



British Embassy
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Search for **منظمة البحث**
Common Ground **عن أرضية مشتركة**



**MARRAKECH SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS
FOR
MEDIATION PROJECT
SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND MOROCCO**

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Introduction and General Context

With the financial assistance from the British Embassy, and in collaboration with the National Initiative for Human Development, Search for Common Ground-Morocco (SFCG-M) is implementing a 24-month project (January 2008 – December 2009) to support the creation of community mediation centres in disadvantaged areas across Morocco to promote the peaceful resolution of conflict through the empowerment and training of 125 youth leaders in leadership, community conflict management, and non-violent communication.

MediAction aims to develop and strengthen the MediAction initiative as well as expand the initiative in other regions in Morocco. The first year focused on the launch of the experience in Rabat and Marrakech. During the second year, Search for Common Ground will roll out the project in Fes, Meknes and Sale with the intent of creating five youth community mediation centres in five cities and creating a national network for young social or community mediators.

Two assessment missions have been conducted within the framework of the MediAction project, one in Rabat and the other in Marrakech. Also two situational-analysis studies have been conducted in both cities to collect data about the context, potential partners and the type of support they can provide to help make the MediAction initiative successful and to probe the perceptions that partners and youth have about the role played by youth in mediating social and community conflicts.

The assessment phase included meetings with local authorities, community leaders, civil society activists and potential partners in the selected areas. These assessment meetings were conducted from a programmatic perspective and were done by the Project Manager and the Design Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist.

The present report renders the findings of the situational analysis conducted in Marrakech. It also highlights some of the key findings that serve to inform the indicator baseline. It is worth mentioning that some of the questions asked in the surveys address some of the indicators retained for the monitoring and evaluation of MediAction.

Scope and Objectives of the Study:

In Morocco, the concept of social mediation centers targeting youth and run by youth is a relatively new concept, which was mainly introduced and spearheaded by Search for Common Ground-Morocco. Since the first pilot project of the MediAction initiative in Casablanca and Rabat in 2006, Search for Common Ground-Morocco has continued to develop tools to make the concept more operational and implementable. The concept has received media coverage and is very close in nature to a number of practices and initiatives that exist and are being implemented by other stakeholders. Several organizations, be they governmental or non-governmental, are targeting youth and trying to involve them in grassroots social development initiatives. Furthermore, many activities are taking place on the ground that could intersect in their orientation with the objectives of this particular project. To further understand the context and to probe into the opportunities, strengths and challenges that it presents, this situational analysis research study aimed to gather information about:

- The degree of participation of civil society and youth in the targeted communities in promoting and bringing about social cohesion through actions and activities of social mediation.
- The capacity of associations and youth to offer social mediation services.
- The assessment of the needs of future partners and targeted communities namely in terms of capacity building with respect to social mediation.

The study was conducted over a period of three days in Marrakech during late October 2008 by Seddik Oubouhacen, the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist and Kamal Hachoumy, the Project Manager. Twelve local leaders representing different organizations, including the regional delegations of the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and local associations took part in the in-depth interviews. Additionally, a focus group was organized in Dar Almowaten with 5 local leaders representing grassroots associations working with youth. Twelve youth responded to an administered questionnaire.

The key findings of this situational analysis will inform both the indicator baseline and the programmatic orientation of the project. Moreover, the input gathered in the framework of this study will enrich the reflection on the best approach to implement the MediAction initiatives, especially that Marrakech seems to have a more solid experience in both educational mediation (*la médiation scolaire*) with a number of years of experience in listening centers in academies of education as well as the existence of previous experiences of

youth coaching in schools to promote a culture of peace and conflict resolution conducted by the international association **L'Ecole Outil de Paix**.

Another study is also scheduled to establish a baseline of indicators of performance both at the level of outputs and outcomes. This study will have as a main objective the collection of data concerning the level of indicators adopted in the log-frame of the project MediAction.

Methodology

SFCG used focus group discussions and key informant interviews as well as questionnaires as its primary tools for the research. As discussed above, the categories of people targeted included two major categories: local leaders and youth. In what follows, a more detailed profile of the participants is sketched.

Sample size and description

Youth

Youth were asked to complete a written questionnaire in order to provide their candid feedback on the presence of positive activities for youth in their community and to offer their self-assessment on issues such as their own positive contributions to their community. Written surveys were completed by twelve youth, affiliated especially with the two grassroots associations targeted to partner with SFCG in Marrakech to implement the MediAction initiative and manage the social mediation center. The youth's sample was predominantly feminine with eight females and only four male respondents. The respondents were mainly high school and university students.

Local Leaders and NGO Partners

The local leaders sample was formed of representatives of different key organizations in Marrakech. The NGO partners represented the following entities:

- Grassroots NGO's (4 NGOs)
- The delegation of the Ministry of National Education (3 representatives attended the meeting)
- The delegation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (1 representative attended the meeting)

- L'Association Ecole Outil de Paix (1)
- Dar Almowaten (1)
- La Coordination Régionale des Centres d'Ecoute et de la Médiation Scolaire (1)

In total, one focus group and seven key informant in-depth interviews were conducted. Twelve respondents provided data as representatives of the category of local leaders. The choice of participants in this category was done on the basis of their potential contribution to the activities of the MediAction project and the intersections between the mandates of the institutions they represent and the mandate of the social mediation centers to be launched in Marrakech.

Description of the instruments used

The data collection for this study was done over a three day period, during which the in-depth interviews, questionnaires administration and focus group were organized. For the local leader's category, discussions were guided by a semi-directive interview protocol that served as the basis for both the focus group and the key informant interviews. Each interview or focus group lasted approximately one hour and participants responded to the following questions, among others:

- What are the organizations or activities in your area that allow youth to contribute positively in the promotion of social cohesion?
- After hearing about the MediAction project, do you think that the creation of social mediation centers targeting youth would have a positive impact on the targeted communities?
- In case of the creation of a social mediation center, would you resort to it to resolve disputes?
- How can your organization contribute to the promotion of the social mediation center?
- Are you going to encourage your colleagues, neighbors and partners to support the social mediation center?
- What are some of the areas of intervention that youth can perform in the framework of social mediation?
- How do you think the social mediation centers should be used to promote leadership in youth and help them contribute to social cohesion?

- What are the types of conflicts present in targeted communities that need to be addressed?

The youth questionnaires similarly attended to the following areas:

- The activities and organizations that allow youth to contribute to social cohesion.
- The roles that youth play in their communities and immediate contexts to provide constructive solutions to problems youth face.
- The youth's support to the concept of social mediation centers run by youth.
- The previous experience of youth in conflict resolution and social mediation

Presentation of the findings

In the following section, the results of the situational analysis study will be presented. The findings for both categories targeted in the framework of this study (1 local leaders/partners and 2 youth) will be presented in separate sections.

(1) Local leaders/partners

In general, all respondents demonstrated a great interest in the concept of social mediation and welcomed the MediAction initiative. There seems to be a unanimous agreement among the respondents interviewed about the urgency of having activities and projects that attend to the problems and conflicts that youth face especially in disadvantaged communities. Most respondents said that the creation of a social mediation center would be a daunting task because of the many challenges that might face the project, but they insisted on the relevance and importance of the initiative.

Through the situational analysis the following areas of interest were identified:

The role of youth in the promotion of social cohesion

The majority of informants emphasized the fact that youth in Marrakech are very active and a great proportion of them are united under associations and youth organizations that provide a platform for them to be more proactive. The analysis of the input provided by the respondents suggests that youth are targeted by many organizations, governmental and non-governmental to take part in events of a social dimension. However, the impact of these initiatives remains

limited since youth are often targeted as beneficiaries and recipients of projects rather than an important stakeholder. Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of the role of youth in the promotion of social cohesion in their communities and the potential they represent, respondents stress the fact that, in reality, there are very few organizations that provide proper coaching for youth to participate constructively. More than that, some participants suggest that in some cases youth are not recognized as an important stakeholder that can contribute to social cohesion and the constructive resolution of conflicts involving youth.

“There are a number of efforts being made at the level of coaching, but they remain very limited because of the fierce resistance at the level of mentalities” Fatima Bourhil, Ecole Outil de Paix.

When participants were asked about organizations in their community which work positively with youth to contribute to society, they provided some of the following answers:

“Besides the INDH, the Ministry of Education and many grassroots associations which target youth and provide activities such as awareness raising, theatre etc..., Dar Al Mowaten tries to provide a platform for youth to actively engage with the community through the organization of different types of activities. However, working with youth is not exempt from real challenges on the ground” Director of Dar Al Mowaten

“Basically Dar Achabab (Les Maisons des Jeunes) is an institution to promote and develop the collective conscience of youth in order to affect local and social development. However, the efforts of the Ministry of Youth and Sports should strengthen those of associations and other non-governmental organizations targeting youth” Delegation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Support to the concept of social mediation centres

All participants demonstrated a keen interest in the concept and its potential for giving youth a more active role in their communities. However, some of the participants especially those who have previous experience in working with youth to resolve conflicts in schools warned against the challenges that coaching youth represent. One participant suggested that SFCG should think seriously about how to continue coaching youth even after the creation of the centre.

“In case there is serious monitoring and coaching of these youth, the project will be successful because youth are generally positive and flexible and they have a great ability to adapt” Fatima Bourhil, Ecole Outil de Paix.

“I like the concept, especially if it is implemented in a collaborative approach allowing a degree of trust to be installed between the different stakeholders interested in the project” Delegation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

“The neighbourhood of Sidi Youssef Ben Ali, which is potentially targeted by this project, is very heterogeneous and suffers from many problems. So, I think that if the project interacts with youth in a positive way to respond to their needs and interests, the social mediation centre will be successful” Bouchra Karawan, Association Youssef Ibn Tachfine

In general, all respondents affirmed that they will resort to the social mediation centre and will seek to have solid ties with it if the work of the youth mediators is professional.

“As the regional coordinator of the coordination of listening centres and educational mediation, I think that the centre will be complementary to our work at the Academy of Education” Hassan Farraj, Regional Coordination of Listening Centres and Educational Mediation.

“The integration of youth as a partner in the efforts of conflict resolution is one of the means to involve youth and communities in efforts of social cohesion” Delegation of the Ministry of Education.

The director of Dar Al Mowaten, suggested that he is willing to involve youth in resolving conflicts, but he stressed the need of some sort of legal protection for these youth who might be embarking on uncalculated adventures.

“There is serious issue that needs to be tackled, before these youth start actually practicing social mediation. There should be some sort of legal protection for these youth” Director of Dar Al Mowaten

The in-depth interviews and focus group conducted with local leaders focused also on the type of support that their respective organizations can provide with the framework of the project.

“The Delegation of the Ministry of Education can partner with the social mediation centre to organize specific activities that involve targeted communities. We can offer both logistical support and opportunities of coaching and learning for these new young social mediators”
Delegation of the Ministry of Education.

“The association is willing to share its expertise and experience and contribute both at the level of coaching and also at the level of building support for the social mediation centre at the grass root level” Bouchra karawan, Association Ibn Tachfine

“As an association with some experience in the coaching of youth in resolving conflicts, especially in the framework of peer mediation in schools, we can offer coaching as well as help getting you in touch with a pool of interesting youth who have been formerly trained by our association” Fatima Bourhil, Association Ecole Outil de Paix.

When asked about their willingness to encourage partners, colleagues and neighbours to resort to the social mediation centres in the event of conflicts they might encounter, most participants responded favourably and emphasized their willingness to support the centre.

Types of interventions intended for social mediation centres

Although most participants agreed that there should be some sort of gradual selection of types of conflicts in which young social mediators can intervene, they seemed to agree that social mediators can have a positive impact in the resolution and facilitation of dialogue in the cases of a wide range of conflicts.

The conflicts named by respondents included, conflicts involving youth in general, be it in school or in their neighbourhoods. They also suggested that youth can intervene in some neighbourhood disputes as mediators. But most importantly, the majority of respondents see that the key role of the social mediation centre is to contribute to the awareness-raising about peaceful and collaborative approaches to conflict resolution and the organization of awareness campaigns around the issue of social mediation.

“Youth social mediators can intervene in simple disputes in the beginning in order to acquire more self confidence. I suggest that mediators work in groups of three so that they feel more prepared to face the challenges of the ground” Hassan Farraj, Regional Coordination of Listening Centres and Educational Mediation.

“The efforts of youth in these social mediation centres should focus on raising awareness about peaceful approaches to resolving conflicts and solidarity between community members. They can also intervene to resolve problems that occur in or with schools and to resolve some simple family disputes, especially those involving their peers” Delegation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports

(2) Youth results

Self-assessments for youth, in the form of questionnaires were designed to solicit candid feedback related to youths’ current capacities and gaps in the areas of leadership, self-esteem, community conflict management, mediation and non violent communication skills.

Youth surveyed believe that young people can play an important role as social mediators in their community. Significantly, all of the youth and community members surveyed indicated a desire to be positive contributors to their community.

In general, respondents identified a number of local associations such as *Ibn Tachfine*, *Association Developpement Humain de Bab Ghmat*, *Dar Al Mowaten* (the house of the citizen) and *Dar Chabab* (the house of the youth) as organizations that enable them to be active in the social development sector. However, they suggest that there is a greater need for deeper and proper coaching of youth so that they can contribute more positively to social cohesion in their communities. In what follows is a summary of the results obtained from youth questionnaires are presented:

- 85% of the youth surveyed believe that youth do not really play an important role in resolving conflicts in their communities.
- More than half of the youth surveyed (65%) believe that youth can play an important role in promoting non-violence solutions to problems that they encounter in school, at home or in their neighborhood if they were properly trained.

- The majority of respondents 90% agreed that youth NGO's still need more capacity building to be able to offer serious social mediation services and to positively contribute to social cohesion in their communities.
- Overall, the majority of youth (100%) supports the creation of social mediation centers and thinks that they would be good for their community.
- Less than 15% reported that they have some background training in conflict resolution, non violent communication and mediation.

Overall, the situational analysis suggests that there is a need for more capacity building to make youth capable of providing social mediation services. The youth surveyed demonstrated an interest in becoming social mediators and learning about techniques to mitigate and resolve conflicts. Their motivation seems to emanate from their desire to have a more active role in their communities as their responses testify.

Implications and Recommendations

- The situational analysis demonstrated the existence of a wide array of cross cutting potential synergies namely with the Delegation of the Ministry of Education, the Delegation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Regional Coordination of Listening Centers and Educational Mediation and the Association Ecole Outil de Paix.
- There is a need for more capacity building to enable youth to efficiently and effectively offer good quality social mediation services.
- There is a need for tools and mechanisms that allow the continuous monitoring and coaching of youth.
- The need to create processes that will allow the gathering of lesson learned to better inform the programming of the MediAction project.
- There is a need for more broad based involvement of youth in conflict resolution and social mediation activities.
- The importance of investing in local partnerships and buy-in to better ensure sustainability after the project ends.
- There is a need for quality coaching all along the process as part of a solid sustainability strategy.
- All stakeholders interviewed agreed on the need for a well-planned awareness campaign prior to initiating youth-focused activities.