

Politics of educational reforms in Morocco since 1956:

The gender dimension

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ABSTRACT

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Hassan Nitami

Since Independence, Morocco has implemented a number of policies geared towards the improvement of its educational system. The existence of socio-economic and cultural constraints does impede the full access of females to education, and to society as a whole. The right to education for every individual has been endorsed as a human right, which is essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) within most national and international development strategies that should be available to all by 2015. It is assumed that education is a way of measuring the degree of development of a country in the current international discourse. It is unfortunate to say that with all policies that have been implemented by the Moroccan government in the last six decades have not generated the desired outcomes, and have faltered for each initiative targeted at reforming the educational system.

The vision to meet the eight MDGs goals by 2015 is unattainable and has a long way to go in reaching the targets, mainly the ones related to gender. Even though substantial improvements have been noted, the various policies implemented by Morocco, alongside with international policies have not been capable of moving the country to an aspired-for level of development.

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None of my siblings finished primary or high school, but it is my deepest hope that someday, my nine nieces and nephews in Morocco attend university.

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my dear father, Allal Nitami (1935-2004), who would have been happy to see me achieving this.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFD: Agence Française de Développement
AfDB: African Development Bank
AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AMDR: Arab Millennium Development Report
CCT: Conditional Cash Transfer
CEDAW: Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CET: Charter for Education and Training
CNEF : The National Charter (Charte Nationale de l'Éducation et Formation)
COSEF: Commission Spéciale Éducation et Formation
DESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DHR: Declaration of Human Rights
EAP: Education Action Plan
EC: European Commission
ECR: European Commission Report
EDI: Education Development Index
EFA: Education for All
EIB: European Investment Bank
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
FDA: French Development Agency
FPE: Free primary education
GCC: Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GEA: Girls' Education Activity
GFW: Global Fund for Women
GMR: Global Monitoring Report
GRB: General Responsive Budgeting
HCP: Haut-Commissariat au Plan (High Commission of Planning)
HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HDR: Human Development Report
HLP: High Level Panel of Eminent Persons
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ICPD: International Conference on Population and Development
IO: International Organizations
ITQANE: Improving Training for Quality Advancement in National Education
KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LAS: League of Arab States
LDC: The Least Developed Countries
LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
LIHN: Local Initiative of Human Development
MEG: Morocco Education for Girls
MENA: the Middle East and North Africa
MSA: Modern Standard Arabic
MHEET: Ministry of Higher Education and Executive Training

MEN: Ministry of National Education (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale)
 NCIPWM: National Charter for Improving the Portrayal of Women in the Media
 NEEP: National Education Emergency Program
 NEP: Najah Emergency Plan
 NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations
 NIHD: National Human Development Initiative
 NSGEE: National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality
 OWG: Open Working Group
 PAIWD: Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development
 PARSEM: Programme d'Appui à la Réforme du Système Éducatif Marocain (Basic Education Reform Support Program)
 PhD: Doctor of Philosophy
 PJD: Parti de la Justice et du Développement
 RMA: Royal Moroccan Army
 SAP: Structural Adjustment Programs
 SDG: Sustainable Development Goals
 SWAp: Sector-Wide Approach
 UAF: Union de l'Action Feminine
 UN: United Nations
 UNCSD: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
 UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
 UNDP: United Nations Development Program
 UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
 UNGA: the United Nations General Assembly
 UNSTT: UN System Task Team
 UPE: Universal Primary Education
 UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund for Women
 USAID: United States Agency for International Development
 WB: The World Bank
 WHO: World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

In 2010, and at the age of 56, my mother joined a literacy and numeracy program for adult women aged 18 years old and older, and who had never had a chance to participate in a formal education setting. This program, that took place in mosques as well as schools, was initiated by the Moroccan government in 2002, in order to give basic education in numeracy and literacy to women. In the mid-1990s, my three sisters had the opportunity to access elementary school but dropped out thus never finished and/or made it to high school. Partly due to the nature of the school system that places more importance on a grading narrative that seeks to treat students differently and unequally, rather than a narrative that centralizes the acquisition of valuable knowledge that could raise awareness, include and treat boys and girls alike; hence, producing a high number of drop-outs, repeaters, and by the same token functionally illiterate citizens. Corporal punishment for low-grades students commonly administered by teachers, poor quality and unexciting curriculum, one way learning, and complete lack of and ill-equipped learning environment were the norm. In the rural areas, where the majority of my extended family lives 30 kilometers from Marrakesh, the majority of women who are now 15 years old have never had any formal education.

The present-day debate in the educational reforms policies set in the global discourse revolves around access to education in light of the changing conditions of society and the international pressure harnessed towards a string of goals to be accepted and applied in the Moroccan setting.

1.2 The Moroccan context

Looking back over the last sixty years since independence from France in 1956, Morocco has unarguably made significant progress in educating its population. The Moroccan Ministry of National Education (MEN) partnered with international organizations (IO), the World Bank (WB) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as an example, to achieve the coveted goal of universal access to education and gender equality in education, mainly through the Education for All (EFA) program established in *Jomtien* in 1990, and the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in New York (2000). It is nevertheless evident that the country is still far from meeting the EFA/MDG targets and struggles to address geographic and gender disparities in education.

At any rate, the education system in Morocco is still centralized and perpetuates the top-down policies (Colombo, 2011), vested in the government as the sole overriding authority on reforms. Unlike many other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Morocco has enjoyed a stable political system but has not benefitted from its political stability to eradicate and/or eliminate illiteracy, or to promote the social well-being of its citizens. So far, national and international efforts have not generated the desired results in regards to achieving the EFA/MDG targets. While there has been improvement in some sectors, disparities in educational levels still exist between the urban and the rural populations.

In the Moroccan context, the educational reforms have two broad aims. On the one hand, they involve much-needed improvement of the existing education system for those who are already in school. On the other hand, they aim to achieve universal access

to primary education for nearly half of the population; particularly the 46.8 per cent of school women and girls.

Despite the fact that there have been many educational reforms since the independence of Morocco from France in 1956, current statistics about the education sector in this northern African country are alarming. The European Commission Report (ECR) published in 2007 states that illiteracy affects 43 per cent of the population over ten years of age. This number is higher among women in rural areas. Likewise, the Human Development Report (HDR) (Malik, 2013) points out that 20.1 per cent of adult women have a secondary or higher level of education (compared to 36.3 per cent of males).

Enrollment and retention are still the biggest challenges at the primary level due to poverty that affect the families and unsuitable school environment that lack basic utilities (ex: absence of restrooms for females). Those who complete primary school usually do not continue to the next level. They usually drop out of the system because secondary education schools are not considered a realistic option due to factors such as distance between the school and home, prohibitive cost of books; the economic need for children to work on the farm in rural areas. For female students the barriers also include cultural barriers. For example, getting married at an early age is more important than pursuing education.

Reform in education cannot fully take place without financial provision from the state. In Morocco, the economic sector is weak and relies mostly on agriculture and tourism. The state also lacks financial resources and the available ones are allegedly under-utilized and/or mismanaged. As in many developing societies, defense expenditure

takes priority over social sector spending. For example, according to the Index Mundi (2012) website, Morocco spent \$US 27 billion dollars on military, as compared to about 5 billion dollars on education in 2011. Morocco has also a Monarchy whose wealth is not transferred to the population.

As a signatory to the EFA/MDG, Morocco has been working to reform its educational sector in order to fulfill its commitments to these instruments. However, there are still major obstacles for the Moroccan governments as well as its international partners to achieve the desired outcomes in education. Numerous issues, such as access to schools in rural areas, existence of programs and tools to address special needs, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teacher preparation and performance, the use of humiliation as a disciplinary technique, need to be resolved.

1.3 Objective of the study

This thesis aims to investigate critical challenges facing the educational reform in Morocco, with a focus on the gender dimension. In this respect, it attempts to understand issues related to low enrollment and problems related to retention of girls in Morocco's educational system. Furthermore, it seeks to examine the key issues related to the implementation of international education programs like Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with specific focus on the gender dimension to see how these programs have affected girls/women education in Morocco. To this end, this research will provide the current contexts of the educational reforms in Morocco, the challenges and obstacles facing the implementations of these reforms, and some

recommendations that could help improve the national education system, and gender education.

1.4 Research questions

1. To what extent has the education of Moroccan women evolved/progressed in the context of EFA and MDGs?
2. What has been the Moroccan government's response to achieve the EFA and the MDG targets especially related to women's education?
3. What are some of the challenges facing the education of women to implement EFA and MDG programs?

1.5 Methodology and Data sources

The intent of this thesis is to uncover the crucial problems that hinder the improvement of the education system in Morocco. It involves gathering and analyzing relevant data from UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report (available on the organization's website), as well as published data from the Moroccan ministry of education related to the achieving of EFA/MDG targets especially in the context of girl children's access to education. This data will help me understand what the EFA and MDG targets are, and the Moroccan government's performance in achieving them. Information from these sources will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the issues contingent to the education of girls in Morocco. It will also help achieve a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the educational reform in the country in relation to gender.

The primary data sources is supplemented by policy documents and scholarly books and articles related to education in Morocco. This data will help me in understanding the historical context of the Moroccan educational system, and the major reforms that it has undertaken since independence from France in 1956.

1.6 Literature review

This research will draw on three bodies of research, namely:

- The research done by UNESCO in the context of EFA, MDG (2012, 2013/14 and post 2015 reports).
- Government resources mainly published by the Moroccan Ministry of Education.
- Scholarly research on gender and education in Morocco published by Moroccan scholars as well as experts in the field of gender education in Morocco.

Education reforms take place when it is perceived that the system is not functioning optimally, and thus needs improvement. However, Cummings (2010) argues that educational reform is never an easy task, and it is only the first step to an uncertain journey. He adds that reforms are usually shaped by the interests of the “class demands, ethnic, and religious groups”. Corrales (1998) specifies two types of reforms: access and quality. The former is related to expending the infrastructure of the schooling system, whereas the latter is about students and teachers’ performance and productivity, quality of the curricula and teaching materials and their relevance to the national and cultural contexts and ethos.

The cherished goal of universal literacy in Morocco is still on hold as the struggle for providing education continues. Education is linked to development in today's rhetoric. In their correspondence theory, Gintis and Bowles (1981) emphasized that there is a link between the economy (work) and the educational system in society. Their correspondence theory suggests that schools "prepare(s) students to be workers through correspondence between the social relations of production and the relations of education (p. 46), and it contributes to "reproducing the class system and extending the capitalist mode of production. (Barakett and Cleghorn, 2008, p. 39).

Education in the contemporary narrative is not considered a privilege anymore. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1948 stated in article 26 of the UN Declaration of Rights that everyone has a right to education, and it should be free and compulsory at the primary level.

Likewise, article XIII of the Moroccan constitution states that "all citizens shall have equal rights in seeking education and employment" (1996). However, almost half of Moroccans are still deprived of that right and hence are less empowered to initiate full social change. According to Indabawa and Mpofu (2006), education is a means for people "to overcome poverty and exclusion, establish and reinforce democracy, achieve justice and comprehensive peace, enhance economic and social well-being and improve health and ensure food security" (p. 83). But in practice, many adults in Morocco have missed opportunities for social and economic reasons. For those who are already in school, the system is dysfunctional and does not respond to their needs (Skalli, 2011).

Geographically, Morocco is part of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that is fraught with a complicated socio-political and cultural environment. In the

context of the present political stability, the country needs to put educational reforms at the heart of its reforms policies. The Moroccan government, in fact pays more attention to those 5 per cent who completed their higher education (UNESCO, 2012), where it spends fifteen times more than it does on primary compulsory education (Pease, 2012). In terms of gender, Morocco is ranked 129 out of 135 countries in the Global Gender Gap report (Schwab et al., 2013). For instance, unemployment ratio is “estimated at 22 percent among males and 38 percent among females (UNICEF, 2013).

As part of the strictly connected global order, Morocco could not escape the western influences on the educational modernization. In its educational reforms since 2000, Morocco has imported and adopted western models of education. However, it also strives to preserve its indigenous languages (Berber with its varieties), cultural and religious values. Morocco’s colonial history as a French Protectorate created a social unbalance in society. The colonial administrations/system provided education mostly to the elites while depriving the majority of the population. According to Ennaji (2005), Westernization benefitted the elites, and was much less advantageous to the masses that are still traditional and have doubts about Western values (pp. 34-35). Part of it is the fact that the masses do not have what Bourdieu (1973) calls, the social, cultural and economic capital. By looking at the class structure, the lower class does not possess the cultural capital. Bourdieu defines capital as a “set of actually usable resources and powers” (Bellamy, 1994, pp. 120-134), and the volume of capital an individual possesses differentiates the major classes.

The educational reforms of the last two decades have been influenced by the neo-liberalism agenda. These reforms reflect the influence of international stakeholders and

financial institutions like the World Bank. International lenders include particular education reforms as “part of their package of economic and state reform” (Carnoy, 1995). These packages come with strings of “conditionalities” attached to them. They effectively define the parameters of educational reform. As a result, the current educational reforms are related more to the economic/financial framework. Education reforms are dictated and imposed by international agendas that seek control and privatization of the education sector through neoliberal and the free market ideologies and mechanisms. In this sense schools became a site of “production of management and wealth” rather than “the production of knowledge” (Arshad-Ayaz, 2007).

The will to educate women and to eliminate gender disparity in education dates way back to 1966, when UNESCO recommended to its members the necessity of providing and facilitating education to women and girls, considering the high rate of illiteracy and the vital role women play in society (Chaton, 1968). Morocco’s Ministry of Education (MEN) has engaged in addressing the gender disparity in education since early 1990s. It has established partnerships with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Projects like Morocco Education for Girls (MEG) and Girls’ Education Activity (GEA) aim at promoting girls ‘access and retention to education (Brush et al., 2002). Other Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) such as Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and other organizations have been working to eliminate gender disparities in education.

Despite these efforts, the outcomes have not been encouraging. Women’s education still faces many obstacles (Desrues & Nieto, 2009). According to EFA Regional Report for the Arab States published in 2011, Morocco is still lagging behind in achieving

gender parity in education (UNESCO, 2011). The report adds that Morocco is off-track in achieving Millennium goal 4 (reduce child mortality rates), goal 5 (improve maternal health), and goal 6 (combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases) (p.34). This can be ascribed to the global economic crisis affecting the developed and developing countries, emergence of environmental issues, and the bureaucracy of UNESCO's policies (Duke & Hinzen, 2010), and other influential international agencies such as USAID.

And that is not all; a lot has to be done to achieve gender equality. Sadiqi (2003) suggests that in a patriarchal society like Morocco, formal education of men is still viewed as more important than education of women (p.89). Issues such as chronic underachievement, precarious economic situation, gender discrimination, traditional structures prevent girls and women from learning and becoming financially autonomous. Other factors like child-rearing and household responsibilities impact women's enrollment as well.

1.7 Limitations

The research will be limited to the analysis of UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report (GMR), which deal mainly with education and gender education in Morocco. However, it must be kept in mind that these data are based on stats provided by national governments in the shape of annual country reports. The official government statistics made available to UNESCO do not have any verification system that could evaluate to what extent have the international programs impacted the Moroccan educational system.

Another limitation of this data set is that due to its macro orientation it does not always account for the regional variations as well as socio-economical differences that exist within the country.

CHAPTER TWO

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)

This chapter talks about the context of the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the different pre-MDGs initiatives that brought about the eight MDGs. The chapter also provides an overview of the progress in achieving the goals, with a special emphasis on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region where Morocco is situated. As the year 2015 is the deadline to achieve the MDG goals, I will talk briefly about the post-2015 agenda and the different talks and discussions that are taking place now and whether a new framework will either build on or supersede the MDGs goals.

2.1 Establishment of the MDGs

On September 2000, 189 state members of the United Nations ratified the UN Millennium Declaration, specifying eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that needed to be addressed by the year 2015. This is the first ever-holistic strategy where member countries, international agencies and civil society organizations agreed to implement means to lower the level of poverty mainly in poor and developing countries. The MDGs set specific targets and objectives to be achieved within a specific deadline.

The main players in the Millennium Development Initiative consist of Governments, international organizations and agencies, civil society organizations. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank are the agencies that monitor the agenda of the MDGs (Saith, 2005). The developing countries use these goals as a guide to track their development strategies.

There are eight MDG goals that the countries strive to achieve by 2015, and are ordered by priorities (UN, 2012a):

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

2.2 MDGs: Goals, targets and indicators

These goals, which span over a period of 15 years, have certain principles that are essential to address inequality, poverty, health issues, environment and development. Eighteen targets were set to attain these eight different goals, whereas the 48 indicators are used to evaluate the progress made from 1990 to 2015. The United Nations is in charge of preparing annual reports on the progress of MDGs, based on data collected from other UN agencies.

These specific goals, targets and indicators attempts to provide a blue print of all human development needs, and are crucial to understanding the progress and challenges of each country. In other words, the goals serve as the necessary guidelines for the development of national policies and programs which involve the cooperation of international institutions such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), Food

and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), national governments, banks, corporations as well as civil society.

2.3 Pre-MDGs Educational initiatives

MDGs were not the first global initiatives that were aimed at tackling poverty. Back in 1949, the United Nations General Assembly agreed on the *Declaration of Human Rights* (DHR) which specified in Article 25 that “everyone has the right to a standard living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family including food, clothing, housing and medical care...” (UN General Assembly, 1948). Subsequently, the Decade of Development followed it in the 1960s at the dawn of the period when many countries were gaining independence from Europe. The US President John Kennedy, in his inaugural speech at the United Nations, reiterated that "to those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, [we] pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves"(Kennedy, 1964). This period was one of hope for the newly emancipated nations to alleviate the burden of poverty that was a result of colonialism.

The 1980s was a turning point period as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were gaining ground while the United Nations had started to lose some of its international influence. The two financial institutions started implementing their Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) policies on the developing countries (or what was then called Third World). Hulme (2009) posits that the structural adjustment procedures imposed by the World Bank and the IMF were a “recipe of liberalization, privatization and reduced government” roles. The SAP was critiqued because the structural reform

initiated by any developing country had to be endorsed by the two banks, and consequently these policies significantly harmed their economy, education and health sectors.

In the 1990s, three crucial international conferences took place with much focus and dedicated efforts on bringing forward substantial changes and improvements to the lives of the poor: The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in *Jomtien* (Thailand) in 1990; the World Summit for Children by UNICEF in 1990; and the eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VIII) in 1992. The EFA aimed at providing primary education for all by the year 2000, whereas the World Summit for Children sought to improve the lives of children globally. It was the World Summit for Children that paved the way to the establishment of the eight MDGs that came to existence ten years later.

The 'Earth Summit' or the 'Rio Summit' on environment and development in 1992 was significant as it triggered the first mobilization of the women's movement, and played a major role in promoting women's issues in subsequent years. One of the recommendations of the International Conference on Food and Nutrition that took place in Rome in 1992 was to reduce by half the percentage of hunger in the world, which corresponds to Goal 1 in MDGs.

Other summits like (1) the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 led to the establishment of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, where the UN members echoed the importance of respecting human rights and basic freedoms for all; (2) the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo dealt with population control and the importance of family planning, and supported

reproductive health and empowerment of women; and (3) the fourth conference on women in Beijing in 1995 emphasized the importance of “women’s rights as human rights and committed to specific actions to ensure respect for those rights” (Declaration, 1995), had all been milestone summits that paved the way to and brought about the Millennium Development Goals framework that adopted a holistic approach that deals with human issues.

2.4 Gender summits

World conferences on women organized by the United Nations have been influential in stirring women’s issues to be the focus of attention, and heralded a new era on promoting gender equality at the international level. Four main conventions took place between the years 1975 and 1995 to acknowledge the importance of promoting women’s issues in all aspects of society. First, the United Nations conference in Mexico in 1975, stressed the importance of educating women in order to solve the problems facing them (United Nations, 1976). Second, the Copenhagen conference in 1980 took “stronger national measures to ensure women's ownership and control of property, as well as improvements in women's rights with respect to inheritance, child custody and loss of nationality” (United Nations, 1980). Third, the Nairobi conference in 1985, at the time when the gender movement gained momentum, considered “all issues to be women’s issues” (United Nations, 1986). And lastly, the fourth conference on women in Beijing in 1995, with its Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, stressed the importance of “women’s rights as human rights and committed to specific actions to ensure respect for those rights” (United Nations, 1996).

The latest win goes back to the International Women's day celebrated on March 8th, 2011. For example, the Global Fund for Women (GFW) celebrated 10 achievements in women's movement, and one of them is related to Morocco where a national referendum took place to reform the constitution, and as a result, "gender equality cemented into Moroccan constitution" (Global Fund for Women, 2014).

The following are the top 10 wins for women's movements, posted on the GFW website:

1. UN Recognizes Human Rights of LGBTI People
2. A Feminist Women's Court for Peace and Justice
3. Uruguay on the Cusp of Legalizing Abortion
4. Gender Equality Cemented into Moroccan Constitution
5. Justice Served in the Congo
6. Sri Lankan Women Workers Fight Back
7. Egyptian Court Bans Virginity Tests
8. Breaking the Silence on Rape in Pakistan
9. Women's Human Rights Central to Peace
10. European Women Win Domestic Violence Treaty

The above-mentioned summits have helped pave the way to the promotion of women's rights movement. This would play an important role to take into account women's issues in the subsequent international agendas and treaties.

2.5 Gender and the MDGs

Whereas substantial progress has been made towards implementing the MDGs, the progress related to women has been asymmetrical. Gender is only clear in MDGs 3 and 5. MDG 3 promotes gender equality and women empowerment, and MDG 5 tackles maternal health. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are effective ways to combat poverty and diseases and to encourage sustainable development. The international organizations have always stressed the need for full gender equality and combating all forms of violence against women.

Significant progress in parity of access to primary education has been achieved, but according to the MDG report of 2013, only 2 out of 130 countries achieved this target in all levels of education (United Nations, 2013). In developing countries, the picture is “much less impressive” and girls still face barriers to education in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Sahara and western Asia. As a matter of fact, as of mid-2000, there were still 41 million girls who did not have a primary education (Turquet et al., 2008).

There has also been some progress in the area of women’s employment. Their participation in the workforce has contributed, to some extent, to their financial autonomy. However, MDGs do not speak to the quality of the jobs available to them. Women constitute a significant percentage of workers in global supply chains that pay notoriously low wages, have dangerous work conditions, fewer or no social benefits, and discrimination and harassment in the work place. I have first-hand knowledge of this reality since my youngest sister (aged 23 and a primary school drop-out) works in Morocco on the assembly lines of a prestigious French children line of clothing and she only makes about 200 dollars per month, and has to work, like the majority of other

women in this company, six to seven days per week. This is still her reality in 2014. Despite this example, women's income has been slowly and steadily growing.

The reality is that women still face the “double duty” of paid and unpaid employment. They still do the majority of child rearing, cooking, healing, sewing and household cleaning. This is such a deeply rooted reality for women that even in richer countries where women bring to the table an education and a good salary, men have only begun sharing children and household responsibilities only recently. Even when societies evolve this paradigm is still very much present and hard to alter since it is based on the customs of patriarchal societies. One of the ways to help women get into the workforce and hopefully get better paying jobs is an evolution of mentality, but also perhaps a government that provides subsidized child care to alleviate this build-in inequality.

Political participation and representation are indicators of gender equality and empowerment. More representation means more power and change that could improve the status of women in society. However, in some countries women are still denied running for public office. The Beijing platform set a target of 30% of seats occupied by women in parliaments, but it was unsuccessful in making it a reality. The current women representation in parliaments is estimated at 17% globally, and, the 30% target will be met only in 2068 (Turquet, 2008). Nowadays, women constitute only 17% in average of parliament representatives worldwide. Rwanda has an unprecedented rate of 49% representation by women, which compares favorably to the developed countries. Moreover, some 10 countries have no women elected in the parliament, whereas about 40 countries have less than 10% elected members of parliament that are women (Inter-parliamentary Union, (2014).

Despite national and international advocacy efforts, gender inequality remains. Discrimination still hinders women to have full accesses to education, economy, and politics, notably in developing countries.

2.6 MDGs monitoring

The monitoring reports generated and maintained by the UN Statistics Division in cooperation with other international organizations and agencies not affiliated with the UN such as UNDP's Human Development Reports, and UN DESA's statistics and Population Division, the WB's World Development indicators, as well as Google's interactive maps and Cisco's technical support. The MDGs collected data is consistently updated, and is made available in all the UN official languages for everyone who is interested in tracking, learning and supporting the MDGs progress worldwide. The reports serve as a framework for accountability in development policy, and contain information concerning progress achieved by each country. At the national level, countries produce one such report every three years.

2.7 Progress towards achieving the MDGs

The 2015 deadline is approaching fast and only 4 out of the 21 MDG targets have been met. Progress towards meeting the MDGs differs from country to country. Although substantial progress has been achieved in certain countries, many developing countries still struggle to meet the MDG targets.

The 50% 'poverty target' reduction has been achieved, however, some 700 million people still live in dire poverty. In addition to the many children worldwide who

are denied access to basic education, there are also 123 million young adults aged 15 to 24 who were missed or were denied primary education, and majority of them are women.

The quota system has helped women and resulted in their access into parliaments, but the quota remains at 20 per cent (instead of 30 per cent). Only 2 out of 130 countries have met the target at all levels of education. A lot has been achieved in reducing child mortality, from 93 to 31 for every 1000 dying children. Maternal mortality has been halved, and maternal health has been improved. However, poverty, lack of funding of education continues to be the main source that affect women's health (United Nations, 2013).

The 2013 MDGs report states that despite measures taken to halve the number of out of school children, the progress has been slowed down, and the 2015 universal primary education target will not be met by 2015 (United Nations, 2013).

Household poverty is one of the reasons for children to not stay in school. Another reason is that parents may need their children to help with agriculture and taking care of farm animals. In big families, some children have to sacrifice attending school and must work outside the home at a young age to help provide for the family. Expenses for school supply and uniforms increase as the children progress in their studies.

Another reason why women in Morocco are less educated than men is that it is culturally accepted for them to get married as early as 16-17 years old to unburden their families who have too many mouths to feed, and believe that based on traditional roles, a women will have less needs for an education when she is raising children and running a household (UNESCO, 2005).

Academic performance can also be a factor that has influence of whether a child will stay at school. The United Nations' 2013 report mentions that children who are in primary level barely acquire basic writing and reading skills. The report adds that "some thirty per cent of students with six years of schooling cannot read a sentence" (UNESCO, 2013). The education of parents can also be a factor if students do not receive extra help at home; they will not be able to keep up with their school curriculum, and hence, loose interest in and drop out of school. Despite the fact that Universal Primary Education (UPE) is accessible to more than 90% of children, poor quality of education coupled with low completion and high number of repeaters are the challenges that still face children mainly in poverty-stricken countries (United Nations, 2013).

Camilla Croso, the president of Global Campaign for Education (CGE) states that:

Our world must no longer tolerate the constant violation of women's and girls' rights to an education. Not only has the 2005 Education For All goal of gender parity in enrolment been grossly missed, but the 2015 gender equality goal is sadly way off track. " (Media for Freedom, 2011)

Geographical location of schools can be another reason children do not attend or drop out of school. Location of schools is important and rural children are the most affected (United Nations, 2013) as requires children have to spend hours walking to and from school, and results in fatigue, anxiety and psychological distress for fear of rain, storms or floods without prior notice. At home, children do not have time to do their homework, as they go to sleep and wait for another long day. Teachers are also likely to miss many days of classes as they also have to commute for hours, which deprives

students from many hours of studying all year long

2.8 Status of the MDGs in the Arab World as of 2013: What has been achieved?

According to the Arab Millennium Development Report (AMDR), the United Nations and the League of Arab States (LAS) have established a regional classification of the 22 Arab countries (Galal, 2008), which are categorized as follows:

1. The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC): Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
2. The Least Developed Countries (LDCs): the Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen.
3. The Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.
4. The Mashreq: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Progress in achieving the MDGs has been uneven between different groups of countries, from country to country, and within countries. For example, the Gulf Cooperation countries (GCC), that include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates, and which are more advanced in the economic sector, have achieved a lot of MDGs, but have experienced delays in eliminating gender disparity. Other countries that shunned political and social unrest in the region have made big strides in many of the MDGs goals. Nonetheless, in countries like Sudan, Palestine, Iraq and Syria enrolment rates

have stagnated due to conflict that has hindered progress, and caused the destruction of many schools, as in the case of Syria where the rate of enrolment has declined from ninety nine per cent (99%) in 2005, to ninety one per cent (91%) in 2010.

Even though significant progress towards achieving the MDGs took place, as did improvement in the rendering of primary school enrolment more mainstream, several countries though close to achieving full equality between boys and girls, they are still behind in achieving other targets, especially in the fight against poverty, hunger, food security, access to water and sanitation services, and health improvement of mothers and children.

The Arab region has achieved significant improvement in primary education enrolment rates as other developing countries. Eighty five per cent (85%) of school-age children enrolled accessed primary school in 1999, whereas this number increased to ninety per cent (90%) in 2012. Countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Qatar, Kuwait, Morocco and Egypt are close to achieve mainstreaming UPE, which stands a little bit beyond ninety five per cent (95%). However, enrollment in primary school in Morocco has gradually increased from seventy one percent (71%) in 1999 to ninety eight (98%) per cent in 2009.

The estimates show that poverty in the Arab countries represents more than the fifth of the population. The poverty situation has not seen any significant changes and between the nineties and 2010 Europe and Eastern Asia and the Arab

region were at the same level of poverty. Poverty rates have regressed in Europe and Eastern Asia while it stayed in the same level in the Arab region despite growth in income which stands at 2 per cent.

The increase of poverty has been prominent as a result of unrest in the region since 2010. The MDGs Arab region report of 2013 states that gains which have been achieved in reducing poverty have been ruined by the political changes and conflicts that plague the region, which expands the cycle of poverty, unemployment and hunger. Syria is a case in point where war erupted some years ago destroyed years of progress, and increased the rate of poverty to 7.9 % (UNESCO, 2013), and will take years to rebuild. The same example is applied to Egypt, Tunisia, and Iraq who are experiencing the same ordeal. Eliminating poverty in the Arab region will unlikely be achieved by 2015. However, the report adds that although the Arab region is 9.6 per cent behind achieving the MDGs, and this rate is better than the average delay in other developing countries, which stands at 13.3 percent.

The rate of child mortality have declined and maternal health have improved. Geographic and economic barriers impede access to health care. Big gaps still exist between rural and urban areas in terms of access to potable water and improved sanitation services.

The region has progressed in reducing gender disparity in education, which is an important step in achieving equality of opportunity between males and females.

The level of representation of women in the legislative sector, for example, has improved but it is still much lower than what has been attained in other developing countries. The quota of parliamentary seats occupied by women has now reached 12.7% in 2012 compared to 18% in the developing countries, and 20% at the global level. For example, the royal decree issued in January 2013 in Kingdom of Saudi Arabic (KSA) has increased the representation of Saudi women in the parliament to 20%. Active participation in political and social demonstrations in countries that experienced democratic transition during the Arab Spring has not resulted in increasing the representation of women in the government body.

2.9 Criticism of the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals have been the most notable mechanism in the development agenda of the Millennium Declaration that have received unparalleled international political commitment (Fukuda-Parr, 2008). The MDGs aims to enable and facilitate progress in the area of poverty and hunger; universal primary education; gender equality and women's empowerment; child mortality and maternal health, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; environmental sustainability; and global partnership. The MDGs have engaged both the poor and the rich countries to work in partnership to improve the standard of living of the poorest on the planet. As the year 2015 is around the corner, the world is still off-track and crucial goals will not be fully achieved. There are many reasons why the MDGs will not deliver promised results.

Globalization is imbued with contradictions. International free flow of goods and services under the neo-liberal agenda has increased the gap between the rich and the poor. According to the Human Development Report of 2003, fifty four (54) countries are poorer than what they used to be, while some other countries have flourished in an unprecedented and unparalleled scale.

With the 2015 deadline approaching, there is a need to ensure that the Post-2015 Developmental Goals framework will not replicate the same mistakes of the MDGs. It needs to focus on attaining human rights, equality, justice, peace and security. It has to accommodate the needs of the silent and marginalized voices as well as hold governments accountable in addressing the future framework.

The United Nations' MDGs are more linked to the development and economic growth is the key factor, which can help reduce or eliminate poverty. However, many countries will miss the 2015 deadline because of slow economic growth (Vandemoortele, 2011), as people who live in abject poverty have benefited less from the national progress.

The MDGs do not take into consideration the diversity of women worldwide: indigenous and religious minorities, women with disabilities, single mothers and widows who belong to the poorest groups and have less access to basic services. Gender equality is fundamental to human progress and sustainable development (UNICEF, 2006). It is of great importance to reconsider the issue of social injustice and marginalization by eliminating gender disparity in order to attain socio-political and economic advancement. If the main objectives of the MDGs are to promote the right to education, empowerment and equality for everyone, they must support it, as it is a human right, regardless of race,

ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and background. UNESCO considers women as a source of talent and energy; educating both sexes and creating convenient conditions are deemed to be necessary to achieve equality in all walks of life.

2.10 Beyond the MDG-2015 deadline

The United Nations has started talks and discussions about the post-2015 agenda in order to come up with a framework that will either build on or supersede the MDGs goals. The post-2015 development framework will need to, as the UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said in her speech in the 2013 Global MDG Conference: “Making the MDGs work” that took place in Bogotá, “to reflect the new global context fully, while remaining committed to the unfinished business of the MDGs”.

First, the 192 UN members endorsed the Rio+20 summit held in Brazil to initiate Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Rio+20, also known as The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) published its report “The Future We Want”, where the participating 192 states agreed to engage in the promotion of a sustainable future, eradicating poverty and protecting diversity. The discussions revolved on two themes; “how to build a green economy to achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty; and how to improve international coordination for sustainable development” (UNCSD, 2012).

The *raison d'être* of the Open Working Group (OWG) in 2013, to prepare and design the SDGs, and “aim[s] to define a process by which world leaders will reach an agreed future development agenda that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals” (UNDP, 2013). The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has created the UN System Task

Team (UNSTT), in 2011 and it gathers experts from more than 50 UN agencies and international organizations to prepare and propose a post-2015 road map. For example, the UNSTT report “Realizing the Future We Want for All” published in 2012, suggests a holistic approach to address the challenges present in the MDGs. The recommendations that came in the reports are:

- Support human rights, equality and sustainability.
- The MDG goals should be reorganized to be based on four dimensions; inclusive social development; inclusive economic development; environmental sustainability; and peace and security.
- A policy coherence at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels.
- A global agenda with shared responsibilities that will result in transformative change required for human rights, equality, and sustainability.
- Both an inclusive consultation and the recommendations of the Rio+20 conference on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) should be taken as a guideline.

The establishment of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP), which was founded by UNSG Ban Ki-Moon, and co-chaired by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and British Prime Minister David Cameron which provide consultations for the Post-2015 Development Agenda (UNDP, 2013). The HLP published its report in 2013: “A new global partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable

development” where it states that the post-2015 framework need to tackle “five big transformative shifts” (Panel, 2013):

1. Leave no one behind
2. Put sustainable development at the core
3. Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth
4. Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions
5. Forge a new global partnership.

2.11 Summary

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were endorsed by the United Nations members to achieve eight goals that deal with poverty, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, HIV, environment, and global partnership. These goals span for a period of fifteen years, marking the year 2015 as the deadline for achieving them. Historically, the MDGs were the results of previous conferences that tackled the same above-mentioned issues but separately.

Integrating the gender aspect has been present since 1975. Different women activists and organization have raised awareness of women’s issues, and they should be an integral part of United Nations’ agenda.

The gender aspect is pervasive in all the MDG goals. For example, gender equality cannot be achieved without eliminating poverty, diseases, HIV, child

mortality and education. Substantial achievements in promoting equality but a lot is still to be done.

As part of the MENA region, Morocco has done important improvements to access to primary education. Poverty is still an element that impedes children, and mainly girls from attending school. Access to health is still fraught with geographical and infrastructure barriers, which deprives substantial percentage of population from access to basic health.

Despite the fact that there has been significant progress in reducing gender inequality in education, it is still low compared to what has been achieved in other developing countries.

In order to achieve the “unfinished business of the MDGs”, talks have already started to design a post-2015 framework which will either supersede or build on the Millennium goals. The post-2015 framework will be based on promoting human rights, equality, and sustainability.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to give a historical context of the different educational reforms that took place in post-independence Morocco. In other words, this historical analysis is necessary to better understand the different factors that brought about the position of education in Morocco nowadays. Different procedures were adopted from 1956 until the eighties as the successive governments tried to remedy the French legacy in education that contributed minimally to the education of the masses. Furthermore, the chapter provides examples of educational reforms initiated by Morocco from the early nineties, the period when Morocco started adopting and mainstreaming international programs.

3.1 Country background

Morocco is a country situated in North-West Africa. While it is located right below Europe, and only 15 km away from Spain by boat; it has deep roots in Africa, and is naturally linked to the Arab world. Islam is the main religion and it is practiced by 98% of its population. There is a minority of Jews and Christians who also live in this country. Berbers constitute around 30% of the Moroccan population estimated at about 35 million (Diyen, 2004). Arabic and French are the official languages, but many others are spoken. The various indigenous Berber languages have been assigned a minor role perhaps because they are oral languages, but recent reforms introduced them to primary school in different select regions. Morocco was under the “French protectorate” between 1912 and 1956, a lovely metaphor, which really means that France colonized the country during that period. France controlled and dictated all major decisions taken in Morocco during

44 years and appointed the French army general Hubert Lyautey as the Resident-General in Morocco to ensure close implementation of French policies and power in their new colony.

Nowadays, Morocco is governed by a monarchy. The current king –Mohamed VI– is the 16th head of state of the Alaouite dynasty that has ruled the country since 1669, and traces its lineage to the Prophet Mohammed. King Mohamed VI ascended to the throne after his father's death in 1999. He is the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Moroccan Army (RMA), as well as the *Amir Al Mu'minin* or the Commander of the Faithful (religious authority). He appoints the Prime Minister and the government. He controls almost all the facets of the political arena of the country. He obtained a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in general law from the French university of Nice Sophia Antipolis in 1993.

The major but slow reforms undertaken during the last 15 years of Mohamed VI's rule has insulated Morocco from the unrest of the Arab Spring that swept across the Arab World. Since his ascending the throne, the king brought upon major positive changes at the social, political, economic and educational levels, and the country became more open to foreign investment and privatization (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 2008; p.46). By the same token, there has been a significant improvement in the area of human rights as he granted amnesty to many political prisoners who had been jailed during his late father's notorious rule. Mohamed VI focuses more on national policy of the country and, contrary to his father Hassan II; he rarely attends any international summits, and does not give any interviews to the local or international media. All in all, the country has enjoyed

modernisation and economic growth but the people are still demanding more and more reforms.

3.2 The Linguistic landscape in Morocco

3.2.1 Arabic, French, Spanish, and English

Morocco is a multilingual and a multicultural country as a by-product of an accumulative past presence of Europe and the Middle East in the country. There had been the contact and interaction between Moroccans and Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Vandals, Arabs, French and Spaniards throughout history. As a result, languages like Berber, Moroccan Arabic (*Darija*), Standard Arabic (*Fus'ha*), French, English and Spanish are languages that are spoken by a variety of people. These languages are “commonly spoken regionally and nationally” (Buckner, 2011)

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the official language of Morocco. MSA was introduced to Morocco (as well as Islam) in the seventh century during the Muslim expansion to North Africa. The language is used in all official documents, in the media and in books. On the other hand, Moroccan Arabic (*Darija*) is a variety of spoken Arabic and it is the language used in daily life, and it uses French and Spanish words. When Arabs communicate between each other, they use MSA for the reason that the specificities of the different dialects across the Arab world are incomprehensible.

French still plays an important role in Morocco's culture and heritage. It is the second official language of communication for business and government sectors, and spoken among the upper-class Moroccans. It is mandatory to learn French as a second language from third grade until university. French schools are present in big cities, and both expatriates and Moroccan upper middle class enrol their children to study in French.

Charles Fries, the French ambassador in Morocco states that “the French school network in Morocco is the biggest one [we have] outside of France, with 32 schools and 26,000 students, of which 15,000 are Moroccan.” (Alaoui, 2013).

Spanish is still spoken in the north of Morocco. The language was introduced to the country at the same time as the French language. The northern regions were under the Spanish control from 1912 to 1956. On the other hand, Spain still maintains two cities on the Mediterranean Sea, Ceuta and Melilla, and have been like that since the seventeenth century. Morocco still claims them to be under Spanish occupation.

In the last two decades, English has been gaining ground in Morocco. It is becoming widely used and is “competing with French (Ennaji, 2005). It is taught in public schools at the secondary and tertiary levels. The educational reforms of 1999 introduced English at the lower secondary level (COSEF, 2000). There exist many private schools, which teach evening classes for a variety of Moroccan students, and professionals who want to benefit from the upward mobility offered to those who can master the language of international business that is English.

3.2.2 Berber identity and languages dilemma

Amazigh (or Berber) are the indigenous languages of almost 40% of the population. It is a branch of Afro-Asiatic languages and it has three varieties: *Tachelhit* in central Morocco, *Tamazight* in the south and *Tarifit* in the North. It is worth-mentioning that Berber is also spoken in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina-Faso, Chad, and some parts of Egypt. Berbers have been living in North Africa since 3000 BC. The name “Berber” derives from the Greek word *Barbaros* (meaning barbarians), but “Berbers” prefer to be known as Amazigh” (the Free People) instead.

“Berber” has been an oral language for centuries, and 2003 the Moroccan government has started introducing the written form of this language in primary schools (El Aissati, et al., 2011). The students now have the opportunity to read, write and speak this native language of Morocco. In recent years, many government buildings, street signs are in Arabic, French and Berber.

Many Moroccan activists and civil society voices are calling for laws to make it an official language. The growing demand from the Berber (*Amazigh*) movement paved the way for the creation of the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) and finally recognized Tamazight as an official language. The goal of the “Decade of education” was to promote bilingual education, and to recognize Berber (*Tamazight*) languages and local needs of the population (Daniel & Ball, 2009). The Berber culture and dialects were emphasized to be “part of the country’s cultural inheritance” (COSEF, 2000, p. 43; cited in Daniel & Ball, 2009). Berber is spoken at home by nearly half of the population (El Aissati et al., 2011). The language has been marginalized for centuries and it has been used only as a spoken language. Despite its deep-rooted history in the country, Tamazight had never been recognized as an official language until 2003 (Ennaji, 2009).

Policy-makers and the government are working on finding solutions on unification and standardization of the Berber languages (Ennaji, 2009). However, the state kept the Amazigh script (*Tifinagh*), and did not Romanize it. Today, the policy-makers and the government still face the problem of standardization. In other words, either the three existing local languages (or dialects) should be unified into one standard language, or each dialect should be standardized.

Adopting a standardized version of Tamazight would eliminate and marginalize the important cultural and social factors of the other Tamazight languages, hence raise the problem of the dominant and the dominated language. The initiative of standardizing and teaching Tamazight is still problematic. The language is taught to the Amazigh people (Berbers) as a second language, instead of making it as their first language. Therefore, the state policy-makers still marginalize the language that is spoken by almost half of the population. The other obstacle that impedes the teaching of Tamazight is the absence of experts, teacher training, evaluation processes and tracking of the project on the ground.

Table 1: Tifinagh alphabet

(<http://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/4353/enseignement-l-amazigh-jeunes-associations-interpellees.html>)

ⵝ	ⵙ	ⵣ	ⵣⵓ	ⵢ	ⵡ	ⵉ	ⵏ	ⵢ	ⵢⵓ	ⵙ
ya	yab	yag	yag ^w	yad	yaɖ	yey	yaf	yak	yak ^w	yah
a	b	g	g ^w	d	ɖ	e	f	k	k ^w	h
[a]	[b/β]	[g/ɣ]	[g ^w]	[d/ð]	[ɖ]	[e]	[f]	[k/ç]	[k ^w]	[h]
ⵓ	ⵓⵢ	ⵔ	ⵓⵣ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ
yah	yac	yax	yaq	yi	yaj	yal	yam	yan	yu	yar
h		x	q	i	j	l	m	n	u	r
[h]	[ʕ]	[x]	[q]	[i]	[ʒ]	[l]	[m]	[n]	[u]	[r]
ⵓ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ	ⵓⵢ
yar	yagh	yas	yaş	yac	yat	yaɖ	yaw	yay	yaz	yaz
ʀ	gh	s	ş	c	t	ɖ	w	y	z	z
[ʀ]	[ɣ]	[s]	[s]	[ʃ]	[t/θ]	[ɖ]	[w]	[j]	[z]	[z]

Despite the fact that the majority of the population speaks Arabic and Berber, the colonial language, French still has an economic and social status value. It still plays an important role in shaping the national identity of the country, and especially in the field of education. The question that needs to be asked is whether the future of local native languages will ultimately disappear and be absorbed into French (and eventually English). Yes, the French left the country decades ago, but their legacy still indirectly shapes and influences access to education. Freire (2002) was quite right when he said that education is not a neutral site of practice. He also stated that education is connected to power, and those who are in power define what curriculum, programs and methods to implement (p. 102).

3.2.3 The effects of Arabization on the educational system

When French colonization ended in Morocco, the country restored Arabic as the language of communication and schooling, and gradually eliminated the presence of the French language. Arabization was a policy that was adopted by Morocco in 1956 to restore Arabic into society as the standard of communication and schooling (Daniel & Ball, 2009). This policy was also aimed at establishing a monolingual guideline (Marley, 2004). The government decided to hire teachers from the Middle East to speed up Arabization (Gill, 1999; cited in Ennaji 2005, p. 36).

The implementation of the Arabic language everywhere had repercussions on the educational system because it ignored the multiculturalism of the Moroccan people; where Berbers represent 30% of the population. Berbers and Berber languages lived (and still live) in the region before the arrival of the Arabs in the seventh century (Redouane,

1998). With their adoption of Islam and Islamic values, they were obliged to adopt Arabic as the language of schooling and reading the Koran, and some used it in their daily communication mainly as a second language. Hence, 95% of Moroccans had begun studying Arabic as a second language at schools. The standard Arabic was, and is still today only spoken at schools, whereas Moroccan dialect (darija) and the Berber languages (Tamazight, Tarifit, Tachelhit) are spoken at home. This resulted in many dropouts, especially with the presence of untrained teachers who followed a very strict methodology.

However, other voices that were calling for education reform during and after colonialism benefitted from the French “modern” system of education because it helped them in their social mobility, whereas the advocates of Quranic schools failed to reform their traditional education system. The elites attended the modern schools, which existed in urban areas, whereas rural and underprivileged students enrolled in Quranic schools (Bouzoubaâ, 1998). Therefore, French language continued to be the language of instruction in higher education and in private schools as well. Those who opposed teaching French, feared repercussions on the country’s developments at all levels.

Policy-makers have been accused of remaining loyal to the ex-colonizer. What is contradictory is that the dominant elite were pushing for Arabization and were encouraging the masses to send their children to Arabic schools, while at the same time they (the elite) sent their children to French schools (Redouane, 1998). This step was primarily targeted at reproducing power for the benefit of the elite that attended colonial schools, which is different from the education the masses received.

3.3 Educational system before the French Protectorate (late nineteenth century)

Before the French Protectorate in 1912, the educational system was confined within Quranic schools. The curriculum was mainly based on Quran memorization alongside with considerable *Hadith* (tradition) memorization, which took 3 years to learn. The Quran and Hadith were the basis for studying Islamic sciences. The students could then continue to learn other subjects such as poetry, mathematics, astronomy, Islamic law, logic, and natural sciences. But many students only memorized the Quran and did not stay in school long enough to learn other topics. This took place in the Madrasas (schools) established in some big cities like the *al-Qarawiyyin* in Fez founded in 859 by *Fatima el Fihriya* and her sister *Mariam el Fihriya*, and was the first academic granting university of higher education in history; and *Ben Youssef Madrasa* (14th century) in Marrakech, Tetouan, Taroudant and Rabat. Arabic language was also the language of learning. The graduates of these ‘schools’ became judges, notaries, teachers, preachers, and state administrators (Pennell, 2000, p. 17).

However, the educational system of the time was not developed or fit to cope with the advances of education. It was restricted and its objective was to maintain the continuity of the elite, and serve the *Makhzen* (the Moroccan ruling elite). Moreover, the Moroccan educational system could not keep up with the more complex form of education adopted in Europe, which in the end was so advanced that it gave birth to its Renaissance period. Morocco was also unable to provide the necessary tools to embark on modern economy of the time. All these circumstances paved the way for the French to implement an educational policy that served its expansionist interests and intentions in the country.

3.4 Educational reforms under the French Protectorate (1912-1956)

During the colonial era (1912-1956), France implemented an educational system similar to the one adopted in France. Colonial educational reforms were a procedure to create cooperation with the Moroccan elites and keep the latter in power in the future (Segalla, 2009; p.33). Moreover, it was also a means to detach the Moroccan society from its local culture and language by creating a new identity that could be controlled and dedicated to France. For example, the French targeted Arabic language by reducing its status through promoting Berber languages and closing Quranic schools (Redouane, 1998).

This political policy was evident when the French adopted what is called *dahir barbari* (Berber Decree) of 1914, which was created to divide Berbers and Arabs, declaring that “the tribes said to be of Berber custom are and will remain regulated and administered according to their laws and their own customs under the control of the authorities” (Segalla, 1973; p. 49), (Waterbury 1970; p. 41). This policy was aimed at inhibiting the Arabization of Berber culture as well as minimizing the use of Arabic in Morocco.

The presence of France in Morocco spread the French language and culture, and alienated the masses from their indigenous roots (Ennaji, 2005). However, many parents were unwilling to send their children to schools where all subjects were in French and taught by the French. To the hopelessness of some Moroccans parents who did not mind sending their children to French schools, they learned that these schools were not for them but for the sons of the French settlers as well as the elite.

King Mohamed V (1909-1961) responded by opening schools all over the country where all subjects were taught in Arabic. Such schools would be the center of nationalist movement that paved the way for independence (Arab Information Center, 1966). The king's initiative urged the French to react by creating free public schools where Arabic was the main language of instruction. The French initiative came too late as it kept thousands of Moroccans without schooling since it only established five public high schools for Moroccans. Only 250.000 out of 2 million Moroccans attended school (Arab Information Center, 1966).

France gradually introduced and spread secular educational system in Morocco. First, it established European schools whose mission was to further the interests of the French through the production of manpower that took all the aspects of the political, economic and religious sectors. For example, the (*Muslim*) religious affairs ministry of Morocco was under the patronage of the French.

Second, the French opened schools for the sons of the notables (Écoles des Fils des Notables). These schools were open to the Moroccan elite, sons of notables, senior traders. The purpose of these schools was to produce elite that would serve as a mediator between the French and the rest of Moroccans during the French Protectorate as well as after independence. The sons of the notables were fluent in French and they also paid tuition (Pennell, 2000, p. 117), and some got a scholarship (Scham, 1970; p. 150), and most left the country to pursue their studies in Europe (Pennell, 2000, p. 205).

Finally, French established primary schools in rural and urban areas for the general population. The purpose of such schools was to serve the colonial economy in various fields. For example, schools in rural areas concentrated on teaching agricultural

skills, while schools in rural areas provided vocational training in the industrial and commercial sectors (Scham, 1970; p.149-150). Some farmers even refused to send their children to schools because the content of the curriculum was mainly teaching farming instead of becoming government employees and school teachers (Segalla, 2010, p. 96; in Mershed, 2010).

The colonial period was characterized with the coexistence of two systems of education; a superior education system represented by France, and an inferior one represented by Arabic and Islamic ways of teaching. The French educational system was modern, secular, private, and European whereas the Moroccan educational system was traditional, religious and public. The two systems were in direct conflict between what Western culture is, and what Arabo-Islamic tradition is (Redouane, 1998). The French educational system that existed then only benefitted the French living in the country, as well as the Moroccan elite. The French education catered to the needs and wishes of the elite who aspired for social mobility (Segalla, 2010, p. 96; in Mershed, 2010), while the masses were denied or had very limited access to education.

To sum up, French educational reforms had many deficiencies. First, it delivered less to the Moroccan population. It was not in the interest and intention of France to educate Moroccans because, as Paul Odinet Colonel of *Service des Affaires Indigènes* stated, making a stronger and more educated Moroccans is a danger to our [France] endeavour (Bidwell, 1973; p. 188), even though it is also the duty of [Christian] France to morally and intellectually educate the Moroccan who had been waiting for it [education] for 14 centuries (Bidwell, 1973; p. 189). On the surface, the European education came for

its *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission) to “civilize” their dependent subjects, Moroccans in this case.

The World Bank indicated in a 1943 report that after 31 years of the French control of education in Morocco, only 23 Moroccans held a university degree (Sultana & Lazim, 2011), and 530 passed the Baccalauréat (high school) examination (Waterbury 1970; p. 84). This proportion appears insignificant compared to the proportion of the population at the time, which were about six million people. Secondly, it gave a secondary role to the Arabic language spoken by the majority. Thirdly, vocational education was contingent to the French schools and teachers. Finally, French education created two separate Moroccan identities through educating the elite while giving the masses very basic education.

3.5 Post-independence educational system and reforms in Morocco

Since its independence from France in 1956, the Ministry of National Education was created to lay foundations for educational reform, stressing the importance of restoring cultural identity and implementing a school system that reflects the ambition of the newly independent nation. The government adopted the pre-colonial education system (religious education) and the modern education system (French model) to train Moroccans in order to replace foreign teachers who left their professional jobs when France departed from the country. The end of the European presence, however, did not automatically eliminate the modern schooling established in the colony, but new independent Morocco continued their efforts to promote the French educational legacy (Mershed, 2010, p. 7).

The reforms involved increasing access to education for all citizens. In 1963, education became compulsory for children between six and thirteen. However, most families did not send their children to school until 1970s (Hoffman, 2000) due to problems of access, traditional and patriarchal values that do not permit girls to attend schools. Later, mass education attracted many young Moroccans who saw the potential of social mobility as promised by the post-independence government. They also believed in the bright future made possible for those getting an education. Education was offered for free throughout the school process. However, most of those who went to school were children and adults living in the urban areas. The existing private schools only recruited children of the educated elite.

On the other hand, traditional education that was taught at the Quranic schools used Arabic as the medium of instruction. Quranic schools played a major role in diffusing Islamic values, Islamic sciences and the Arabic language to the different ethnicities and countries that converted to Islam in Africa and Asia, and they were under the control of the state. Quranic schools (or madrasas) have been the alternative to the formal education at the pre-primary level, and provided the equivalent of kindergarten education level.

3.6 Educational reforms from 1970s to 1990s

The period of the seventies saw that education reform was an urgent need. An emergency four-year program (1973-1977) laid a framework of developing the Moroccan school, the Moroccanization of the teaching staff, and the Arabization of the primary and secondary school. Moroccan graduates replaced French teachers. All subjects, with the exception of math and sciences, were delivered in Arabic, as it became the official

language of teaching. However, French remained the language of instruction in higher education as the government was not fully ready to completely Arabicize the whole educational system, and the lack of Moroccan graduates who could teach in Arabic.

At the same time, an Islamic inspired curriculum was introduced. For example, subjects like philosophy, sociology, and French literature were replaced by Islamic culture (Vermeren, 2009). Such adoption came as a result of political turmoil of the era in the shape of communism that was gaining ground in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), threatening the monarchical system.

3.7 National Education and Training Charter, or the Decade of Education (2000-2009)

The National Charter (Charte Nationale de l'Éducation-Formation) is a set of initiatives and measures to revamp the educational system at all levels. It is also worth mentioning that it was in 1999 that Morocco joined the UNESCO.

Over a ten-year period starting in 2000, a number of recommendations were implemented to reform the Moroccan education system in order for the country to be able to keep abreast with the socio-economic, political, scientific and technological development particularly in the areas of communication and information in the world. It was also a result of the many prior crises in the education sector in the eighties, which yielded a poor and mediocre education. The government, civil society and the professional who proposed the chart, wanted to take out the country from the burdens of underdevelopment to become a modern country characterized by the reign of democracy and equality. The World Bank Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) operation, and Basic

Education Reform Support Project (PARSEM) supported the implementation of the program reforms.

The charter that came in about 40 pages was divided into two complimentary parts. The first part discussed the basic principles of the system of education and training, the rights and obligations of both partners and national mobilization that are important for the success of the reforms. The second part outlined the six areas of innovation:

1. Expanding education by linking it to the economic environment;
2. Pedagogical planning;
3. Improving the quality of education and training;
4. Human Resources;
5. Management and governance;
6. Partnership and funding.

The outcomes of the “Decade of education” were not encouraging, and the CNEF which was considered as the most important document to reform the educational system unanimously approved by all actors, partners and stakeholders failed for many reasons. First, it remained as a theoretical framework on paper and was not fully implemented. Second, lack of financial resources as the government is not fulfilling its promise to increase its financial aid to the education sector. Third, lack of trained and skilled teachers who possess the right pedagogical tools to deliver educational targets, and the fact that some of them worked in remote and difficult conditions. Fourth, not all key actors of civil society were given the opportunity to draft the charter, as the educational system was still centralized and perpetuated the top-down policies (Colombo, 2011).

Finally, the charter came as a response to a political policy rather than educational reforms. In other words, the educational reforms changed according to the politics of the party in power.

3.8 Emergency Education Plan (2009-2012)

After the previous disappointing reforms in education that resulted only in poor outcomes and failure to keep up with global trends, another set of reforms took place in 2009. The Moroccan government laid down the National Education Emergency Program (NEEP), based on the National Education and Training Charter (CNEF), and spanning the period 2009-2012 to speed up the implementation of educational reforms. This emergency plan “raised the age of compulsory primary education to 15 with an eye to eventually increasing it to 18” (Colombo, 2011) and improve the quality of teaching pedagogies. It aimed at reducing poverty and increasing skills development under the National Human Development Initiative (NIHD), and achieving the MDGs by the year 2015.

The government asked for financial assistance from five donors to implement the reform agenda: The European Union (EU), European Investment Bank (EIB), *L’Agence française de développement* (AFD), African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank. This plan was part of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that urged world governments, especially in the developing countries, to achieve free access to universal primary education, to reduce poverty by 2015, as well as to promote gender equality (UNESCO, 2010).

3.9 Education Action Plan (2013-2016)

The latest educational reform program implemented by the Moroccan government is the Education Action Plan (EAP) for 2013-2016. It aims at evaluating the previous EEP reforms that covered the period between 2009 and 2012. It was a result of King Mohamed VI's decree, which put education as one of the top priorities in the country. It was also an initiative by minority Islamist government, Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD), whose slogan was "to restore trust and confidence to the Moroccan public school". The EAP tackles five basic areas:

1. Schooling: mainstreaming education at the primary and secondary levels from the ages of six to ten. It also aims at broadening vocational education through a set of measures and procedures.
2. Quality of education: improving the quality of education through the preparation of programs and curricula as well as promoting learning of languages.
3. Educational institutions: facilitating the management of educational institutions to solve practical problems through the provision of more independence.
4. Governance: efficiency in distributing and controlling financial resources for schools.
5. Human resources: developing a range of strategic and practical measures that aims at achieving effectiveness and efficiency in the management of human resources.

After reading the 68-page EAP booklet (available in Arabic only), one notices the following deficiencies:

It is hard to predict the efficiency of the EAP program of 2013-2016 as only a year of its implementation has passed. However, it is clear from the outset that these reforms as well as the previous ones will not bring about the anticipated outcomes. This is partly because the state does not have efficient implementation strategies despite the financial assistance from international donors. The policy-makers do not have a clear agenda to put into practice effective educational reforms. Therefore, it is questionable that Morocco will be able to meet the United Nations Millennium Goals, as the country is off-track in achieving universal primary education and eliminating illiteracy.

Moreover, many people, young and adults, still have difficulty accessing formal education. Many children drop out of school at the primary level due to poverty and unsuitable environment. Those who completed primary school drop out because secondary education schools are not accessible, or the students cannot afford to move to the closest school. The government need to implement more schools at the secondary level. It is worth mentioning that poverty is one element that affects education. Reform in education cannot fully take place without financial provision from the state. The Moroccan economy is weak and relies mostly on agriculture and tourism.

3.10 Educational system overview

3.10.1 Organization of the education system

The Ministry of National Education (MEN) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Executive Training (MHEET) manage the public and the private education system.

These departments administer the policies of three sectors: (1) school and higher education; (2) literacy and non-formal education; and (3) vocational training.

The educational system in Morocco consists of two years of pre-school; six years of primary school; three years of lower secondary; one to two years of upper secondary education that includes vocational and technological training; and higher education (tertiary level) that grants Bachelor (5 semesters), Masters (5 semesters) and PhD (4 to 5 years) degrees (Hddigui, 2007). Moreover, there also exists religious education and training programs, which includes pre-school to higher education.

Primary Education

Primary education in Morocco lasts for six years and by the end of the cycle, students complete the *certificat d'études primaires* (Primary education certificate). The age level is six to twelve years old.

Lower-Middle / Intermediate School

Lower-Middle school lasts for three years. By the end of the cycle, students obtain the *certificat d'enseignement secondaire* (secondary school certificate). During their studies, students choose general, technical or vocational specialization. The age level is twelve to fifteen years old.

Upper Secondary

Upper secondary school program lasts for three years. By the end of the cycle, students obtain what is called a *Baccalauréat* (Secondary school certificate). The age level is 15 to 18 years old.

Higher Education / Tertiary Education

Holders of the Baccalauréat certificate (or high school degree) are eligible to enrol in a university, and some require an entrance exam. Students obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree after three years of study. Universities do not require students to pay tuition and the majority are free of charge. Students can continue their studies to obtain their Master's degree. Not all universities have a PhD program, and this also depends on specialization.

3.10.2 Educational spending

Morocco belongs to the Arab world region where public spending on education is the highest in the developing countries. As such, the Government allocated about 25.7 % of its annual budget for education (World Bank Group, 2012). Education expenditure takes about 5.4% of the country's GDP.

The latest report of the UNESCO's EFA report of 2013 gave Morocco a low score on the Education Development Index (EDI). The Global Monitoring Report on Education for All ranked Morocco 94th out of 120 countries, and it also ranked the last in the Arab world. The EDI requires a range between 0.95 and 1, whereas Morocco obtained 0.81. In 2005, Morocco was ranked in the ninth place in the world in terms of government spending on education, with 27.23% GDP.

3.11 Chapter summary

All the major reforms in education in Morocco were related to important political events. Politics does influence the process of education. The first reform took place right after independence, and then followed Mohamed VI's ascension to the throne after the death of his father Hassan II in 1999; as well as new parliamentary elections that

followed (Galal, 2007, p. 138). The recent reforms of 2013-2016 were, more or less, related to the Arab Spring that swept the whole Arab world, where Morocco was an exception. The education reform, however, did not help deliver a good education. According to Colombo (2011), the education sector “has steadily deteriorated”. The poor outcomes were reflected on the development of the country where many graduates were not able to find a job, where certain jobs require French because it is the language of prestige and labor market. The top-down policies have created a poor education system reflected on the curriculum and language policies. Language is an important element in development. Language policies affect the education system, and reproduce a certain ideology that serves the agenda of a certain elite.

Education is still an issue in Morocco. Despite the many reforms since independence from France. Students are forever excluded from making decisions in the reform process. The education method still relies on Freire’s banking model where the teacher has a prevailing authority in the classroom setting. Critical thinking and creativity are discouraged. The system relies on standard exams, which decides who should stay in school and who should drop out. It does not take into consideration students’ learning disabilities or different learning styles. I was a product of the Moroccan educational system from 1980 to 1997 and I was fortunate enough to be able to obtain my bachelor degree in literature. My six siblings and all my relatives have little or no schooling, and everyone dropped out either at the elementary level or during high school.

Educational reform is only a reflection of the ideologies of the existing power that enable students to graduate without thinking critically and or creatively. Through schooling, Moroccan students who stay in school are socialized to support the dominant

power that creates what Gramsci calls “hegemony” which reproduces cultural and economic domination in society (Litowitz, 2000).

Although one may argue that this is the case in many countries, not just in Morocco. This is in conflict with the purpose of education that is for liberation and social justice. There is that yearning for change in society, but there is still a long way to go to have a quality-based education system that could prepare Morocco’s youth and future generations for the increasing global competitiveness, the spread of technology, and the plethora of knowledge helpful to improve peoples’ lives.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER AND EDUCATION IN MOROCCO

This chapter looks at the different policies targeting gender in Morocco, and will also look into the constitutional and legal reforms that impacted the well being of women in general, and their participation in the social sphere. Moreover, it will look into the implementation of international commitments to reinforce gender equality and the promotion of girls' education. The present Moroccan government policies concerning education are in line with the Education for All Movement and the Millennium Development Goals framework.

4.1. National gender policies

The topic of the status of women has been an issue of particular interest and importance in post-independence Morocco. However, the last two decades represent the pinnacle of gender debate owing to national factors represented by the Moroccan feminist movements, and the pressure of international agencies that feverishly demand the improvement of human rights in general. As a result, this period has been marked by the acceleration of efforts towards the promotion and betterment of the status of women in Morocco. The promotion of gender equality is an important element for the promotion of socio-economic and social growth of women in general. King Mohamed VI and other civil society organizations have been active in the defense and promotion of women's rights, which progressed in terms of the status of working women in particular. Chapter VIII of the constitution enables women to benefit from the same rights as men.

Important gains have been made on gender issues to promote equality and empowerment of women in Morocco. Morocco has signed a number of international conventions, which deal with the gender issues. These conventions are either directly related to education, which is the case of UNESCO, or have education as a part of their agenda, as in the case of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Article 10 part II points out that all “parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure [rights] on a basis of equality of men and women” (UN General Assembly, 1979). As a member CEDAW, Morocco is required to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and to promote the values of equality of women and men in the legal system by establishing tribunals to ensure their protection.

4.2 Legal recognition

In this regard, major changes have been introduced in order to ensure and improve women’s rights in all aspects of society. The family code in 2004 stands out as a “centerpiece of Morocco’s self-proclaimed program of liberalization and reform” (Gomez-Rivas, 2008) that supports the right to divorce, child custody, self-guardianship, and restrictions on polygamy, raising the legal age for marriage of girls from 15 to 18 years old, and incriminating sexual harassment (Sadiqi, 2006).

Additionally, the modification of the labor code tackled the regulation concerning the working conditions around child labor, mainly domestic girl workers. Morocco is the first country among the Middle East and North Africa countries to ratify an agreement

that deals with domestic workers. The labor code protects domestic workers and now incriminates abusers. An example of a situation that is no longer legally acceptable was when young Moroccan girls under the age of 15 were recruited to work as domestic servants. They risked encountering physical and sexual abuses, working long hours, and being confined inside the home of their employer. In addition, these girls were far from their families, denied ongoing education; and their employer, who tended to be typically rich or middle class, cared less about their conditions, their schooling, and their future than in getting obedient, low cost labor.

On the other hand, the adoption of the nationality code in 2007 has permitted mothers married to foreign husbands to guarantee the Moroccan citizenship to their children. Prior to the adoption of the national code, for instance, a mother married to a foreigner would cease to maintain the legal status of her children in the event that a divorce happened. Hence, the foreign father automatically took on the guardianship of the children owing to the fact that the mother had no legal documents that proved the citizenship of her children.

The enactment of the nationality code reform was instrumental in improving the equality between men and women, and it constituted a major milestone in accommodating mixed marriages while taking into consideration the Moroccan diaspora that live overseas. Despite the fact that the nationality code was fundamental in laying the foundations for marriage equality (Mir-Hosseini, 2007), the right of citizenship remains limited to children of the Moroccan mothers and it is not extendable to the foreign husbands. For example, the Moroccan husbands married to foreign women are allowed to obtain citizenship for their children and their spouses as well, and the law grants it to

them. It is obvious that full discrimination against women has not been entirely eliminated and the government needs to do more to ensure more rights are given to women in future reforms, and they must recognize full citizenship for both sexes.

In the face of the attempts of the Moroccan government to the above-mentioned reforms, challenges persist. First, inadequate financial provision from both the national government and the international agencies endowments remain insufficient to engage in serious reforms. Second, the widespread of poverty and illiteracy amongst women and girls dissuade them from gaining access to information as a means to be acquainted with their rights. Finally, evaluations and follow-ups that could provide information of the improvement and implementation of these reforms are either lacking or insufficient. Although considerable improvement took place in the last few decades, deficiencies remain vis-à-vis legislation, and a lot has to be done to accomplish and promote gender equality of Moroccan women and girls.

4.3 Gender approach

In order to consolidate the legislative reforms, the Moroccan government implemented the National Strategy for Gender Equity and Equality (NSGEE) in 2007. It is a policy framework for gender equality in education and training that aims at promoting equitable access for women and girls to resources and income, mainly in rural areas (Royaume du Maroc, 2013). The charter consists of the cooperation of numerous Moroccan government departments, civil society organizations and international agencies to find a strategy to mainstream gender in all government departments as a way of establishing gender equality and equity. This way, each government department will

circulate inter-government information on gender issues to raise politicians' and decision-makers' awareness while developing collectively future policies.

Simultaneously, Morocco introduced the National Charter for Improving the Portrayal of Women in the Media (NCIPWM), to fight stereotypes against women in media. This charter highlights the existing inequalities, and would promote efficient ways to combat inequalities since media is a terrain that promote images. Yasmina Baddou, the ex-Secretary of State for Family, Childhood and the Handicapped, affirmed that this charter is "an ethical platform for improving how the media portray women" (International Journalists' Network, 2005). The charter is a major step to "free women from the stereotypes into which they have been confined" (Raes, 2010), and calls for fighting the use of women's bodies as a commodity in advertisements and promoting women's roles as economic, social and political agents.

It is important however to note that media is a means that portrays stereotypes of women, which are not in line with their changing role in society. For example, media has stereotyped women by assigning them narrow roles in the traditional division of labor, by convincing society these are the natural roles that fit them. These roles include cooking, caring about the family, sexual allure and the focus on her physical beauty to market products. Women portrayed in household roles, women do not participate in business decisions, dependent on men, and are viewed as sex objects.

The state also introduced gender in the State's General Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in 2005 as a way of achieving equity in terms of financial resources allocation. GRB is an international initiative that supports gender equality and women's human rights (UNIFEM, 2009):

GRB aims to raise awareness of the impacts of budgets and to make governments accountable for ensuring that public budgets promote the achievement of gender equality and women's rights, especially among the poor or most vulnerable and respond to women's priorities.

4.4 Gender policies in education

The Charter for Education and Training (CET) and the Najah Emergency Plan (NEP) introduced in 2000 and 2006 respectively aim at accelerating the completion of primary education and eliminating gender disparities. CET aimed at providing universal access to education while at the same time making it compulsory as a way to eliminating gender disparities in education. Improving the quality of education and infrastructure as well as fighting illiteracy.

The *Najah* Emergency Plan (*najah* means success in Arabic), which covered the 2009 to 2012 period, is a roadmap based on the acceleration and implementation of reforms in education and training. It is organized around four objectives: (1) improving access to education at the primary level and making it compulsory till the age of 15; (2) improving the quality of education at the higher school and university levels; (3) decentralizing the educational system and emphasizing the quality of teaching; and (4) providing the financial resources. The financial support comes from the Moroccan government and five international agencies, which are the French Development Agency (FDA), the African Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, the European Commission (EC), and the European Investment Bank (EIB). NEP put a big focus on the first objective that deals with access to primary education and the government put an

emphasis on disadvantaged population by providing schoolbags and uniforms (UNESCO, 2013), and the creation of more than 600 boarding facilities at colleges situated in rural areas.

In collaboration with the USAID, the government introduced the Improving Training for Quality Advancement in National Education (ITQANE) program in 2010 aiming to provide a good quality of teaching and keeping students in schools. The approach is derived from the Emergency Plan of 2009-2012 to enhance students' success and retention. At the same time, the government implemented an evaluation tool that would ensure the acquired new methods would be completed in the classroom.

In partnership with the World Bank, the government also started, "*tayssir*", a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) initiative in education in 2008. This is a program to keep girls and boys in schools mainly in underprivileged areas. The child gets a bi-monthly allowance provided s/he attends school regularly. The monthly allowance increases as the child advances in his/her education. For example, grade 1 and 2 children obtain about 6 dollars, whereas grade 5 and 6 are paid around 12.50 dollars per month. The initiative benefited more than 240 school districts and about 300,000 students so far. *Poste Maroc* takes care of the money transfer, and sends mobile offices in places where there are no postal offices.

4.5 Dynamics of access of girls to primary education

4.5.1 Level of access and retention

Free primary education (FPE) today is associated with Universal Primary Education (UPE) implemented as stated in the Dakar Framework for Action and the MDGs. However, FPE is not new in Morocco but goes back to post-independence era

with the expansion of public schools and free schooling. Despite the fact that primary school is free of charge today, this still does not automatically guarantee that every Moroccan benefits from free schooling. Challenges remain as there are a few kids who are not able to access schools due to distance and/or drop out after attending a few years, and a few students finish FPE and end their academic experience forever as secondary school is still an impossible dream to them. In 2000, around 75 percent of primary school age children attended school, but only 55 percent of girls attended primary school (Global Education Reference, 2014). Enrolment is bleak in rural areas where women are much needed in doing household chores.

Efforts are made to keep students in school, and the Global Monitoring report of 2013/14 suggests that Morocco ranks among ten countries with the highest decrease in out-of-school population, which fell by 68 per cent. Gender disparity is slowly disappearing as the Ministry of National Education (MEN) made it a national priority with the help of international agencies. But of ongoing concern remains the high rate of dropouts affecting girls.

4.5.2 Factors that impact access

It is of great importance that the government addresses the issue of dropouts among girls. Special emphasis needs to be on educating at-risk girls in poor areas where families lack the necessary means and resources for their daughters, as the cost of educating girls is higher than boys. Poverty does affect educational achievement at the micro-level where poor families receive less education.

4.5.3 Environmental, socio-economic and cultural constraints

Constraints associated with external environment factors can be ascribed to the deficiency of basic and girl-friendly infrastructures. The existence of schools and predominantly in rural areas still have limited educational and sanitation amenities and have not adapted to the needs of girls. The cost of school supplies such as books, clothes that can be a burden of families mainly with many children, and thus could it be a factor that contributes to girls' feeling like they have no other choices but dropping out of school.

Girls often face geographical barriers to attend school. Walking long distances from their homes in order to attend school every day contribute to their loss of precious time that could have been used, for instance, to do homework. There is also the possibility of coming across harassment on their daily commute from and to school as well. The effect of harassment on girls can be enormous. Girls who have experienced harassment are more likely to be less productive at school, lose their self-confidence.

The importance of girls, both at school and in society depends on the degree of consciousness regarding gender. Cultural factors contribute to the predominance of stereotypes against girls in educational materials and curriculum, which continue the devaluation of their education and their role in the development of society as a whole. Social norms inhibit girls from attending school. Due to cultural norms, Moroccan women face disadvantages from the time they are born. As a result, they are given less or no education, less health care and less attention to participate in society.

Additionally, parents prefer their girls to stay at home to look after domestic chores or to take care of younger children until they get a marriage proposal, usually –

but not always, at a young age. Sending daughters to school is not generally valued as they will eventually leave their homes after marriage and will be under the custody of their husbands. Such norms with respect to the tolerability of girls to participate fully in the public sphere will have unfavorable results on society. The public space will remain be predominantly a space where men continue to dictate the social norms towards women (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006).

4.5.4 Advocacy for girls' education

The advocacy for girls' education in Morocco went through stages: from refusal, to hesitation, and to current discourse which considers their education as a prerequisite. If Moroccan parents dreaded sending their sons to schools established by the French in the course of colonization, it was automatically understood that they would feel the same way about sending their daughters into the French system, with the exception of the elite who did not have any objection to sending their daughters to French schools. In addition to all the hurdles mentioned earlier in this thesis to educating girls in Morocco in the course of history, the French political interference was yet another disruptive element. One of the obvious reasons for this was that the French educational system was mistrusted and foreign to the Moroccan culture and traditions.

Despite the French careful planning to dodge an uprising of Moroccan society towards their colonial interests, the earlier years of spreading education in general, and girls' education in particular faltered. The French Resident General Lyautey was himself conscious of the importance of maintaining the Moroccan traditions and religious beliefs to guarantee the loyalty of Moroccans to France (Segalla, 2009; pp. 50-51) but theory is one thing and implementing the right program is quite another. For example, the first

French schools for females were designed to teach crafts like embroidering and sewing. It did not provide any academic curriculum.

The advocacy for girls' education and equality remained secondary during colonization as priority was given to independence. Advocacy for female education in Morocco came at a later stage as compared to other Arab countries in the Middle East. For example, Egyptian thinkers like Huda Shaarawi (1879-1947), Mohamed Abduh (1849-1905), Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), and Qasim Amin (1863-1908) criticized the treatment of women by men in Egyptian society and called for improvement and reforms of their status.

In the Moroccan context, the first wave of women's emancipation was embodied in the Sisters of Purity Association (SPA). This group was founded in 1947, and remained active in the fifties and sixties. SPA stood as a political movement that pressed for full and equal political rights, abolition of polygamy, and more visibility in the public sphere (Sadiqi, 2010), called for the education of women and the fight against illiteracy. Two the prominent figures of the time, Malika el Fassi (1919-2007), were the only women who signed the treaty of independence in 1944; and Princess Lalla Aicha (1930-2011) the daughter of late King Mohamed V, were pioneers in furthering and promoting girls' education, which culminated in the establishment of "free schools", specifically, schools that were free from the French control, (Pennell, 2000, p. 186).

Today's demands are different from those in the past, as girls acquire education now 25 times more than in 1956 (Desrues & Nieto, 2009). The promotion of girls' education occupies a chief priority on the state's agenda in modern-day Morocco. This is ascribed to the rise of national and international pressures and voices calling for more

democracy, respect of human rights, and the influence of globalization and neo-liberalism that impacted social and economic, and socio-political policies worldwide. Consequently, such pressure on educating women is an important strategy that contributes to moving towards the liberty women to exercise and enjoy political and civil rights; right to vote and to run for elections, and eventually to work and get equal pay without discrimination.

4.6 Impact of the MDGs on the development of Morocco

4.6.1 How has Morocco understood/interpreted MDGs?

The endorsement of Morocco of MDGs in 1990 has been translated into the establishment of the National Initiative for Human Development (NIHD) as a reference framework to promote and achieve the Millennium goals in the upcoming years. The unveiling of the NIHD by the current King, Mohamed VI, in May 2005 established a global and holistic approach aimed at fighting poverty, enhancing access to basic school infrastructure, protecting and promoting the rights of women and children (Royaume du Maroc, Haut-Commissariat au Plan. (2009), which are compatible with the recommendations of the United Nations' MDGs. Funding of NIHD occurs through public investment (60%), local communities (20%), and external sources (20%). The NIHD is administered by regional authorities in cooperation with local communities under what is called, the Local Initiative of Human Development (LIHN), whose role is to implement and evaluate the development of the NIHD (Province Boujdour, 2013). Additionally, the state has also established a training strategy in the form of capacity building for the implementation of the initiative as a way to help improve and achieve quantifiable results of their mission.

Table 2 MDGs and their NIHD equivalence (Source: <http://www.omdh.hcp.ma>)

Goal	Number of targets		Number of indicators	
	United Nations	Morocco (2009)	United Nations	Morocco (2009)
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	2	6	5	17
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	1	4	3	6
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	1	3	4	10
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	1	1	3	8
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	1	3	2	9
Goal 6: Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases	2	2	7	9
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	3	4	8	10
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	7	5	16	9
Total	18	28	48	78

Since the adoption of the MDGs, the Ministry of High Commission of Planning has become the entity in charge of coordinating and producing periodical national reports as a tool for monitoring the implementation of the MDGs. Up to date, Morocco has produced four national reports: in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2012. The committee comprises ministerial departments, Non-governmental Organizations and United Nations agencies.

The role of the Moroccan ministries is to prepare reports according to their authority. In this regard, the High Commission of Planning is responsible for Goal 1

(fighting poverty); the Ministry of Education is responsible for Goal 2 (education); the Ministry of Social Development, Family and Solidarity is responsible for goal 3 (gender equality), the Ministry of Health is responsible for Goals 4, 5 and 6 (health); the Ministry of Environment is responsible for Goal 7 (environment), and lastly the Ministry of Economy and Finance is responsible for Goal 8 (partnership).

In the last 15 years, the Kingdom of Morocco, with its development projects and its general sectorial policies, has succeeded to some extent in accomplishing substantial progress in different MDG goals on the one hand, and paving the way to achieve the remaining goals on the other hand. Morocco's promise to work on achieving the MDGs that were adopted by the 189 member states on September 2000 seeks to overcome social issues such as poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, education and sustainable environment. The state's reform policies have made some transformation in people's lives, and the continuation of these policies is assumed to be indispensable to combat social issues, which ultimately will benefit the whole society.

While analyzing to what extent these goals have been achieved, one notices the uneven levels of progress from level to level. In other words, there exist goals that were easy to achieve and implement, whereas other goals will need deep, long-term societal changes. To give an example, goals related to gender face more difficulties of implementation owing to the complex structure of Moroccan society, associated generally with the male/female dichotomy. The current Moroccan Prime Minister, Abdelilah Benkirane, responding to a Member of Parliament's question during the monthly meeting of the House of Councilors regarding the status of MDGs in 2011, echoed his frustration in what has been achieved towards the elimination of gender

disparity and the ongoing difficulties that still obstructs women's access to all spheres of life be it decision-making, work, or education (Royaume du Maroc, 2012).

4.6.2 Current situation in education

The Ministry of Education (MEN) has created projects to expand and improve children's enrolment, and to reduce dropouts and "repeaters". The national report of 2012 on MDGs shows that there has been a 3.9% increase in enrolment between 2008-2009 and 2011-2012, with an overall 96.6% at the primary level. The report stipulates that the gender disparity has been reduced from 2.9% to 1.3%, at the national scale mainly in rural areas (Royaume du Maroc, Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2012). This improvement is attributed to the financial initiative "*tayssir*" that provides one million schoolbags to primary school children in vulnerable areas, and expansion of public schools nationwide (Benhassine et al., 2013).

On the other hand, a substantial improvement has been recorded in the school environment. Basic school needs such as electricity, toilets, drinking water and libraries have been installed. However, such infrastructure is distributed unevenly across regions. For instance, schools in remote areas will do not benefit from the same quality and maintenance, as do schools located in or close to cities. Without better quality school environment, children and mainly girls will be turned off attending schools. Appealing school environment enhances the likelihood of children staying in school.

The education system has made exceptional progress in terms of improving and making education available to all, but obstacles remain. The objectives of the universalization of education are still hindered by low level of attendance and the absence of school boards mainly for the underprivileged girls. Additionally, poverty constitutes an

external factor that still inhibits children from enrolling and staying in schools. More resources need to be funneled in the primary level education that has not reached millions of Moroccan children, and serious policies need to be implemented to find convenient ways to keep girls at school, and to reduce the gender disparity by looking at the serious cultural issues by connecting more to the community instead of just top-down policies.

4.7 The family code reforms and its role in promoting gender equality and access

4.7.1 King Mohamed V

After the independence of Morocco in 1956, King Mohamed V adopted some limited reforms on the Family Code, or what was formerly called the Code of Personal Status. For illustration, the Family Code is a legal text that is concerned with the regulation of family law like marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. The monarch's reform embraced the Sharia law (jurisprudence) based on the Maliki School as a reference. The Maliki school is one of four schools of religious law in Islam "attributed to Imam Malik (born 93 AH/712 AD, died 179/795) which is rooted most to the Sunnah (traditions) of the Prophet, and to the experience and knowledge accumulated in the city of Medina" (Hakim, 2001).

Despite the role women played in the fight for independence, the advent of the newly post-independence state, under King Mohamed V, had minimally addressed their status quo, in the Family Code of 1958. The government adopted Islam as the official faith of the kingdom (Sadiqi, 2006) and adopting literally laws from the Quran (Cabr , 2007, p. 135; Freeman, 2004, p. 25). The literal interpretations of Quran tend to play in favor of the males as an approach of subordinating females. The commission that was

appointed by the king to reform the Family Code in 1957 was composed of only males (Sadiqi and Ennaji, 2006), all Muslim legal scholars (*Ulemas*) who drafted a family law congruent with the teaching of the Islamic law (*Shar'ia*). The Mudawana, which was adopted without any parliamentary discussion, was a universal law that is still relevant to all Moroccans today, regardless of their race.

The adoption of the Family Code endorsed early marriage of women, importance of the presence of a male guardian (*wali*), and prohibition of marrying non-Muslims, rejecting of the woman's foreign nationality if she happens to marry one [non-Muslim], and could not initiate divorce (Cabr , 2007, p. 136). On the other hand, a man was allowed to stay single until the age of 17, to marry many (up to four) wives. A man of any nationality living in Morocco does not require a guardian for marriage, and has the right to initiate divorce. Therefore, the proposed Mudawana gave men the freedom to engage in polygamy and exercise the power of unilateral divorces. Women, on the other hand, had unequal rights to divorce and limited property and inheritance rights" (Tamanna, 2008).

Even though post-independence Morocco adopted a civil law inherited from France, and a family law based on *Sharia*, the family law was only applicable to family matters. In other words, matters of commerce are not obliged to abide by the Sharia law. For example, the government allowed itself the right to distribute and sell licenses to businesses to sell alcohol, even though Islam prohibits it. The implementation of the Mudawana by king Mohamed V, did not any major changes, and was more in line with the legal scholars (*Ulema*) and tribal leaders from where he acquires legitimacy as a monarch.

4.7.2 King Hassan II

After a long wait, the next reforms to review the 1958 Family Code took place under King Hassan II in 1993, six years before his death. This took place the same year as when Morocco ratified CEDAW with some reservations. The political situation during his reign that lasted 38 years had witnessed a big tension between the monarchy and opposition, notably what is called the Years of Lead (*sanawat al-rassas*) characterized by violence against opposition, which resulted in torture, disappearance and exile of many political activists.

The new commission appointed to review the Family Code comprised of nineteen men and one woman. Years preceded to the reforms were characterized by a struggle of two ideologies: “Moroccan Islamists were gaining ground as an oppositional force” on the one hand, and “Women’s groups, aligned with the secular and socialist opposition” demanding change on the other hand (Mir-Hosseini, 2007). As a result, the Moroccan feminist movement, Union de l’Action Feminine (UAF), launched a campaign in 1992, to collect one million signatures in order to reform the Family Code.

With this rise of activist women voices and lobbying, King Hassan II had to interfere to and released a royal decree to review the Mudawana, without any parliamentary discussion before the dissemination of the new Family Code as it was absolved by the king before the parliamentary elections took place.

Though the new revisions that came in the Family Code brought minor changes, as, giving some protection to women against their male counterparts; it still kept various male privileges in terms of divorce and polygamy. The new reforms did not bring what the women’s movement demanded and aspired for, but only amended polygamy, divorce

and guardianship. As an example, the new Family Code stated that a male guardian (*wali*) is no longer a requirement and the consent of the woman to her marriage became a prerequisite. All in all, the changes to the Mudawana did not bring about the progress required.

4.7.3 Mohamed VI and the new era of the *Mudawana*

Major reforms in the family code took place in 2004 after 5 years of King Mohammed VI's ascent to the throne. The amendments enclosed in the new Family Code are the result of the socio-political and cultural advancement of the country. The new monarch pledged to respect human rights and democracy and give the country a more modern outlook (Dennerlein, 2012).

The 2004 reforms were the culmination of prior hard-work, especially under the auspices of the prime minister of the socialist government led by Abderrahman Youssoufi (1998-2002), whom, after return from exile, opened a national dialogue and urged the promotion of the economic situation of women and the improvement of their rights on the one hand. At the same time, the UN's Platform for Action, manifested in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, which stressed the necessity of the putting into practice of CEDAW objectives.

The government drafted its own program called Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development (PAIWD), which was based on the Beijing Declaration that was calling for national policies for incorporating women in development, and a result of the miserable realities of women. The Moroccan action plan laid down four priorities (1) expanding opportunities in education and literacy; (2) improving women's reproductive

health for poor and marginalized women; (3) economic integration; and (4) strengthening gender equity and justice through the revision of legal texts (Skalli, 2001).

The above-mentioned endeavors paved the way to a major reform in the Family Code implemented in 2004. It used the CEDAW's article 16 as a guideline to grant more rights to women. For illustration, article 16 declares that "States' Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations in particular..." (UN General Assembly, 1979). As such, the Family Code raised the legal age of girls for marriage from 15 to 18 years; it modified marriage and divorce laws, regulated polygamy, and introduced family courts to guarantee the implementation of these laws. The Family Code was also part of a cluster of reforms that were extended to the Labor Code, Penal Code, Nationality Code, and Electoral Code.

4.7.4 Criticism of the Family Code

Many shortcomings have been noticed after many years of the implementation of the Family Codes (Gomez-Rivas, 2008; Tamanna, 2008; Bordat, et al., 2011; Sika 2011). For example, limited implementation mechanisms (Sika, 2011) and women's lack of awareness of the Family Code amendments due to low literacy rates and ignorance (Gomez-Rivas, 2008; Tamanna, 2008; Bordat et al., 2011) all constitute hurdles that hamper the reforms to be effectively implemented. Access of girls to education will not effectively take place with the ongoing presence of discriminatory mechanisms.

The committees that were appointed to review the Family Code of 1975, 1993, and 2004 were not able to veer from the religious frameworks. The amendments chose the patriarchal and traditional interpretations of Islam to curb the natural rights of women,

rather than the contemporary needs of society. Hence, the traditional approach reinforces a perception of unequal relationships between males and females. The millions of non-literate women in today's Morocco have been victims of a political system that categorize them as passive individuals with less value and importance, who do not need to contribute to development of society that is monopolized by patriarchy.

As the Arabic proverb says, "Women are half of the society and they are the ones who educate the other half". However, the negative cultural exclusionary values are still rampant in today's Moroccan society, and are more pronounced in rural areas. These attitudes that favor women to stay at home and do domestic chores coupled with other "natural female roles", disregard the importance of women in society.

Some reforms and rights have been asserted in the Moroccan Family Codes geared towards women's emancipation, and the promotion of equality between men and women to ensure rights of children. After several years of adoption and implementation, the Family Code was not immune from criticism due to existence of loopholes. Morocco has achieved a lot in implementing women friendly reforms (Tamanna, 2008), which have been hailed as the least discriminatory laws against women in the Arab states (Sika, 2011), there is still a long way to go. Serious laws are needed to keep up with the fast development in the world. The reforms of the Family Code under the three monarchs have not given full rights to women. The monarchs, who have absolute political power, are more in line with gaining their legitimacy from tribal leaders and conservative components of society, rather than making democratic changes in civil society.

4.8 Summary

The gender policies of the Moroccan government in the last six decades, coupled with the implementation of international programs have contributed, to some extent, to the improving of access to education. The various policies targeting gender, the constitutional and legal reforms, have impacted the well-being of women in a limited manner. Implementation of international commitments has contributed to narrow gender equality and the promotion of girls' education to some extent. The legal battles of women have not been fully won yet. Restrictive practices and laws on females will inhibit their full access to education and other spheres if not remedied by serious laws.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Reform or failure?

As discussed in this thesis, many educational reforms and policies have been introduced in Morocco with the intention of remedying and reshaping the discrepancies that has existed in the educational system since independence from France in 1956. Some of these came from NGOs outside Morocco and International agencies like UNESCO, and some originated from within Morocco.

The Moroccan educational reforms have gone through several reiterations which can be classified in the following five stages. First, the colonial school reforms during the French protectorate from 1912 to 1956, aimed at educating the elite, and at the same time introducing its policies to separate Berbers and Arabs through the elimination of Arabic language in schools. During that period, the gender dimension was not of significance due to the cultural norms of society. France did not have the intention to embark on a path that would destabilize their colony, and the emphasis was put on maintaining the status quo as a way to avoid Moroccan protest. Second, the phase of the establishment of the Moroccan national schools, which appeared right after independence. This period promoted the popularization, Arabization and Moroccanization of the school system. Third, the 1970s period reforms, with a simple national program, characterized with innovation and contribution in moving the Moroccan society into a modern era. It was a period that stimulated attention to the situation of women through discussion of their needs and demands. These discussions contributed to the creation of many movements that paved the way to overcome injustices and discrimination against women. Fourth, the

period of regression and decline that characterized the mid-eighties featuring the policies of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), with the increase of international pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The SAP which took place between 1983 and 1992 did more harm than good to the overall economy, education, and health sectors.

Finally, the last period which began in the late nineties and continued till the beginning of the twenty-first century in order to save the dire education situation. More had to adopt international standards and measures, especially after the endorsement of the MDGs/EFA initiatives and the need to redress the educational system within an international framework. Therefore, the creation of the national charter for education and training was designed to achieve many international goals, and most importantly education equality.

I have illustrated in this thesis that the policy-makers do not have clear agenda to implement effective education reforms. First, the National Charter for Education and Training (2000-2009) to revamp the educational system at all levels failed to deliver a modest education, and was doomed to failure. Second, the Emergency Education Plan (2009-2012) failed at targeting the most vulnerable areas, and lacked well-trained educators. And finally, the current Education Action Plan (2013-2016), which sadly looks like a carbon copy of the previous reforms may end up just being a cosmetic embellishment to make the state, look like it is working for the benefits of the Moroccans.

The present-day policies still embrace the top-down approach to reforms, and the active participation of the communities in the decision-making process is still not

optimal. My research also illustrated that the state has to broaden its scope of reforms by including communities and civil societies to cater to the needs of the most vulnerable population, especially related to gender. Teachers really need to be involved in providing feedback and making recommendations because they know the needs of students in the different local settings. They have barely been included or consulted in the previous processes of reforms, and their voice has not been heard. Their roles should not be limited to just being agents who teach what they were told.

There is no question that there have been areas where Morocco has taken strides forward in achieving MDGs goals and in improving access to education; however, a comprehensive analysis indicates that it is lagging behind in meeting many targets. A look at what has been achieved in the education sector in Morocco makes us conclude that the Moroccan educational reforms have failed in achieving their goals. Issues of access to school, inequality of opportunities and absence of a quality education still do not respond to the needs of its citizens.

As a result, the government faces two challenges: to provide a quality education that would succeed in keeping students enrolled until they finish high-school and to attract the youth population who have thus far never attended school regardless of the different incentives made available to them. The Moroccan constitution makes it compulsory to attend school until the age of 14, but reality contradicts that..

5.2 The way forward

Educational reform has the objective of building a new paradigm that ensures the education of citizens and overcomes modern challenges caused by the arrival of advanced

technology, and the plethora of knowledge that exist now due to the fast expansion of social media, globalization as well as growing neoliberalism gaining much territory all over the world.

Educational reforms cannot be addressed in isolation from the socio-political and economic realms. The school should be in the heart of the community, and cater to the needs of all citizens regardless of their race. However, this requires the availability of several conditions, where the different components of society are allowed to engage in conceptualizing a holistic educational project that is inclusive and would benefit all in the long run. This project should stem from the community and have a clear vision that contributes to the building of a strong and educated nation.

It is necessary to universalize education in Morocco and provide the necessary conditions to make it accessible to all without exception; however putting each child in school should not be the end goal. No further reform on its own can really be a complete success

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