

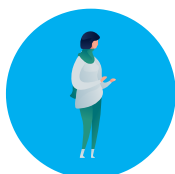
Morocco and ICPD25

Achievements, challenges and opportunities



Achievements

Morocco made remarkable efforts to address the complex relations of population and development, in terms of policy design, creation of appropriate legal frameworks and adoption of relevant international instruments. For instance:



- In 2018, Morocco adopted two significant laws. The law 103-13 was dedicated to fight against all forms of violence against women and law (N° 79-14) related to the creation of the national authority of parity and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.
- In 2017, Moroccan Government launched the second version of Program ICRAM (or "ICRAM 2" (2017-2021) aiming at the promotion of gender equality and inclusion of women's rights at the public policy level.
- In 2015, the new Organic Finance Law (LOF) (Law N° 130-13) included a gender-based report that aims to become an assessment tool through the gender lens of public policy.
- More women and youth are in positions of leadership: in 2018 the parliament adopted the law (n° 89-15) related to the creation of the Advisory Council for Youth and Associative Action with a main mission of proposing economic, social and cultural recommendations related to youth and civil society.



Education supports

Over the last years, the total enrolment, the number of preschool pupils and the literacy rates increased significantly. The literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 has reached 90% in 2014 against 58% in 1994. This improvement is much more significant for girls as the rate has gone during the same period from 46% to 85.9%.



Maternal and Child mortality rate

- Child mortality in Morocco dropped from 80 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 22.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018.
- Over 25 years maternal mortality decreased by 78%, from 332 deaths in 1992 to 72.6 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017.

These efforts have been demonstrated by Morocco ranking 3rd among the Arab countries at the ICPD's Population Development Composite Index. It comes in the first place in the indicators of mobility, governance and sustainability; however, it ranked ninth in dignity and tenth in reproductive health, which might be seen as a useful insight to the priority setting process



Challenges

As of today, and despite the progress it made, Morocco still faces challenges to fully implement the ICPD25 objectives. More challenging, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 has had considerable impact on the achievements of the ICPD25 commitments and made the situation even harder for the most vulnerable categories in society, especially women, youth and rural population. It is still unclear how the impact of the pandemic will look like in the near-medium future and how deep it will affect society; yet, it is clear that it will slow down or even reverse some of the achievements in the medium and long term if no measures are taken now.

Social inequalities, especially between genders (men and women), regions (rural and urban) and different social classes and lack of inclusion of the most vulnerable categories, make it difficult for Morocco to meaningfully achieve the ICPD25 commitments.

While Morocco's youth bulge may seem like a blessing for the country, by using the advantage of this demographic window through investment in human capital, it seems that seizing the youth bulge in Morocco is rather a challenge. Youth in Morocco are among the most excluded categories in political and economic activities and it is one of the areas where Morocco did not progress well in the ICPD25 commitments. Youth are the most excluded from economic activities and political participation.

Despite Morocco's international engagements, constraints to fulfill ICPD25 engagements in relation to sexual and reproductive health still exist. Maternal mortality declined significantly in the last two decades but inequalities between rural and urban areas are still wide. Rural areas, suffer more in regard of healthcare infrastructure and medical staff, poverty, illiteracy and poor hygiene conditions in the living environment.

Despite the growing access to contraception, there are still challenges for women who did not want or wished to delay pregnancy. One of the main challenges is the access to information, education and services for adolescents and young people.

This is why Morocco needs a comprehensive sexuality program to address sex-related social issues. With the absence of adequate SRH information and services, there is a higher risk for unwanted pregnancies which then leads to unsafe and clandestine abortions in some cases.

Morocco made significant progress in universal education, yet challenges remain. Moroccan education system suffers from chronic problems, including the preschool deficit, which significantly widens inequalities in access and success between different social strata and between rural and urban areas. Also, the school dropout is high, which further exacerbates social inequalities. Another factor is the low educational achievements and internal performance affecting the quality of learning.

Violence against women is still prevalent. In addition to the problem of stereotypes of women and the structure of power in society, there are obstacles that hinder the full implementation of the law 103.13. This includes the low quality of care centers for abused women, the lack of local management (la prise en charge) of cases of abuse, lack of human resources that should provide assistance on the local level, such as trained lawyers, doctors, social assistance and psychological assistance professionals who specialize in gender-based violence issues.

These challenges are linked to different factors such as the lack of good governance, limitation at the level of institutional capacity and limitation at financial aspects of the ICPD commitments. This is why it is unlikely that Morocco will fully achieve the commitments of ICPD25 any time soon.



Recommendations

1. Reducing spatial inequality (urban and rural) and gender inequality (men and women) should be a top priority for the Moroccan government in the coming years.
2. It is important to generalize the concepts of the ICPD 25 through a broad awareness and civic education campaign, by integrating Parliament, government bodies and civil society organizations in this campaign.
3. Adapting government policies to the goals of the ICPD 25, and enhancing coordination between and within ministries, which will enhance the outputs of government initiatives and increase their effectiveness and impact.
4. Youth need special attention from the government, and the integrated national strategy for youth (SNIJ) should put youth at the epicenter of public policies. More specifically, the NEET should be given priority in all actions of government and civil society organizations, because it is the most marginalized and vulnerable group among youth.
5. It is extremely important to raise the quality of services in terms of SRH, as well as raise the quality of the services of care centers specialized in protecting women victims of violence.
6. Civil society organizations can have a positive impact on the implementation of the ICPD25 commitments, and for this reason authorities should allocate more resources to civil society organizations working to achieve the ICPD goals.