

MEDNET 2 – Innovation, exchange, networking for a new leading  
class in the Mediterranean

## **Fourth COUNTRY REPORT: Morocco**

Update Thematic Dossier #2:

### Youth Participation in Politics

Topic to be explored:

# Youth participation in the Elections

*proposed by Hiba Antoun (DPNA, Lebanon)*

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**“Youth should be given a chance to take an active part in the  
decision-making at local, national and global levels.”**

— Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

While greatly concerned with issues that affect their daily lives, such as finding a job, accessing to education and other, many young Moroccans remain positive about the current path of the country.

Meanwhile; constitutional reforms and legislative elections are perceived as more transparent. The victory of the PJD, and the opportunity for a historic opposition party to form a new government are mentioned by most focus groups participants as positive indicators of a country making steady progress in the right direction.

Although the Arab Spring did not conduct to a big revolution in Morocco, in fact it has, as in many other countries in the region, raised the voice of young people asking for democracy and human rights, and paved the way for essential reforms in the society. Following the movement of February 20th in 2011, a new Constitution has been adopted that gives more power to the Parliament, and more space for civil society and acknowledging the role of youth as a crucial resource that should be supported.

The majority of participants characterize the Last legislative elections as a step forward for the country. The fact that an opposition party won the largest number of seats in the parliament and formed the first government following a constitutional revision is seen as a significant and positive development. The youth believe that the elections were managed in a transparent manner. However the youth knowledge about elections in general and the role of elected officials in particular is still very low. Participants acknowledge their own ignorance and cannot articulate how elections directly or indirectly affect their lives. The Internet and foreign television are considered more credible sources for acquiring the information by youth rather than notional informational sources.

Recently, the Moroccan Parliament amended the local election law to raise female representation from 12% to 27% in municipal councils

“This important achievement would not have been possible without the engagement and determination of various stakeholders including women’s NGOs. Through the Arab Partnership Fund (AP), the British Embassy in Rabat supports MDP to advocate an increased women’s representation and encourage their participation at the local, provincial, and regional levels.” [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

In a study conducted by the **National Democratic Institute**, the majority of youth did not take the initiative to vote in the last elections but that they have a greater intention to vote in upcoming communal elections that took place in (November 2015). While a large number remain undecided.

Indeed, discussions with Moroccan youth showed that ordinary young people are not very interested in voting in elections, and that for them voting does not seem like a way to change things. Also, schools do not really offer democracy education or prepare students for democratic participation. However, a general consensus seems to be that things are anyway going to a better direction also for young people.

In a street survey conducted by Demo-Finland and group discussions with Moroccan youth, it was perceived that, young Moroccan people are not very interested in voting, considering that it is not the right thing that can lead to change. Also, within schools and especially public schools, there is not a program that offer “Democracy Education” or enhance student for democratic and political participations. However, in general, Morocco seems going ahead towards the right way for young people.

In my opinion there are surely different ways that can be considered in launching new strategies for enhancing (Youth participation in Voting). I remain very convinced that the human mind always works the way around it is pushed to behave. In other words, if we strategically twist the voting manners and we make youth understand that their votes will certainly in a way or another help the country to make significant changes and that their opinions and participations matter. Rather than, pushing them to vote which will make them to isolate further away.