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



MEDIATION PROJECT
SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND MOROCCO
SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT FOR FEZ

May 2009

Introduction and General Context

With the financial assistance from the British Embassy, and in collaboration with the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) 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 to other regions in Morocco. The first year aimed at launching 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 Marrakesh. 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 also to probe into some of 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 Fez. 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 Situational Analysis

To understand the context and to probe into the opportunities, strengths and challenges that the project presents; this situational analysis research study aimed to gather information about relevant stakeholders in the city of Fez:

- 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 of the context with respect to the objectives of the project.

The study was conducted over a period of three days in Fez during the first week of April 2009 by Seddik Ouboulahcen, DME specialist, and Kamal Hachoumy, Project Manager. It included interviews with a cross-section of local stakeholders, including local youth, community members and local leaders. To collect data for this baseline a sample of 20 respondents were consulted. The respondents fall mainly into following categories: local leaders and youth leaders both representing local associations and local governmental institutions.

Methodology

SFCG used key informant interviews as well as questionnaires as the 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 8 youth (3 females and 5 males). The respondents were mainly university students.

Local Leaders and NGO Partners

The local leaders' sample, however, was formed of representatives of different key organizations in Fez. The latter represented the following entities:

Local associations:

- L'Union Nationale des Femmes Marocaine, section de Fès (1/ female)
- L'association ALCI (Le Mouvement Alternative Citoyenne de Fès) (1/ female)
- L'association Groupement d'action pour les services sociaux, Fès (1/ male)
- Association Biladi pour le développement durable et la moralisation de la vie publique (1/ male)
- Association El Ayadi el Bidaie, pour les Oeuvres sociales et Humaines (1/male)

Representatives of governmental institutions:

- Directeur de la maison des jeunes Albatha (1/male)
- Division de l'Action Sociale à la préfecture de Fès (1/male)
- Délégation du Ministère de la Jeunesse de Fès (2/ males)
- Directeur centre AHLI des enfants en situation précaire et l'enfant de la rue (1/ male)
- Président de l'Arrondissement Urbain, Sahb El Ward (1/ male)
- Service de partenariat, Délégation Régionale du Ministère de l'Education National de Fès (1/ male)

In total, 12 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 the future in Fez.

Description of the instruments used

The data collection for this study was done over a three day period, during which the in-depth interviews and questionnaires 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 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 in 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?

Presentation of the findings

In the following section, the results of the situational analysis study will be presented.

Like in other cities, all respondents demonstrated a great interest in the concept of social mediation and welcomed the MediAction initiative. Most respondents said that the creation of a social mediation center would be a relevant and important initiative that will help resolve communal conflicts and promote social cohesion in Fez.

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

The role of youth in the promotion of social cohesion

The situational analysis tried to investigate the perceptions of the surveyed sample with respect to the role played by youth in promoting a culture of peace, non violence and mediation as well as the role played by youth NGOs in their communities.

The surveyed sample feels that youth play an important role in bringing about social cohesion by engaging in social and non-profit work. In fact, 64% of the surveyed sample believes that youth play an important role in promoting a culture of peace and non violence.

The respondents made it clear that there are no organizations that allow youth to offer conflict resolution services as such. However, they emphasized the role played by youth in promoting social cohesion through the organization of a wide array of cultural and educational activities that aim to bring youth in disadvantaged out from their exclusion. Respondents believe that youth play an important role in their communities by engaging in activities that attempt to fight against social exclusion and minimize social disadvantage. These activities range from the organization of cultural and artistic events to the delivery of literacy classes to community members.

Despite this rather positive perception of the role played by youth, youth NGOs seem to play a less important role according to the surveyed sample. Only 21% of the surveyed youth, and local leaders believe that youth NGOs are playing a central and important role in their communities. Some respondent youth NGOs need more capacity building and need to be more pragmatic in their approach.

“Youth NGOs should be more field and grassroots oriented. They should provide concrete initiatives that help youth in their communities fight exclusion and social disadvantage”
Association Escape Lumiere, Initiative des Jeunes.

For other respondents, the loss of trust among youth and their decision to shun social and political work is one of the reasons why youth NGOs have such a limited role.

“ Normally youth associations should be playing a more important role in their communities, but the loss of trust among youth makes it difficult to engage them both as agents of change and also as beneficiaries” Fouad Hanifi, Goupement D’Action Pour Les Services Sociaux.

Support to the concept of social mediation centres

All participants demonstrated an interest in the concept and its potential for giving youth a more active role in their communities. In fact, a 100% of the surveyed respondents are

demonstrating support for the creation and the development of youth mediation centres. When asked about their willingness to resort to the community mediation centres to resolve their conflicts, 79% of the surveyed respondents said they were willing to resort to the mediation centres to resolve their conflicts.

Respondents said that there are no organizations in Fez that offer community mediation services.

“As far as I can tell, there are no associations specialized in social mediation here in Fez” Youssef El Hanaoui, Division de L’Action Sociale INDH, Fez.

“I do not think there are any NGOs that provide conflict resolution services to communities in Fez” Baqali Abdelali, Délégation du Ministère de la Jeunesse, Fez

For most respondents, the creation of a community mediation centre is very much needed to provide a platform that will enable to deal with problems of violence, drugs, family related problems and school related disputes.

However, it is worth mentioning that although respondents support the creation of the community mediation centre, they believe that it can only be successful if youth are trained and coached rigorously to be able to succeed in this daunting task.

For many of the interviewed stakeholders, the success of the MediAction initiative is dependent on the profile of the youth recruited to become social mediators and the training they will receive.

“As authorities, we are ready to cooperate with the community mediation centre, but we would like to deal with professional youth who are able to engage with us in an honest discussion about the way they will intervene to resolve some disputes” Charii, President De L’Arrondissement Urbain Jnanat ALward.

“I think it is difficult for youth to succeed as social mediators especially with the older demographic. Besides these youth need a lot of capacity building

themselves before they can play this important role of mediation” Youssef El Hanaoui, Division de L’Action Sociale INDH, Fez.

Types of interventions intended for social mediation centres

The majority of respondents see 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. For the surveyed respondents, the community mediation centres can also intervene to resolve disputes in schools, some family disputes that do not necessitate a high level of expertise and neighbourhood disputes. Because of their ability to understand their peers better, youth can be more effective in preventing some disputes in neighbourhoods.

“I think youth can intervene to deal with problems of violence and drugs that are widespread in our neighbourhoods. However, they need to have the proper training to do that” Charii, President De L’Arrondissement Urbain Jnanat ALward.

In general, respondents believe that the community mediation centre can help resolve a variety of disputes; however, there should be a very well organized awareness raising campaign that informs the members of the community of the existence of the community mediation centre.

Some respondents believe it is pertinent to think of creating a network of community mediation cells that operate in different neighborhoods and report to the community mediation centre which serves as a hub for offering coaching and training for mediators.

Summary of Findings:

This section provides a summary of the findings of the situational analysis with respect to the indicators of success adopted by the project.

- **64 %** of all surveyed respondents feel that **youth play an important role** in promoting a culture of peace, non-violence and mediation.
- **36 %** of all surveyed respondents feel that the youth **do not** play an important role in promoting a culture of peace, non-violence and mediation.

- **79 %** of all respondents **are willing** to resort to the mediation centres to resolve their conflicts.
- **14%** of all respondents **are not willing** to resort to the mediation centres to resolve their conflicts.
- **21 %** of all respondents feel that **youth NGOs are playing a central and important role** in the community
- **79%** of all respondents feel that youth NGOs **are not playing** a central and important role in the community.
- **0 %** of **community members visit** or solicit the services of the mediation centre.
- **0 %** of trained **youth are involved in conflict prevention activities** on the ground.
- **7%** of all respondents are **undecided** about resorting to the mediation centres to resolve their conflicts.
- **100 %** of all **respondents support** the creation and the development of youth mediation centres.

As far as youth are concerned here is a summary of the results obtained from youth questionnaires:

- **100%** of youth surveyed **support** the creation and the development of youth mediation centres.
- **87%** of the youth surveyed believe that **youth play an important role** in promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.
- **25%** of the surveyed youth (two out of eight) reported that they have some **background training in conflict resolution**, non violent communication and mediation.
- **25%** of surveyed youth believe that **youth NGOs are playing a central role** in their communities.
- **75%** of surveyed youth stated 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.

Conclusion

This situational analysis highlighted the following important areas:

- The need for more capacity building to enable youth to efficiently and effectively offer good quality social mediation services.
- Provision of good quality training and coaching to enable youth to play their role as social mediators efficiently.
- All interviewed respondents highlighted the need for awareness campaigns to promote community mediation.
- There are no organizations that offer conflict resolution services in Fez. Hence, the need for more capacity building in that area.

Stakeholders in Fez welcome the idea of creating a community mediation centre, however, they emphasize the necessity of dealing wisely with issues of recruitment of youth, their coaching and training because of the impact those aspects can have on the results of the project.