the planet is what makes the brain race,' said mother, 'and to put our brains to sleep is the idea behind the locks and the walls.'*¹¹⁹

Before colonial rule (1912-1956) women's presence in public spaces, including attendance at Qur'anic schools, the only primary education providers at the time, was barred by Moroccan society's segregated nature. Apart from women belonging to the small Moroccan elite, few women in cities had the opportunity to leave their living quarters except to visit relatives, go to the bathhouse (*hammam*), or pray in the mosque. During French colonization the government began to provide primary education. Women's presence became tolerated outside the home, enabling the female population to become educated and eventually establish itself as a normal presence on the streets and in the work force. In fact, since the struggle for independence, in which a large number of Moroccan women participated throughout the country, as illustrated in *Voices of Resistance – Oral Histories of Moroccan Women* by Alison Baker,¹²⁰ Moroccan women have made large strides toward legal, economic, and political equality that are becoming increasingly accepted culturally and socially.

¹¹⁹ Fatema Memissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales from a Harem Girlhood*, (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 1994) 186.

¹²⁰ Alison Baker, *Voices of Resistance – Oral Histories of Moroccan Women* (New York: SUNY, 1998).

This process of societal change toward gender equality has been largely influenced by Morocco's increase in non-governmental organizations. Civil society has grown quickly in Morocco during the past two decades, promoting a diverse selection of causes, including rural development, micro finance, human rights, Berber culture, and the status of women. As the first organization, concerned with the advancement of women's rights, the *Association démocratique des femmes du Maroc* (Association of Democratic Moroccan Women), or ADFM, was founded in 1985 from members of the *Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme* (Party of Progress and Socialism), or PPS, to promote women's legal status.¹²¹ Today, women's NGOs are not necessarily affiliated with a political party or even one single cause. The promotion of the Moroccan woman's status, however, has included literacy training from early on, recognizing that women needed to be educated to reach an equal status in the family and in the work force once equal legal status was achieved. In fact, in addition to the struggle to change the *Moudawana*, or personal status code of the family, finally achieved in early 2004, literacy is one of the most important topics for women's NGOs today.

Legal equality, however, could be meaningless to women's daily lives if not accompanied by societal change. Although remarkable changes concerning women's role in society have taken place since colonization due to numerous largely unsatisfying national literacy campaigns, as discussed extensively in chapter three, Moroccan women's literacy lags behind men's reading and writing skills at intolerable levels. It is therefore particularly important to examine how NGOs providing women's literacy training are working to achieve their goals, whether or not their policies comply with the

¹²¹ Guilain Denoeux and Laurent Gateau, "L'essor des associations au Maroc: à la recherche de la citoyenneté?" (*Monde Arabe Maghreb-Machrek*, no. 154, oct.-déc. 1996) 29.

guidelines for successful literacy promotion (established in chapter four), whether the programs are ultimately effective, and finally whether they have the desired impacts on furthering women's health, self esteem, economic situation, and empowerment. The next sections will evaluate these questions through the study of six NGOs with women's literacy programs that cooperate with the *Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education Non Formelle* (SLIE) to differing extents in Rabat and Casablanca, the governmental and commercial capitals of Morocco.

NGO Strategies

Although an integral component of the "Massirat Ennour" campaign, Moroccan NGOs can choose the level of support, and subsequently, the degree of independence from the established governmental strategies they wish to engage. The level of cooperation is in fact based on the decision made by each NGO. Although most NGOs cooperate to some extent with SLIE, they do not necessarily completely conform to the government's strategies, and choose instead to implement their own methods and independent practices, which may be incompatible with the "Massirat Ennour" campaign's policies. In turn, full cooperation with the government causes significant restrictions for the NGO and compromises their decision-making power as a trade-off for support.

Direct government support for NGOs, however, includes only the supply of classrooms, literacy manuals, and salaries for teachers and one supervisor per program. Therefore, NGOs often look for additional funding sources, for example, to pay the rent. Furthermore, NGO strategies can differ significantly from the overall policies dictated by the government (discussed in chapter five), creating a more complex picture of women's

literacy programs in Morocco. The degree of program independence from the government and adherence to “Massirat Ennour” campaign strategies appears to be correlated to the level of support provided by the government, support which indirectly affects the program’s compliance level with the factors for successful literacy provision established in chapter four. As a result, NGO compliance with government strategies may be compromising not only their independence, but also their effectiveness, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The level of NGO cooperation with the Moroccan government ranges from total independence to almost complete commitment and submission, with most NGOs falling in the middle: accepting some but not total government support and conditions. Of the NGOs consulted for this study, *Ribat Al Fath* and *Union de l’Action Féminine (UAF)* accept the most government support and conform most closely to its strategies, while *Femme Action* and *Jossour* are most independent, and *Ligue Démocratique pour les Droits de la Femme (LDDF)* forms the middle ground. Although *Solidarité Féminine* is the most independent from the government, it will only be of minor concern to this study because this particular NGO focuses only marginally on literacy. Table 7 summarizes the degree of NGO cooperation and compliance with the Moroccan government and its literacy strategies.

Table 7: Level of NGO Cooperation and Compliance with SLIE

NGO	Cooperation with SLIE	Compliance with SLIE
Ribat Al Fath	High	Medium
Union de l’Action Féminine	High	High
Ligue Démocratique des Droits de la Femme	Medium	Low
Femme Action	Low	Low
Jossour	Low	Low
Solidarité Féminine	None	None

High SLIE Cooperation – Low Independence

The NGO with the strongest governmental ties is Ribat Al Fath Association for Sustainable Development, founded in 1985 in reaction to the call by late King Hassan II for stronger civil society, in response to fears of increased Islamist extremism. Although proclaiming independence from the government, Ribat Al Fath not only fully subscribes to governmental strategies, but also receives additional support as a semi-entity of the government itself. In fact, the 12 people employed full-time at Ribat Al Fath in Rabat are directly on the government payroll in administrative roles as primary school teachers. These government workers are lent to the association from different government entities and receive the same salary as if they were actually schools teachers or ministry accountants. Furthermore, the government provides the program's workbooks, classrooms, and the association's teacher salaries. To assert that the Ribat Al Fath program is independent from the government and to assign it NGO status therefore appears questionable.

As an organization focusing on Rabat, Ribat Al Fath runs a number of social programs, including the provision of medical checkups, and works to integrate the poor into development while combating environmental and economic problems. The literacy program launched in 1990 has received several national and international prizes, most notably from UNESCO, and, in 2003, had grown to service 2500 learners in 48 locations. The large majority of learners enrolled in Ribat Al Fath courses are women, 70 percent of whom have migrated to Rabat from the countryside. Specific to Ribat Al Fath are the association's efforts to mobilize participants through the provision of essential goods and services, such as medical examinations, eyeglasses, and groceries before religious

holidays. Furthermore, its pedagogical approach (addressing learner's needs and interests) was highlighted by both the association's literature and head of association's literacy commission, Mme Binani, who spends most of her time making on-site visits with the different literacy centers to ensure dialogue and quick response between staff, teachers, and learners.¹²² The frequent on-site visits suggests that learners have the opportunity to voice their opinions about the program and that their needs and interests are taken into account.

The second NGO also allowing strong government involvement in its program is UAF, a large-scale national NGO working for women's advancement at several levels, including legal rights, family violence, and literacy. As one of the first Moroccan NGOs focusing on women's issues, UAF has offered women's literacy classes since 1987. Since the first classes began, about 20,000 women have attained literacy through UAF programs. In greater Rabat (including Temara and Salé), the NGO provides literacy classes at 42 different locations, reaching over 3000 learners at a time. Government manuals are used in class to teach lessons about health, human rights, democracy, and elections. These workbooks, described as specific and helpful to women by UAF representatives, are used by the teachers and program directors without objection. No one mentioned learner participation as an important component of the program, nor was the program adapted to the specific needs and environment of learners.¹²³ Nevertheless, the classrooms at UAF were overfilled with learners and enrollment was high.

Although the UAF and Ribat Al Fath literacy programs are similar in their levels of governmental involvement, they differ slightly in several strategic areas. First, Ribat

¹²² Personal interview with Abdellatif Zaimi, external relations, and Mme Binani, literacy program director, Ribat Al Fath, Rabat, January 19, 2004.

Al Fath focuses on learner participation, while at UAF such practices appear to be absent. Second, at UAF women participate in two-hour classes three times per week, while the Ribat Al Fath classes are one and a half hours in length and are held five days a week. Third, as prescribed by the government, the UAF classes follow the first two literacy manuals for three months each and complete the fourth workbook after an additional four months. Although the UAF representative interviewed conceded that at least two years are usually necessary for a learner to become literate, in actuality total class time adds up to about 200 hours over a period of 10 months, directly following the government's requirements. Due to the restrictions of the "Massirat Ennour" campaign, which provides classrooms, literacy manuals, and teacher and supervisor salaries, UAF is bound to comply with the government regulations and enrolls women only in ten-month programs. Ribat Al Fath agrees that ten months of literacy training are insufficient. However, despite SLIE regulations and strong ties to the government, Ribat Al Fath ignores the ten-month requirement and runs its program on a two-year basis, allowing some learners to participate for up to three years.¹²⁴ Their decision to extend the program supports the argument that Moroccan NGOs cooperate with the SLIE as they choose.

Both UAF and Ribat Al Fath hold classes in the evenings (between five and eight) when families are generally at home, because the use of public school classrooms restricts the time literacy classes can be held. In addition to literacy classes, both programs offer craft classes to motivate income-generating activities. However, no childcare is provided during class time in either program, although some women bring their infants to class. After these courses have ended and learners have successfully

¹²³ Maria, administrator for literacy at UAF, personal interview, Rabat, January 20, 2004.

¹²⁴ Abdellatif Zaimi, Binani, and Maria, personal interview. See Appendix A for full citation.

passed an examination, the female students are declared literate, although some participants choose to retake the course. Neither program provides post-literacy training. Despite both programs' high level of government cooperation, over January both organizations indicated that government control had increased with the new campaign. By increasing the bureaucratic process to receive government support, the government was taking charge of previously existent and effective programs, causing tension between SLIE and NGOs rather than improving relations.¹²⁵

Independent but Under Funded

Precisely because of the increased bureaucratic difficulties in obtaining governmental support, some NGOs, such as Femme Action and Jossour, which had previously cooperated with the government, are no longer willing to pursue the extensive application and review process mandated by SLIE. Neither NGO currently receives teacher salaries through SLIE, while both use government literacy manuals. Furthermore, while Femme Action works for women's development with projects throughout Morocco, the NGO's literacy center, founded in 1994 in the impoverished outskirts of Rabat, services about 420 to 450 women, a number significantly higher since their 1994 opening. Similarly, the Jossour literacy center in the *Medina* (ancient city center) of Rabat is affiliated with a national NGO working for women's equality at all levels, while the literacy center itself only started classes in 1995, and now services about 300 women. Both Femme Action's and Jossour's literacy programs are thus significantly smaller than UAF and Ribat Al Fath efforts in Rabat, making them less desirable partners for the government, which is concerned with large-scale results. Femme Action and Jossour are

¹²⁵ Zaimi, Binani, and Maria, personal interviews. See Appendix A for full citation.

therefore led by volunteers who spend most of their time looking for international funding, granted only for limited periods of time before further financial resources must be found. Although international or private funding sources also require the provision of extensive information and lengthy procedures, in counter distinction to government funding, which usually pays salaries one or two years late, alternative funding sources are more reliable and thus more worthwhile for NGOs.

At the time this study was conducted, however, Jossour had run out of funding three months beforehand, leaving both bills and salaries unpaid while continuing to provide literacy classes. Several teachers had left the NGO and were being replaced by volunteers. The literacy classes continued to run, although the program operated with only three teachers, compared with the former six. The classes in crafts and other income generating activities, however, had to be momentarily interrupted, due to a lack of materials. Femme Action, on the other hand, receives funding from various international sources including the British and Finnish embassies and the British Council. However, Mme Rachiq, one of the founders and principal directors of the national Femme Action NGO, stated that she spends most of her time completing questionnaires for donor information, rather than working with program participants.

On the other hand, Femme Action and Jossour have more independence and are not bound to governmental strategies, a freedom that cultivates both positive and negative implications. For example, both NGOs hold literacy classes in the mornings and afternoons while women's families are often times at work or school, which means that women are free from their domestic responsibilities. This time frame, rather than programs using public school classrooms in the evening when women are generally

expected to be at home with their families, allows a greater number of women to attend classes. Childcare, on the other hand, is provided only by Jossour, since to Femme Action lacks the necessary space.

More significantly with respect to the “Massirat Ennour” strategy and the guidelines established in chapter four, the total length of the literacy program is extended because of the NGOs’ increased level of independence from the government. Both Femme Action and Jossour calculate three years of literacy training per learner, and participants are able to continue attending classes as long as they wish. Some women reportedly retake several of the classes to enhance their comprehension. Neither program includes a formal participatory approach to program design, implementation, management, and evaluation, as directors and teachers were largely responsible for these components. However, directors, teachers, and learners indicated that both programs facilitated dialogue to incorporate participants’ needs and interest in the classes. Furthermore, both programs use SLIE literacy manuals, which directly target women’s everyday needs and interests, as shown in Appendix C. Femme Action’s and Jossour’s decision to break away from cooperating with the government because of its high bureaucratic and regulatory nature, allows these NGOs to be more independent and to keep pursuing more effective literacy strategies, such as holding classes during the day and providing continuous education.

Government Support with Independent Participatory Approach

The only program officially incorporating active participation as a principal component of the program’s philosophy and pedagogy is the Ligue Démocratique des

Droits de la Femme (LDDF), a large national NGO with headquarters in Casablanca. LDDF was founded in 1993 to combat discrimination and improve women's rights with a focus on feminist activism. In 1994, the LDDF began providing literacy classes for women and has since educated 10,000 beneficiaries nationwide. Although the LDDF accepts government support for teacher salaries, the NGO is strictly opposed to SLIE manuals, criticizing the workbooks' discriminatory character. Participants themselves propose the themes of the classes, focusing on the LDDF's spirit of women's rights and equality, while teachers facilitate lessons and discussions. Furthermore, classes are given during the day, according to learners' needs, in classrooms rented by the LDDF. Childcare, however, is not provided and it is rare that women bring their children to class.

A drawback to the LDDF participatory approach, however, is its method of teaching basic literacy. The LDDF does not work with literacy manuals, forcing learners to copy all information from the board (a difficult task for illiterates), while only occasionally providing photocopied materials. Although officially bound by government regulations to provide literacy training for ten months per learner in return for government-funded teacher salaries, LDDF does not set a time limit on learner participation in its literacy programs. This independent attitude is further enhanced through outside funding sources, decreasing LDDF's need for SLIE support and compliance. Thus, although no post-literacy training is formally introduced, classes inevitably become post-literacy classes as learners obtain higher skill levels and continue to participate in more advanced classes, breaking with the government strategies but complying with the guidelines for successful literacy provision established in chapter four.

Although formally a component of the “Massirat Ennour” campaign as the principal provider of women’s literacy, Moroccan NGOs with literacy programs thus do not necessarily conform to all government’s strictures and remain relatively independent entities, as indicated by this small sample of NGOs visited in Rabat and Casablanca. Due to the plethora of different approaches towards literacy provision within the governmental protocol, evaluation of these governmental policies becomes relatively meaningless if governmental strategies are not followed by NGOs. Certainly, compliance with governmental strategies could improve in the future, since at the present point implementation of the “Massirat Ennour” campaign, and its eventual protocol are currently still in their beginning phases. Furthermore, SLIE intends for each NGO to apply different approaches to the specific contexts of their learners. Nevertheless, despite non-compliance on several factors with the “Massirat Ennour” campaign, women’s NGO-sponsored literacy programs – whether directly supported by the Moroccan government or not –are still impacting beneficiaries’ lives significantly. The next section will therefore first seek to evaluate the results of the different programs consulted in terms of successful literacy provision, before analyzing the factors determining these impacts.

Impacts of Literacy

As seen in chapter two, literacy is associated with a large number of benefits for the learner, the participant's direct environment, and the national development processes. Most directly applicable to a learner's life, literacy classes should have positive impacts on the learner's health, economic situation, self-esteem, and empowerment. Increasing economic development, political participation, and democracy at a national level, on the other hand, are national goals, which cannot be evaluated because of the small sample of the programs studied. Successful literacy promotion, however, should contribute to the attainment of the personal benefits discussed above. So far, the focus of this study has been to determine the important factors in successful literacy provision according to literacy experts, comparing these factors with the Moroccan government's strategy, and studying various NGO policies. However, due to the limitations discussed in the methodology section, data on the impact on participants' lives could not be obtained from all organizations. Furthermore, only one of the NGOs consulted provided exact records on such success indicators as participant numbers and completion and dropout rates. Most literacy program directors consulted estimated these numbers between 70 and 90 percent for program completion levels, rather than concluding from collected information. Therefore, evaluation of the effectiveness of a program is based on its impact on women's personal lives rather than on the program's accomplishments. As will be illustrated, the data collected reveal relevant information about the ramifications of literacy training for urban Moroccan women, indicating significant benefits to learners' everyday lives. Some expected benefits, however, such as financial well-being and improved health, were not reported, as will be seen in the next section.

Economic Status and Health

None of the women questioned, all of whom had participated in their literacy program for a significant amount of time, reported changes in their economic situation or health. Very few of the women consulted had ever worked outside the house and most had no intention of doing so, because their husbands were generally employed and earned sufficient money to support the family. Although most women consulted were not well off financially, they were not poor enough to be forced to contribute to household income. As Fatema Idrissi, a 38-year-old woman attending literacy classes with Jossour in the ancient medina of Rabat, explained, "I don't take classes to find work. I take classes for my everyday life."¹²⁶ Furthermore, many of the women were older and were not interested in finding employment at their stage in life. The learners interviewed mentioned neither improvement to their own, nor to their families' health even when specifically questioned on this subject. Given that economic status and health conditions are closely correlated, as discussed in chapter two, unchanged health in light of unchanged financial situations is not surprising. Nevertheless, the impact of literacy on the health and economic situations of these women and their families could prove to have long-term intergenerational effects, which cannot be accounted for in this study. However, at least in the short term, impacts on economic status and the health of participants consulted were reported as insignificant.

¹²⁶ Fatema Idrissi, program participant, personal interview, Jossour, Rabat, January 21, 2004.

Self-Esteem, Self-reliance, Independence, and Empowerment

On the other hand, literacy generally had large impacts on women's self-esteem. Nearly all learners questioned reported an increase in self-worth, self-reliance, and a feeling of completeness in response to literacy classes. An image often used by participants to describe illiteracy was darkness. Literacy, however, as Halima Abou Ala stated, made her feel as though the dark room she had been in before was suddenly lit up, enabling her to see clearly and to become more independent.¹²⁷ Women put their new skills to use every day while finding the right bus, bank, post office counter, or the name of a street. Literacy further provides skills for bargaining in the market, conducting telephone calls, helping children and grandchildren with homework, and reading the Qur'an or letters – tasks learners could not perform without assistance before enrolling in literacy classes. Through the ability to read and write, women feel more independent, complete and capable of controlling their every day activities.

Furthermore, the literacy-training participants received increased their confidence to engage in activities unrelated to reading, activities which women felt themselves incapable of performing before beginning classes. Hadija Khadit, for example, a 52-year-old woman originally from the region of Kenifra, traveled to France by herself to visit her son. Once in France, Hadija traveled across the country alone on a bus without knowing French. Hadija feels the literacy classes gave her the confidence to make the trip, inspiring her to acquire more knowledge and to begin learning French after mastering Arabic.¹²⁸ Other learners interviewed have similarly taken advantage of their newly found

¹²⁷ Halima Abou Ala, program participant, personal interview, Jossour, Rabat, January 21, 2004.

¹²⁸ Hadija Khadit, program participants, personal interview, Femme Action, Rabat, January 23, 2004.

independence to travel by themselves, to visit relatives within Morocco, or participate in pilgrimages.

Learners' new skills, independence, and confidence, also changed their status within their families, indicating higher levels of empowerment. Many of the women questioned reported they had been portrayed as ignorant in their families before taking literacy classes. However, their education has not only given them a sense of self-worth but also established them as knowledgeable members of the family, able to make decisions and provide advice. For example, several women reported their husbands never took them seriously before becoming literate. Now that their wives are literate and knowledgeable about practical information provided in the government manuals, however, these same husbands look to their wives for advice or must ask them to read official letters to them when husbands themselves are illiterate. In this way, women's literacy became an asset to the whole family, and thereby elevated women's status.

Thus, contrary to the presumptions of literacy's benefits outlined in chapter two, the economic situation and health conditions as reported by these learners remained unchanged in light of literacy training. On the other hand, significant effects on women's confidence, empowerment, and self-esteem can be recorded, affirming the importance of literacy to learners' lives. In this sample, literacy thus proved to have important impacts on women's lives, and hence on society as a whole, by elevating women's status and participation. The next section will further examine these achievements and identify the factors that lead to the development of women's personal potential.

Significant Factors: Political Will, Awareness, and Mobilization

Although families may be opposed to women's literacy training at first, such tendencies have become increasingly rare over the past decade, according to most literacy program directors and learners consulted. When literacy training for women first began in the late 1980s, opposition from families and the communities where programs were located was quite strong, while the general public itself did not comprehend or believe in the potential benefits of women's literacy for families and nations alike.

However, opinions about women's literacy in Morocco are changing, and families of participants are more supportive. Fatema Barun, a 50-year-old woman originally from the Zagora region bordering the Sahara, said televised spots focusing on literacy awareness had changed her family's attitude about her literacy classes. When Fatema began taking literacy classes at Ribat Al Fath, her family made fun of her, but after her family members saw an advertisement for the association on television they encouraged her to continue. In fact, most women consulted stated that their families were very encouraging of the literacy classes and understood that their wife's or mother's education took precedent over domestic demands. These outcomes strongly suggest the success of the Moroccan government's current large scale awareness campaign in reducing the barriers to literacy acquisition and mobilizing all actors of society to create a literacy friendly environment. In accordance with the guidelines established in chapter four, political will, awareness raising, and mobilization of all segments of society thus appear to be significant factors in successful literacy provision.

Income Generating Activities

Although income-generating activities (primarily in the form of crafts such as decoration, sewing, and needle work) were incorporated into each of the NGO sponsored literacy programs, they did not appear to have the desired effects, as participants reported no changes in economic status. The Moroccan government explicitly criticized the lack of income generating activities in former campaigns and thus included this component in its strategies for the “Massirat Ennour” campaign. However, these activities appeared to be viewed more as a pastime by participants than as an opportunity to improve their financial situations. Furthermore, income-generating activities targeted informal work without promoting formal employment. As Kbira Charkaoui, a 47 year old learner who had been attending literacy classes for five years, stated, “I don’t think these classes can help me find work.”¹²⁹ The efforts aimed to promote women’s financial status were thus inadequate to meet the government’s objectives. Nor were they considered by participants or NGOs as a serious opportunity for generating income. However, program participants indicated that such activities were significant factors in attracting them to literacy programs. Thus, although crafts classes did not appear to create real opportunities for financial improvements, these activities nevertheless are valuable factors in attracting participants.

Language Choice

As suggested by government strategies, all NGO programs consulted taught literacy of Modern Standard Arabic, while utilizing Moroccan Arabic to facilitate classes and explain concepts. Although many of the women attending classes were not native

speakers of Arabic, language did not appear to be a significant factor in the success of the programs or progress of learners. In counter distinction, it appeared that learners had accepted Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, the Moroccan government, and print media and television, as the language of literacy. Berber participants were neither opposed to learning Arabic nor did they indicate learning difficulties, as they had usually acquired knowledge of Moroccan Arabic by socializing with neighbors and living within largely Moroccan Arabic speaking populations prior to beginning literacy classes. Thus, although the choice to teach Modern Standard Arabic was a political decision by the Moroccan government, it did not appear to be a critical factor creating barriers to literacy training for learners. Literature discussed in chapter four, on the other hand, suggests that language of literacy training should be adapted to learners' needs and interests rather than dictated. In the case of urban Arab and Berber women in Morocco, however, the government's choice seems to overlap with the desires and needs in the everyday lives of learners since Moroccan Arabic is the language of most practical value to them.

Human versus Financial Resources

Jossour and Femme Action illustrate the importance of strong leadership and competent human resources, as discussed by Arnove and Malone in chapter four. Both Jossour and Femme Action have been able to sustain themselves without ongoing support from the Moroccan government or international institutions due to their directors' strong leadership. Furthermore, the associations' employees show strong commitment to women's literacy without financial remuneration, which can be sporadic for teachers and staff members and is non-existent for the directors. In fact, directors and teachers often

¹²⁹ Kbir Charkaoui, program participant, personal interview, LDDF, Casablanca, January 15, 2004.

spend their personal resources on materials for the learners or do not ask to be reimbursed for expenses related to their occupations with the literacy programs. However, Aïcha Benbouker, *Déléguée du Secrétariat de l'Etat chargé de la Jeunesse* (Delegate to the Youth Ministry) in Salé, who oversees the literacy classes for women in government youth centers and other public institutions in Rabat's twin city, stated it was not possible to implement the ministry's planned literacy programs because of a lack of funding. Therefore literacy efforts had been temporarily abandoned in the programs sponsored by the Youth Ministry in January 2004.¹³⁰ On the other hand, because Jossour's and Femme Action's staff invests its time and energy, the NGOs' literacy programs continued to run when funding sources were no longer available. Thus, strong leadership and committed human resources in the absence of ongoing funding, as found at Jossour and Femme Action, appear to be more important factors in literacy delivery than government financial support. This finding concerning the sustainability of literacy programs, corresponds to the suggestions by Arnove and Malone discussed in chapter four.

Participation of Learners

Although only one of the NGOs consulted for this study formally incorporated learners' participation as one of the program policies, aspects of such participation could be seen in every program. In fact, all programs took learners' specific needs and interests into consideration, as participants generally approached teachers or program directors with suggestions or concerns. Directors and teachers meanwhile appeared open to input from learners, respected their opinions and suggestions, and treated them as respected adults. Furthermore, with the exception of LDDF, the only NGO formally incorporating

¹³⁰ Aïcha Benbouker, *Déléguée de l'Etat chargé de la Jeunesse*, personal interview, Salé, January 27, 2004.

learner participation into curriculum design, the NGOs consulted used the government literacy manuals, which provide valuable information for learners' everyday needs, thus automatically incorporating a design applicable to learners' characteristics and contexts, without consulting every learner in the program. As Zhor Rachiq, director of Femme Action stated, "The beneficiaries would not participate in our classes if what we taught didn't interest them. They would be bored. Therefore we treat subject matter that is interesting to them and that they can use in their daily activities."¹³¹ Thus, although the government literacy manuals were designed by literacy experts hired by SLIE, learners considered the information in the manuals, provided free of charge, highly relevant to their everyday lives, promoting their interests while teaching literacy and thus creating motivation and participation. Attaining the desired results of meeting learners' needs and interests, the government literacy manuals can therefore be considered a compatible alternative to direct learner participation, and thus, a positive aspect of the "Massirat Ennour" campaign.

A key component of individual learner success is the quality of personal will, the most basic precondition to literacy acquisition. In the five NGOs discussed so far, women were attracted to the literacy programs because they themselves wanted to learn to read and write. However, with Solidarité Féminine, an NGO in Casablanca that focuses on integrating outcast single mothers into society by providing professional training, legal advice, health care, and literacy classes, women are not given the choice of whether to participate in literacy classes or not. As part of a comprehensive program, women are required to attend literacy classes and often display disinterest and low motivation. Rajae, the literacy teacher at Solidarité Féminine, thus reports poor progress and beneficiary

¹³¹ Zhor Rachiq, program director, personal interview, Femme Action, January 16, 2004.

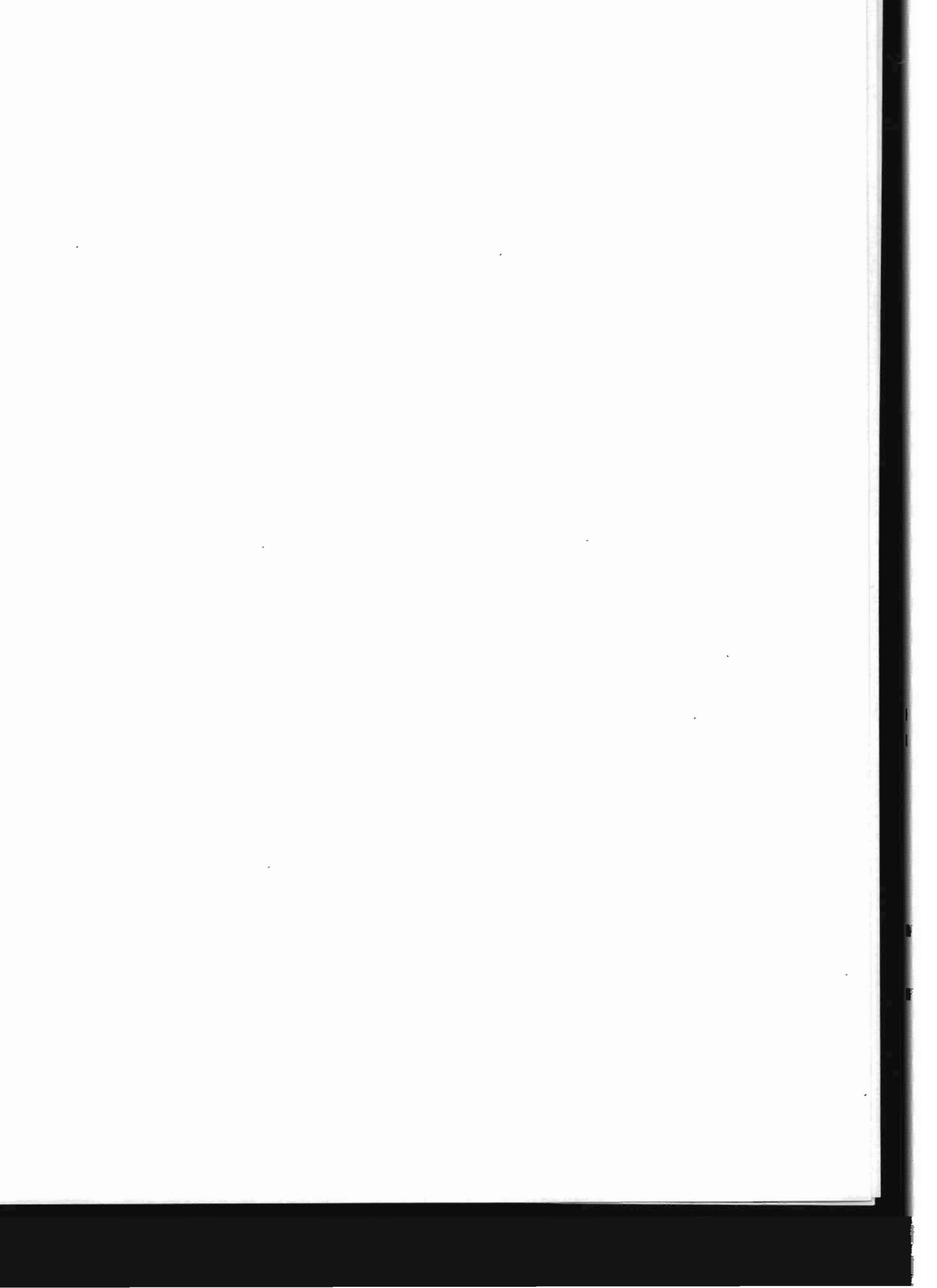
disengagement from classes,¹³² a phenomenon virtually inexistent in the five other NGOs consulted, where women attend literacy classes on a voluntary basis and are usually eager to learn and participate. Hence, the conclusion that personal motivation is the underlying factor for learner participation and successful literacy acquisition.

In summary, learners' participation, or input from learners, to program design according to learners' interests and needs is one of the most important components of successful literacy provision. However, the information collected for this study indicates that individual will and commitment must be accompanied by political will and commitment, awareness campaigns and mobilization of all segments of society to create a literacy friendly environment and to minimize barriers to education. When these factors work in concert, the Moroccan government and the strategies for successful literacy provision established in chapter four could produce the desired results. Also highly important are human resources and strong leadership that ensure commitment and sustainability, factors highlighted in chapter four, although not addressed by the Moroccan government. Other factors that carry less significance to successful outcomes are SLIE strategies in support of income generating activities, government funding, and choice of target language, particularly in the urban Moroccan context, where literacy in Arabic is perceived as most useful, in accordance with government strategies.

As a whole, the Moroccan government's new campaign can therefore generally be seen as beneficial. In particular, the government's provision of literacy manuals to learners and the awareness campaign to mobilize all segments of society is creating an environment where both literacy and women's potential can further grow. On the other hand, the short time period allowed per learner through the government programs may

¹³² Rajae, literacy teacher, personal interview, Solidarité Féminine, January 28, 2004.

hamper the potential of sustaining the objective of widespread literacy with the “Massirat Ennour” campaign. At the moment, this deficiency is still being compensated through more independent NGOs which are resisting government regulations and implementing their own, more long-term, literacy approaches. However, this independence and increased time frame of literacy classes could be lost if the government continues to enforce its regulations on NGOs without listening to the voices of program directors and learners alike, who are calling for the extension of classes. Without longer classes or post-literacy, government efforts may yield positive yet *unsustainable* results, proving “Massirat Ennour” to be yet another failed Moroccan literacy campaign, leaving the potential of millions of Moroccans unrealized and continuing to deny women the opportunity to participate in the country’s future.



Conclusion

*'Morocco has changed quickly, little girl,' she often told me, 'and it will keep on doing so.'*¹³³

Although almost completely barred from basic literacy only fifty years ago, Moroccan women have begun their education, and they are eager to continue. In fact, when asked what they would change about their literacy programs, most women stated they would simply like to take more classes. Moreover, every classroom observed over the month-long field research period was filled to the last seat. In some instances, women were leaning against walls or sharing chairs during classes. The observed NGOs did not have the capacity to sufficiently service all learners they attracted. Nevertheless, according to the Moroccan government's ambitious plans, every illiterate Moroccan woman will learn to read and write by 2015, when illiteracy will be eradicated in the country.

According to the strategies for successful literacy provision established in chapter four, the "Massirat Ennour" campaign fulfills most of the relevant criteria, predicting successful attainment of the government's goals of illiteracy eradication. The government's campaign design, tailored specifically to differing groups of learners,

¹³³ Fatema Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales from a Harem Girlhood*, (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 1994) 37.

especially targets the most marginalized Moroccans – women. As a result of this training, newly literate Moroccan women feel more self confident, independent, and empowered, and are able to utilize their new skills to facilitate everyday activities. Thus, Moroccan women are more likely to realize their potential in personal growth, self-sufficiency, and economic achievement, in illustration of the objective of King Mohammed VI to create a more modern and democratic nation. Morocco has been taking more and more steps in the direction desired by its sovereign ruler. With the reform of the Moudawana, the personal status code of the Moroccan family, women’s legal equality is progressing, providing women with more rights on such important issues as divorce and child custody.

Nevertheless, Moroccan society continues to be segregated and patriarchic. In the minds of many Moroccans, a woman’s place remains in the home, outside of public spaces. Even highly educated Moroccan women are faced with significant barriers to promotion and acceptance in the work force. Many Moroccan women themselves associate women who do not need to work outside the home, due to their husbands’ financial security, with prestige, an important ideal in a society where status and outside appearance are more relevant than reality.

Only real changes in the status of women’s literacy in Morocco – not merely a large campaign promising to boost literacy rates in the short-term – will procure the quality of progress in modernization and democratization of the Moroccan state called for by King Mohammed VI. Whether the “Massirat Ennour” campaign results only in increased literacy rates, or whether it causes real and lasting changes, not only for the country’s literacy environment but also for its development process, for its poverty levels, and for social and gender equality, remains to be seen. Meanwhile, large numbers of

Moroccan women are continuing to realize their potential in terms of personal growth, independence, and empowerment, through realization of individual development goals – learning to read and write.

Appendix A: Institutions Consulted and Persons Interviewed

Centre Annajda SOS/Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF)

Address: 425 Avenue Hassan II, no. 3, Diour Jamaa, Rabat

Telephone & Fax: (212-37) 72-72-22

E-mail: uaf@mtds.com

Literacy Director: Maria, January 20, 2004
Participants: Saadia Mohammed, January 22, 2004
Fatema Rachmani, January 22, 2004
Ouchen Rokaya, January 22, 2004

Femme Action

Address: 1, bis rue Moulay Idriss, appt. 2, Rabat Hassan

Telephone: (212-37) 26-22-94

Email: womenaction@yahoo.fr

Director: Zhor Rachiq, January 16, 2004
Participants: Fatema Shaoui, January 23, 2004
Hadija Khadit, January 23, 2004
Fatema Alaoui, January 23, 2004
Rachida Brarun, January 23, 2004

Jossour - Forum des femmes marocaines

Centre d'Alphabétisation Juridique

Address: 24, Rue Zaouia Naciriya Boukroune, Rabat

Telephone & Fax. (212-37) 73-61-65

Email: Kcas@iam.net.ma

Director: Fatema Sekkak, January 12, 2004
Participants: Halima Abou Ala, January 21, 2004

Fatema Douglaz, January 21, 2004
Fatema Idrissi, January 21, 2004

LDDF, La ligue Démocratique pour les Droits de la Femme

Address: 317, Rue Mustapha El Maani, No. 17, Casablanca
Telephone: (212-22) 29.78.69
E-mail: lddf@iam.net.ma

Publicity Representative: Bouchra Abdou, January 13, 2004
Participant: Kbira Charkaoui, January 15, 2004

Ribat Al Fath

Address: Avenue Mehdi Ben Barka,
rue Madani Ben El Housni
B.P. 1390 Souissi, Rabat, Maroc
Telephone : 212 37 75 61 06 / 08
E-mail : ribat@magrebnet.net.ma

Public Relations: Abdellatif Zaimi, January 19, 2004
Director of Literacy: Mme Binani, January 19, 2004

Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education non formelle

Address: Avenue Al Abtal, Agdal, Rabat
Telephone: (212-37) 77-05-24

Officer for NGO program: Abdellatif Kissami, January 14, 2004

Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de la Jeunesse

Salé

Ministry delegate: Aicha Benbouker, January 27, 2004

Solidarité Féminine

Address: 10, Rue Mignard, quartier Palmier, Casablanca
Telephone: (212-22) 25-46-46 / (212-22) 99-06-67
E-mail: solidaritéféminine@atlasnet.net.ma

Public Relations: Hafida El Baz, January 26, 2004
Literacy Director: Rajae, January, 28, 2004

Appendix B

Government Questionnaire

- Why is literacy important?
- What are the government's objectives in increasing the literate population in Morocco?
- Why does the Moroccan government believe educating women is important?
- How is the government working to help more Moroccans to become literate?
- Why do you believe Morocco's literacy rate is relatively low compared with countries of similar economic status/ with its neighbors?
- Does the Moroccan government cooperate with any international organizations to increase its literate population? How?
- What are the largest challenges that the Moroccan government faces in helping more Moroccans to become literate?
- Do you believe it is necessary to change Moroccans' opinions about literacy to improve the literacy rate?
- How do you think a more literate population will change the future of Morocco?
- Have increases in the literate population in Morocco positively influenced the country's economic development? How?

Questionnaire for literacy program directors

- Name of the organization:
- How long has this organization existed/how long has it been involved in literacy work?
- What is the primary focus of the organization?
- Why is it important for women to become literate?
- What goals does the program hope to achieve as a result of the literacy program?
For:
 - The learners
 - The community
 - The nation as a whole
- What are the short-term objectives of the program?
- How many women does the program wish to graduate and in what period of time?
- With what level of literacy does the program wish to provide its participants?
How is "literacy" defined?
- How many women are currently taking classes through the program?
- How many hours per week do participants spend in class?
- How long do women take classes? What is the overall number of hours of literacy classes to complete the program?
- What percentage of participants who start the program complete it?
- Do you consult participants to help design the literacy program?
- Do the classes address the needs and interests of participants?
- What materials does the curriculum incorporate? Is the curriculum learner-oriented in terms of incorporating practical information?
- Do participants evaluate the program? Is there a way for participants to give feedback to the teachers or program directors? (formal/informal process?)
- Is the time of the classes designed to be convenient for the participants?
- Do you provide mothers with a space for their children during classes?
- How does the program try to motivate participation?
- How is the program funded?
 - How does the funding source influence the literacy program?
 - Long-term goals
 - Short-Term objectives
 - Curriculum
 - Learner participation in program activities
- Does the program work in cooperation with any other organization/the state? In what ways do you cooperate? Why is this cooperation important?
- Is this organization supported by the Moroccan government in any way?
- Is this organization supported by an international organization in any way?
- What are the largest challenges that the program faces?
- What are the largest challenges to literacy in Morocco and in general?

Student Questionnaire

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What is your mother tongue?
- Where are you from? Where did you grow up?
- Are you married?
- Do you have children? How many? Do you have grandchildren?
- Have you had any formal education? If yes, how long did you go to school?
- Have you taken literacy classes before?
- How long have you been participating in this literacy program?
- What are your long-term goals in becoming literate? (Finding a job, reading the Qur'an...) What do you hope to accomplish by becoming literate?
- What are your immediate objectives? Do you have smaller goals that you have set for yourself along the way? (Writing one's name, reading an advertisement, etc.)
- What motivates you to participate in literacy programs?
- Are you employed or were you previously employed?
- Where?
- For how long?
- What type of work did you do?
- Have the literacy classes helped you to find employment?
- Do you think you will have better chances of finding employment once you are literate?
- Were you consulted to help design the literacy program?
- Do the classes meet your needs and interests?
- Does the teacher take your needs and interests into consideration?
- Do you evaluate the program? Is there a way for you to give feedback to the teachers or program directors?
- Is the time of the class convenient for you?
- Is the location of the classes convenient to you?
- Have the literacy classes improved the conditions of your everyday life? In what ways?
- Have the literacy classes had a positive impact on your:
 - Health
 - Economic situation
 - Self-esteem
 - Empowerment
 - Status within your family
- In what ways?
- What obstacles have you had to overcome to attend literacy classes?
- How could your literacy class be improved?

Appendix C: Excerpts from Government Literacy Manuals

Lessons from the Qur'an (Manual 2)



المعاملات الدينية

البطاقة

7

..... نعم الله

قرآن كريم



سورة النحل 118 128

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 أَمْرًا اللَّهُ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ بِعَيْتِهِ وَعَلَىٰ عَتَا شَرِكُونِ ﴿١١٨﴾ يَنْزِلُ
 الْعَذَابُ بِالرِّيحِ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُمْ
 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿١١٩﴾ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ تَعَالَىٰ
 عَتَا شَرِكُونِ ﴿١٢٠﴾ تَقَالَىٰ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ نَفْقَةٍ إِذْ أُوْحَصِمَ مُبِينٌ
 ﴿١٢١﴾ وَاللَّهُمَّ خَلَقْنَاكَ كَمَا عَادُوا وَمَنْفَعٌ وَمِنَافِعُ خَالُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾
 وَكُنْ بِهَا جَمَالٌ عِيسَ تَرْجُونَ تَوْحِيدَ تَسْرُحُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَتَعْمَلُ أَنْفَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ
 بَلَدِهِمْ تَكُونُوا بِالْغَيْبِ الْأَبْشِقِ الْأَنْفِيسِ إِنْ رَيْتُمْ لَرُؤْفَ رَحِيمٍ ﴿١٢٤﴾
 وَالنَّيْلِ وَالْيَعَالِ وَالنَّجْوَىٰ وَتَكُونُوا فِيهَا رَاقِبَةً مُقَامُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَعَلَىٰ
 اللَّهُ فَضْلُ السَّبِيلِ وَمَنْ عَظَمَهُ لَ وَنَسَاءَ لَعَدِبُكُمْ بِأَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي
 أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ نُجِيبُكُمْ رِيسْمُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ يُنِيبُ
 لَكُمْ بِهِ الرِّيحَ وَالرِّيْحُونَ وَالنَّيْلَ وَالْأَعْتَابَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْغَمْرَانَ إِنْ فِيهِ
 ذَلِكُ لَا يَتَّبِعُكُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

مدفله مطبر

- استمع إلى تلاوة الآيات الكريمة، وانقرأها بتدبرك :
- حاول أن تحتفظ آيات معينة من السورة، بمساعدة مكتوبك :

بِقَضَلِ كُنَاشِ الْحَالَةِ الْمَدَنِيَّةِ يَحْصُلُ الْمُوَاطِنُ عَلَى :

- ◆ نُسْخَ عُقُودِ الْإِزْيَادِ.
- ◆ شَوَاهِدِ الْحَيَاةِ.
- ◆ شَوَاهِدِ الْوَفَاةِ.

بِطَاقَةُ التَّعْرِيفِ الْوَطَنِيَّةِ



بِطَاقَةُ التَّعْرِيفِ الْوَطَنِيَّةِ تُمْكِّنُ الْمُوَاطِنَ مِنْ :

- ◆ إِثْبَاتِ الْهَوِيَّةِ.
- ◆ سَحْبِ الْأَمْوَالِ.
- ◆ التَّصَدِيقِ عَلَى الْإِمْتِضَاعَاتِ وَتَحْرِيرِ الْعُقُودِ.
- ◆ الْإِدْلَاءِ بِشَهَادَةٍ.

لَا حَاصِلَ عَلَى جَوَازِ السَّفَرِ يَلْزَمُ أَنْ أَتَوْفَّرَ عَلَى الْوُكُاتِقِ الْآتِيَةِ :

جَوَازُ السَّفَرِ



- ◆ 1 نموذج لبطاقة المعلومات مع طابع من فئة 100 درهم.
- ◆ 2 نسخ من عقد الإزدياد أو شهادة الحالة المدنية.
- ◆ 3 صور شمسية.
- ◆ 1 نسخة مصححة لبطاقة التعريف الوطنية للأشخاص البالغين أكثر من 18 سنة.
- ◆ 1 شهادة تثبت المهنة.
- ◆ 1 شهادة الإقامة مسلمة من طرف مصلحة الشرطة.
- ◆ 1 طابع بريدي من فئة 300 درهم.
- ◆ 1 جواز سفر قديم.



القراءة والكتابة

البطاقة

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الخدمات البريدية

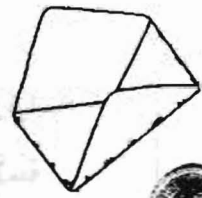
اسمع وأقرأ:

يَقْدَمُ الْبَرِيدُ لِلْمُؤَاظِنِ خَدَمَاتٍ عَظِيمَةً
تُسَاعِدُ الْمُواظِنَ عَلَى التَّوَاصُلِ مَعَ
النَّاسِ عَنْ طَرِيقِ الْمُرَاسَلَةِ، أَوِ الْهَاتِفِ،
وَتُمْكِنُهُ مِنْ قَضَاءِ أَعْرَاضِهِ الْاجْتِمَاعِيَّةِ.



أفهم وأجيب:

- أَسْطُرْ عَلَى الْجُمَلِ الَّتِي تَتَضَمَّنُ خَدَمَاتِ الْبَرِيدِ :
- أَصِلْ كُلَّ خِدْمَةٍ بَرِيدِيَّةٍ بِالصُّورَةِ الْمُنَاسِبَةِ لَهَا :



- ◆ الْمُعَامَلَاتُ الْمَالِيَّةُ
- ◆ الْإِتِّصَالُ الْهَاتِفِيُّ
- ◆ الْمُرَاسَلَاتُ
- ◆ الطَّوَالِيعُ الْبَرِيدِيَّةُ

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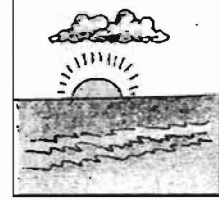
الماء نعمة من الله فمن أين يأتي؟



مياه جوفية

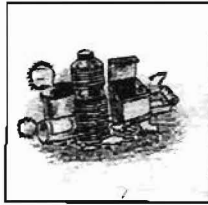


مياه الأنهار



مياه البحر

المكونات الأساسية للماء



المنزلية



الصناعية



الزراعية

تُبدلُ مجهودات كبيرة لتوفير
الماء الصالح للشرب، لذلك
يجب على المواطن أن يحافظ
عليه، ويستهلكه استهلاكاً
مُتزنًا في:

- ◆ نظافته
- ◆ نظافة منزله وأوانيه.
- ◆ الزراعة والأفلاحة.
- ◆ عدم تلويثه.

- عن المكتب الوطني للماء الصالح للشرب -





التعبير والتواصل

البطاقة

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استخدام الفعل

أَخْشَاوُ وَأُنَافِئُ :

لِلرَّجُلِ وَالْمَرْأَةِ
حَقَّ الْعَمَلِ
وَكَسَبُ الرِّزْقِ



الْعَمَلُ الشَّرِيفُ
وَاجِبٌ عَلَى
الْمُؤَاطِنِ



الْعَمَلُ عِبَادَةٌ





القراءة والكتابة

البطاقة

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حَقِّقِ الْمَرْأَةَ فِي الْعَمَلِ

اسْمَعِ وَأَفْرِكِ



لِلْمَرْأَةِ حَقُّ الْعَمَلِ، وَكَسْبِ الرِّزْقِ، وَتَحْمَلُ
كُلَّ الْمَسْئُولِيَّاتِ :

- الْمَرْأَةُ تَعْمَلُ فِي الْمَصْنَعِ
- الْمَرْأَةُ تَعْمَلُ فِي الْحَقْلِ
- الْمَرْأَةُ تَعْمَلُ فِي الْإِدَارَةِ
- الْمَرْأَةُ رَبَّةُ بَيْتٍ
- الْمَرْأَةُ رَبَّةُ عَمَلٍ
- الْمَرْأَةُ وَزِيرَةٌ ...



أَتِمِّي الْجُمْلَةَ التَّالِيَةَ :

لِلْمَرْأَةِ حَقُّ الْعَمَلِ فِي :

.....

.....

.....

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