



EU support for women's political participation and leadership under the EU's Gender Action Plan

A case study on Morocco



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The research was funded by Demo Finland, Political Parties of Finland for Democracy.

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Women's political participation in Morocco

Although the 2021 general elections in Morocco resulted in a small increase in women's political representation, women remain underrepresented across different levels of decision-making, particularly in ministerial positions and at the local level. This paper assesses the extent to which the EU and EU member states have supported women's political participation and leadership in Morocco, based on their commitments in the previous and current EU Gender Action Plan (GAP). The paper concludes with lessons learnt and recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the new EU Gender Action Plan's provisions on women's political participation and leadership.

Even though Moroccan women obtained the right to vote in 1963, no woman was elected to the country's parliament until 1993. Over the past two decades, however, the Moroccan government has made significant strides in promoting gender equality in political and public life. In response to the demands of women's rights activists, Morocco in the early 2000s began a landmark reform process that led to the revision of the country's Labour Code in 2003 and the revision of the Family Code (Moudawana) in 2004, thereby strengthening the equality between men and women under the law. A new constitution, ratified in 2011, further improved the legal framework for gender equality.¹ Since then, the government has implemented two gender equality plans ("ICRAM 1" and "ICRAM 2") that aim to realise these constitutional provisions.² Both plans emphasise the need to strengthen women's political

representation, with ICRAM 2 seeking to reinforce affirmative action measures such as quotas and exclusive electoral lists for women.³

Morocco first adopted a gender quota ahead of the 2002 legislative elections. This quota reserved 30 parliamentary seats for women, who are elected from a national list based on each political party's share of the total vote. The measure was revised in 2016 to increase the number of reserved seats from 30 to 60. As a result, women's representation in parliament has continuously increased: it currently stands at 24 percent, compared to 16.9 percent in 2011 and 10.4 percent in 2007.⁴ In Morocco's upper house of Parliament (the House of Councillors), however, the proportion of women still does not exceed 11.6 percent, and until September 2021, women only held four out of twenty-four ministerial

1 Constitute, "Morocco 2011 Constitution," www.constituteproject.org, 2012, available [here](#).

2 Kingdom of Morocco Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality, and Family, "Plan Gouvernemental Pour l'Egalité ICRAM (2012-2016)," available [here](#).

3 Kingdom of Morocco Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality, and Family, 34-39, available [here](#).

4 Kingdom of Morocco Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality, and Family, "Equality Bulletin," 2020, 44-45, available [here](#) and

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Jossour, "Evaluation Des Mécanismes de Promotion de La Représentation Politique Des Femmes Au Maroc," 2018, 50, available [here](#).

Larache, A. (2021): « Parlement : Une avancée en trompe-l'œil de la représentativité féminine, » Le Matin, available [here](#).

positions.⁵ Women also remain under-represented in parliamentary leadership positions: only one of the eight parliamentary groups and one of the nine permanent parliamentary committees in the House of Representatives are currently headed by a woman.⁶ Since 2015, the parliament has had a Thematic Group of Parliamentarians for Parity and Equality that encompasses only women MPs, but it does not have the status of permanent committee.⁷ Similar trends are observed at the subnational level. Women currently lead only two of Morocco's twelve regions. In addition, they make up 37.6 percent of regional councillors, 4.5 percent of representatives at the level of prefectures and provinces, and 21.2 percent of representatives at the level of communes.⁸ Only one woman heads a Moroccan political party, namely the Unified Socialist Party.

Ahead of the September 2021 general election the Moroccan government adopted four laws aimed at enforcing the constitutional provisions promoting women's political participation. First, a

new electoral law now allocates at least 90 (rather than 60) parliamentary seats to women, who are elected from regional electoral lists.⁹ To this end, the bill dedicates the first and second rank of each regional candidate list for women, while the number of women in all lists presented for a regional constituency must not be fewer than two-thirds of the candidates. In addition, new legislation also reserves one third of seats in all councils of local authorities for women and extends the number of seats reserved for women in the councils governing communes, municipalities, and arrondissements.¹⁰ Two additional laws have increased the amount of public funding available for women's political representation and ensured women's presence in other public bodies, such as chambers of commerce.¹¹ Preliminary election analyses show that these measures made a difference, as women's representation in parliament increased to 24 percent (though only five women were elected to non-quota seats).¹² In an unprecedented development, three

5 Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Jossour, "Evaluation Des Mécanismes de Promotion de La Représentation Politique Des Femmes Au Maroc," 2018, 48, available [here](#).

6 Chambre des Représentants, "Groupement Du Progrès et Du Socialisme," January 18, 2017, available [here](#), and Chambre des Représentants, "Commission des secteurs sociaux," Chambre des représentants, January 18, 2017, available [here](#).

7 Chambre des Représentants, "Groupe de Travail Thématique sur l'Égalité et la Parité," Chambre des représentants, January 18, 2017, available [here](#).

8 Kingdom of Morocco Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality, and Family, "Equality Bulletin," 2020, 48, available [here](#).

9 "Élections Du 8 Septembre : La Révision à La Hausse de La Représentativité Féminine, Un Des Principaux Amendements de La Nouvelle Loi Électorale," Maroc.ma, August 19, 2021, available [here](#).

10 Chambre des Représentants, "Texte de Loi Num. 299," February 18, 2021, available [here](#), and Kingdom of Morocco, "Élections Du 8 Septembre : La Révision à La Hausse de La Représentativité Féminine, Un Des Principaux Amendements de La Nouvelle Loi Électorale," Maroc.ma, August 19, 2021, available [here](#).

11 Kingdom of Morocco, "Élections Du 8 Septembre: La Révision à La Hausse de La Représentativité Féminine, Un Des Principaux Amendements de La Nouvelle Loi Électorale," Maroc.ma, August 19, 2021, available [here](#).

12 Ayoub Lahrache, "Parlement: Une Avancée en Trompe-l'œil de la Représentativité Féminine," LeMatin.ma, September 21, 2021, available [here](#).

« Parité : maintenant ou jamais. » LesEco, 8 February 2021, available [here](#).

women were elected as mayors in Morocco's major cities, namely Casablanca, Marrakech, and Rabat.¹³

Most Moroccan women politicians point to patriarchal societal stereotypes as a key barrier to gender parity in politics. Systemic inequities such as young girls' lack of access to education, women's relative lack of economic power, and the marriage of underage girls continue to hinder gender equality and subsequently women's political participation. Additional barriers include the majoritarian electoral system and male-dominated political parties, which tend to use non-transparent criteria for selecting candidates and mainly use women for electoral purposes.¹⁴ Civil society organisations (CSOs) focused on the promotion of equality, such as the recently established collective "Parity Now," are continuing to advocate for the full implementation of gender parity in all spheres of society, as referenced in the Moroccan constitution.¹⁵

13 Khouloud Haskouri, "Nabila Rmili, Asmaa Rhlalou, Fatima-Zahra Mansouri: Morocco's Female Mayors Take Over", Morocco World News September 12, 2021, available [here](#).

14 Jihane Gattioui, "Parité: Maintenant Ou Jamais ?," LesEco.ma, February 8, 2021, available [here](#), and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Jossour, "Evaluation Des Mécanismes de Promotion de La Représentation Politique Des Femmes Au Maroc," 2017, 16-17, available [here](#).

15 Médias24, "Jossour Lance Des Actions En Faveur d'Une Parité Effective En 2030," Medias24, October 21, 2019, available [here](#).

Mapping of the EU's Gender Action Plan (GAP) interventions related to women's political participation in Morocco

To date, the European Union's, and EU member countries' support for gender equality in Morocco has focused primarily on combating gender-based violence, promoting women's and girls' economic empowerment, and fighting against gender stereotypes in society. The EU has also provided substantial budget support to the Moroccan government's Plan for Equality (ICRAM 2) which focuses on gender equality more broadly. In addition, the EU currently has a twinning project with the Moroccan Parliament, but gender equality is only a small component of the initiative. Overall, very few EU projects implemented under the Gender Action Plan II have focused on women's political participation, and even fewer activities have targeted political parties and actors. In fact, only one EU-funded project has focused on advancing gender equality in political parties, primarily by boosting women party members' confidence, communication skills, and campaigning strategies.

Interventions seeking to advance legislative and institutional reforms

“Equality/Moussawat” (2018-2022): EU budget support to Morocco's Government Plan for Equality (ICRAM 2) (EUR 35 million, 2018 – 2023)

Since 2018, the EU has been funding the “Equality/Moussawat programme,” which provides budget

support (totalling EUR 35 million) for Morocco's governmental gender equality plan ICRAM 2.¹⁶ The programme aims to advance gender equality in Morocco by increasing women's empowerment, advancing women's rights, fighting against gender-based violence, and promoting a culture of equality. The EU's budget support also seeks to ensure gender mainstreaming in sectoral public policies in cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Solidarity, Equality and Social Development, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, with the latter taking the lead on gender-responsive budgeting. This process is meant to institutionalise gender equality in the objectives, results, and performance indicators of the government budget.¹⁷ The French government, through the French Development Agency, has also provided budget support for gender budgeting, complementing the same programme.¹⁸

Women's equal political participation is one of the expected outcomes of the programme, with the EU listing “accrued women's participation in the public sphere (administrative and political)” as a key indicator of success. For this purpose, the EU has initiated technical assistance to the Ministry of Public Service and Modernisation of the Administration as well as the Ministry of Interior, with the aim of increasing women's representation in senior ministerial positions. In addition, the programme sought to open a Support Fund for the promotion of women's representation ahead of the September

16 Kingdom of Morocco Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality, and Family, « Convention de financement entre l'Union Européenne et le Royaume du Maroc – Appui à la mise en œuvre du Plan Gouvernemental pour l'Egalité II (PGE II),” 2017, 1-3, available [here](#).

17 *ibid*.

18 Agence Française de Développement, “Morocco: Equality and Gender Responsive Budgeting,” May 20, 2021, available [here](#).

2021 general elections, to fund programmes aimed at strengthening women's representation in Morocco's professional chambers, and to introduce a "financial incentive mechanism for political parties in the distribution of annual financial support, taking into account the number of seats won by women in the House of Representatives."¹⁹ However, the EU has released few details about the specific activities carried out under this framework, and it remains unclear if any of the programme goals related to gender equality in political decision-making were reached.

"Moucharaka Mouwatina" (2018-2021): EU funding for civil society

Besides providing budget support to the Moroccan government, the EU has funded various civil society projects related to youth, gender equality, and the environment under the "Moucharaka Mouwatina" programme.²⁰ Although the programme as a whole does not focus on gender equality in politics, some of the projects funded by the programme have indirectly touched on women's political participation, through activities that seek to build the capacity of civil society groups' to monitor and evaluate public policies or improve the overall institutional and legal environment for Moroccan CSOs.

"The Promotion of Women's Political Representation in Morocco:" Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) support for Jossour - Forum des Femmes Marocaines

Besides these EU-funded initiatives, the German political foundation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has supported a campaign by the women's rights organisation Jossour to strengthen women's political representation in Moroccan politics.²¹ Since the launch of the project in 2017, Jossour has focused on achieving at least 30 percent representation in all elected bodies. The organisation launched a national campaign in 2019, engaging politicians, trade unions, professional chambers, CSOs, and artists to speak out on the issue. They also formed the collective "Parity Now" (Mounassafa Daba) to lobby for targeted legislation to implement the principle of "gender parity" referenced in the Moroccan constitution.²² As part of this effort, the collective initiated a national petition proposing such a law, which would make gender parity a priority for all electoral processes, professional bodies, private companies, as well as government institutions at the local and national level.²³ In an unprecedented move, the Parliament's Committee on Petitions approved the petition in June 2021, and announced that it would disseminate the proposal within parliament in order to study it and decide on the next steps to be taken.²⁴

19 Kingdom of Morocco Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality, and Family, "Convention de Financement entre l'Union Européenne et le Royaume du Maroc – Appui à la Mise en œuvre du Plan Gouvernemental Pour l'Égalité II (PGE II)," 2017, available [here](#).

20 Moucharaka Mouwatina-Programme d'appui à la société civile au Maroc, "NOS PROJETS - Moucharaka Mouwatina," accessed September 14, 2021, available [here](#).

21 Nadia Bernoussi, "Projet de Promotion de la Représentation Politique des Femmes au Maroc Contribution à l'Élaboration d'un Dispositif Juridique pour la Promotion de la Parité," June 25, 2018, available [here](#).

22 Médias24, "Jossour Lance Des Actions En Faveur d'Une Parité Effective En 2030," Medias24, October 21, 2019, available [here](#).

23 S. Alarkoubi, "La Pétition 'Parité Maintenant' Au Menu d'Une Rencontre de Communication à Rabat," MAP PARITE, February 4, 2021, available [here](#).

24 Maroc Diplomatique, "Acceptation de La Pétition Pour l'Effectivité de La Parité Constitutionnelle à l'Horizon 2030,"

Interventions seeking to build the capacity of women candidates, party members and elected officials

EU Twinning (2020-2022): Support to Morocco's Parliament (House of Representatives and House of Councillors) (2020-2022)²⁵

The EU's support to Morocco's parliament started in 2020 and is funded through the EU's twinning instrument, which aims to share the public sector expertise of EU member states with partner countries through peer-to-peer activities.²⁶ The project includes a gender equality component, as it encourages parliamentary staff members to commit themselves to the principle of gender equality and to develop instruments and strategies based on a gender-sensitive approach. In sum, all the actions foreseen by this project are supposed to reflect European good practices on gender issues, ranging from support for female elected representatives to promoting the career advancement of female parliamentary staff. To date, however, the EU has not published any details about gender-related activities carried out under this framework.

"Support for the Development of the Role of the Parliament in the Consolidation of Democracy in Morocco" (2020-2023): Joint project between the European Union and the Council of Europe

Through this joint project funded by the EU, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is supporting the two chambers of the Moroccan Parliament to improve their performance and openness to citizens.²⁷ The project is meant to complement the EU's twinning project and does not have a specific focus on women's participation in politics. However, the programme contributed to a July 2021 conference on women in politics, a topical issue before the general elections.²⁸

"Let's Get Involved! For More Women in Politics in Morocco and Benin" (2018-2021): EU Commission support to the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

This project was launched in March 2018 by a consortium of African and European partners with co-financing from the European Union, under the leadership of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Morocco.²⁹ The three-year pilot project targeted 830 young women members of political parties and women interested in politics as well as 250 women

Maroc Diplomatique, June 17, 2021, available [here](#).

25 The project will last for 2 years and has a budget of EUR 1.200.000 for the cooperation with the House of Representatives and 800.000 for the House of Councillors. The project allegedly started in 2020, but this cannot be confirmed due to a lack of publicly accessible information on the project.

26 European Commission, "ANNEXE C1 : Fiche de Jumelage Intitulé Du Projet : Appui à La Chambre Des Représentants Du Royaume Du Maroc," 2020, available [here](#); and European Commission, "ANNEXE C1 : Fiche de Jumelage Intitulé Du Projet : Appui à La Chambre Des Conseillers Du Royaume Du Maroc," 2020, available [here](#).

27 Council of Europe, "Appui au développement du rôle du Parlement dans la consolidation de la démocratie au Maroc - (2020-2023)", Juin 17, 2021, available [here](#).

28 Le 360, "Femmes En Politique: Les Députés Du Conseil de l'Europe Saluent Les Avancées Du Maroc, Mais En Réclament Plus," July 13, 2021, available [here](#).

29 Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, "Événement: Engageons-Nous ! Pour plus de Femmes En Politique Au Maroc et Au Bénin," Bureau de la Fondation au Maroc, June 24, 2018, available [here](#), and European Union, "How to Empower Female Politicians: The Case of Morocco | Capacity4dev," October 28, 2020, available [here](#).

and men holding positions of responsibility within political parties in Morocco.³⁰ This project's goal was to encourage women's participation and influence across eight Moroccan political parties by bolstering the skills and self-confidence of young female party members, increasing the awareness of senior party officials, and establishing more inclusive party structures.

To achieve these goals, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) organised capacity-building workshops for women party members and brought external experts to train each party on best practices for drafting gender-sensitive political party manifestos, internal documents, and recruitment policies, with the aim of overcoming the informal practices that often prevent women from participating equally in political parties.³¹ The project included a peer-to-peer mentorship initiative coupling young women politicians with senior female political leaders as well as interactive trainings involving both men and women leaders. Another component of the programme was South-South cooperation and exchanges with political parties from Benin.

“Promoting Women’s Access to Governance Agencies in the Maghreb and Machrek” (2014-2017): French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Europe support for UN Women

Initiated in 2014 by UN Women Maghreb in partnership with the Moroccan Ministry of Administration and the Civil Service Reform (MRAFP), this project aimed to strengthen the capabilities of the public administrations of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, in terms of collecting

data on and strengthening mechanisms to promote women's leadership.³² Activities have included national and regional studies on women's access to leadership roles as well as leadership training for more than 300 female executives. This project is part of the Priority Solidarity Fund (FSP) for “Women for the future in the Mediterranean,” funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Europe.

30 The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's office in Morocco was also involved in the project, as they worked directly with the Moroccan party Socialist Union of Popular Forces.

31 European Union, “How to Empower Female Politicians: The Case of Morocco | Capacity4dev,” October 28, 2020, available [here](#).

32 ONU Femmes, “Place Des Femmes Fonctionnaires Aux Postes de Responsabilité Dans l'Administration Publique En Egypte, Jordanie, Maroc et Tunisie,” ONU Femmes | Maroc, June 2018, available [here](#).

Lessons learnt and recommendations

While many of the GAP interventions in Morocco have tried to tackle the root causes of women's political exclusion, they have rarely focused specifically on women's political participation. Future EU support should continue to target persistent socio-cultural barriers to gender equality in public life, including child marriages, gender-based violence, and women's lack of economic power. At the same time, the EU could do more to reinforce women's political participation at the national, regional, and local levels, building on the momentum of the 2021 elections and the successful "Parity Now" campaign. Activities targeting political parties, such as the EU-funded KAS project, are important, and have already made a positive contribution to women's electoral participation.³³ In the future, the EU could help support women's collective political mobilisation, through national alliances like Parity Now, and help ensure that the principle of gender parity is realised through actionable legal and policy reforms.

Ensuring targeted and long-term support

Lessons Learnt

EU and EU member states' support for women's political participation tends to be centred on election periods, rather than taking a long-term approach. The EU typically integrates women's political participation as a cross-cutting objective in broader gender equality or democracy support initiatives, including in its governmental and parliamentary support. In practice, however, this mainstreaming approach often leads to the sidelining of the issue. The gender components of EU

parliamentary support tend to be poorly defined, with limited attention paid to women's political participation except for a few activities carried out ahead of elections.

Recommendations

To address this issue, the EU should support more projects solely or primarily focused on women's political participation, setting out a clear set of activities to be carried out over longer timeframes and beyond short-term election cycles. For example, future projects could seek to strengthen the Thematic Group of Parliamentarians for Parity and Equality, in order to encourage women parliamentarians to take on more active roles in parliament and collaborate with gender equality advocates in civil society. For example, civil society calls to reform the Family Code would benefit from coalition-building with elected women representatives and their male allies. Working with women MPs is also essential to ensuring that the principle of gender parity is integrated into future public policies and strategies.

Future EU support could also focus on technical and legal capacity-building targeting women elected at the local level, especially in rural areas, who often lack previous political and legislative experience. Such support needs to be embedded in a holistic approach to women's participation that simultaneously tackles discriminatory gender stereotypes, women's lack of access to education, and all forms of gender-based violence. Lastly, elected women representatives in Morocco often struggle to secure re-election. Future GAP projects could study the causes of this pattern and devise

³³ Author's interview with Badria Zeino-Mahmalat, Project Manager, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, September 2021.

potential strategies to support women's re-election campaigns, to ensure that more women parliamentarians achieve positions of seniority within legislative bodies.

Targeting political parties

Lessons Learnt

To date, few GAP interventions have directly targeted political parties, except for the EU-funded project implemented by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). The impact of the latter is difficult to determine, although the organization itself notes that 100 of the 800 women trained through the programme have stood as candidates for legislative, regional, and municipal elections. In general, the programme's mid-term evaluation indicated that the peer-to-peer mentorship approach proved effective, as did the inclusion of male party leaders in programme activities. Involving political parties from a wide ideological spectrum to work on gender equality has also proven successful so far.³⁴ Additional lessons learnt include designating a focal point for the project in each political party to prepare and on each activity drawing on youth and women's organisations within each party to select the participants, and recruiting women participants from all regions of the country rather than only in the major urban centres.³⁵

Yet at the same time, many barriers that women face within political parties have not been addressed. For example, women candidates report high levels of gender-based political violence,

resistance, and discrimination within their parties.³⁶ Ouafa Hajji, president of the International Socialist of Women and founder president of Jossour Forum of Moroccan Women, notes that "in political parties, when a woman succeeds in affirming herself, there is a huge mobilisation against her."

³⁷The weak institutionalisation of many Moroccan parties worsens the problem. Yet even in parties with relatively formalised structures, there are few women in positions of leadership, while many serve in local support positions or as assistants to male leaders. Career advancement within parties often depends on informal relationships and networks of influence, which remain inaccessible to women and other political newcomers. In this context, it is not surprising that few women manage to break through at the local level.

Recommendations

To target these challenges, future EU support should continue to focus on gender equality within Moroccan political parties. Such support could take different forms. First, multifaceted capacity-building in areas such as campaigning and constituent outreach, public speaking, and communication can encourage more women to compete for leadership roles and forge stronger networks between women politicians. Similarly, disseminating the success stories of women who have secured seats at the national, local, and party levels could motivate others to become politically involved. Long-term mentorship programmes for aspiring young women politicians could also help build a pipeline of future women candidates.³⁸ All of these efforts should

34 Author's interview with Badria Zeino-Mahmalat, Project Manager, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, September 2021.

35 *ibid.*

36 Brahim Mokhliss, "Le Matin - L'Association Démocratique Des Femmes Du Maroc Dénonce La Violence Politique à l'Égard Des Femmes," *Le Matin*, August 21, 2021, available [here](#).

37 International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, "AFRICA Women's Political Participation Women's Political Participation," 2021, 76, available [here](#).

38 "How to Empower Female Politicians: The Case of Morocco," accessed September 12, 2021, available [here](#).

target rural areas as well as the Casablanca-Rabat axis.

At the same time, these initiatives need to be complemented by efforts to make the political environment more hospitable to women, rather than simply asking women to “lean in.” For example, future funding might support media campaigns that help improve the visibility of women candidates during electoral campaigns. Projects should also promote intra-party reform in areas blocking women’s participation, especially by implementing clear and fair candidate recruitment and selection criteria. Given the challenges that informality poses for women politicians, future projects should support efforts to formalise internal-party decision-making processes, for example through elections for party leadership positions or systematic mechanisms for recruiting candidates for upcoming elections. One way of exerting leverage on parties would be to support mechanisms that condition party funding on their efforts to promote internal gender equality. Further deepening cross-party collaboration amongst women politicians could also help build momentum for intra-party democracy and gender parity. Engaging young party members could be another avenue for reform, as they tend to be more open to challenging existing patriarchal leadership norms.

The inclusion of men in project activities remains critical to breaking gender stereotypes within parties, particularly since it is often male resistance—rather than women’s lack of capacity—that blocks women’s advancement. Potential focus areas include pushing party leaders to place women at the top of local electoral lists, supplying dedicated funding to women candidates, or adopting voluntary party quotas for internal party structures and committees. Future interventions should also explore avenues for tackling violence against women within political parties, including mechanisms for safely reporting any potential incidents or threats. These types of programmes need to be carefully designed and evaluated, drawing on best practices for male

engagement in gender equality.

Investing in networks linking women politicians and gender equality advocates in civil society

Lessons Learnt

Interventions facilitating networks between women activists and women politicians have yielded unexpected positive outcomes, such as the successful petition for a gender parity framework law. These successes highlight the need for such spaces of collaboration and alliance-building to grow in the future. Reinforcing networks of women committed to gender equality within civil society, electoral politics, academia, and even the cultural sphere could help change mentalities through multi-level advocacy, eventually resulting in further measures and legal changes advancing women’s political participation.

Recommendations

Going forward, EU support could help establish coordination platforms at the national and local levels that bring together women politicians and civil society groups working on gender equality, in addition to supporting civil society advocacy for political inclusion and the effective implementation of gender parity. These platforms could help ensure that women politicians understand the realities on the ground while also reinforcing evidence-based civil society advocacy. Networking between women in civil society and women elected at the local and national level may also help activists better assess the impediments to women’s political inclusion and how they vary across regions or across urban vs. rural areas. Lastly, future projects could provide legal assistance and training to both civil society groups and women politicians aimed at strengthening their capacity to advocate for more gender equal laws and the effective implementation of existing legal frameworks.



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