



Advocating for Inclusive Implementation of Morocco's New Gender-based Violence Law

Gender-based violence is widespread in Morocco: In 2011, the Moroccan High Commission of Planning reported that 62% of women had been victims of gender-based violence, and recent court records indicate that these numbers are increasing, not decreasing.

To help address this pressing concern, Counterpart International's USAID-funded Civil Society Strengthening Program (CSSP) has been working with Moroccan CSOs and government partners to increase social inclusion and ensure that legal protections are extended to women. In September, we supported our partner Ennakhil Association on a workshop to educate community leaders on a new law to combat violence against women. This new law entered into force on September 13th, 2018, after decades of effort from women's rights movements.



"We appreciate partnership between Counterpart International and Moroccan NGOs. This contributes to achieving important goals."

*Judge Abdelhak Naam
President of the Marrakech branch
of the Hassanian Widdadiya of
Judges
Standing, center, in blue suit*

The workshop was attended by judges, lawyers, police officers, and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Attorney General's office, the gendarmerie, the National Council of Human Rights, centers for victims of gender-based violence, NGOs working in the field of combatting gender-based violence, and associations for the defense of women's rights. The workshop was open to journalists, which resulted in extended television, radio, and newspaper coverage in Morocco. The workshop enabled participants to familiarize themselves with the law and discuss strategies for its successful implementation.

The governmental departments of health, youth, and women were included to ensure broad awareness and inclusion. The workshop addressed the need for a national strategy to promote women's rights and combat gender-based violence. The goals of the strategy are to reduce violence against women and to promote women's rights, including increasing awareness of women's rights and gender equality so that Moroccan women can feel freer and safer in their society.

Many associations were outspoken in their opinion that the law was incomplete; according to these associations, the greatest shortcoming was the absence of a national strategy to accompany the new prohibitions against gender-based violence. Most of the workshop's participants insisted on amending the law to include a national strategy to encourage its implementation and ensure its sustainability. As one participating attorney noted, additional steps were necessary to ensure that "the new mechanisms of support to victims of gender-based violence were strengthened and received public funds from the national budget."

Participants concluded by expressing their determination to work toward implementing the law in a spirit of partnership between public institutions and civil society. Ennakhil Association emerged from the workshop as a leading national institution supporting victims of gender-based violence and advocating for women's rights, and will continue collaborating with government institutions and its CSO counterparts to ensure appropriation implementation of this important law. Counterpart looks forward to continuing its support of Ennakhil Association's advocacy initiatives within the CSSP program in Morocco.



"Thanks to Counterpart International and USAID for bringing all these people and institutions together today to consecrate Moroccan women's fight against gender-based violence one day after the law came into force."
*Ms. Zakiya Chramou
Ennakhil activist, lifelong
fighter against gender-
based violence, pictured
receiving an award from
Judge Abdelhak Naam*

