Understanding the Differences, Acting on the Commonalities

SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND IN MOROCCO

Morocco Update

Morocco is moving fast towards an open and pluralistic political system, with the adoption of a greater range of democratic norms. There exists a strong will on the part of Moroccan society and the government to adopt alternative methods of dealing with instability and conflicts caused by a variety of socio-economic issues. Search for Common Ground in Morocco and its partners have developed programs which aim to prevent and manage conflicts caused by various socio-economic issues, namely unemployment, youth disaffection, insalubrious living and ideological extremism, by espousing conflict resolution and mediation techniques which are culturally appropriate and effective to sustainable social development.

SFCG in Morocco

Since 2001, Search for Common Ground has been working with Moroccan society to transform the manner in which people and institutions resolve conflicts, and to develop a culture of mediation and dialogue in order to reduce the socials costs caused by internal conflict.

PROGRAMS IN BRIEF:

MediAction

In partnership with the British Embassy in Rabat and the INDH, SFCG-M is supporting the creation of 5 mediation centres in disadvantaged communities of Rabat, Marrakech, Fes, Meknes and Salé cities. The objective is to increase a culture of mediation and improve socio-economic conditions for youth via training and capacity building in conflict management and prevention, mediation, self-esteem and leadership skills.

Youth Community Mediation Centres in Casablanca and Tetouan- YCMC

SFCG-M supported by USAID and in collaboration with the Moroccan Government and the local of Casablanca and Tetouan has launched the creation of 4 youth community centres in disadvantaged areas of Casablanca, and Tetouan. This program aims to engage youth constructively in the local democratic process, while promoting a spirit of mediation and entrepreneurship.

'The Team' A 26 Episode Dramatic TV series

'The Team' a 26 episode dramatic TV series, funded by the British government, supports SFCG-M's mission to promote constructive dialogue and a culture of mediation and conflict resolution with Moroccan youth. A fictionalized story of a football team and the conflicts they face in their day-to-day life will be broadcasted primetime on TV, and will engage millions of viewers on the subjects of moderation, mutual understanding, non-violent communication, tolerance, and citizenry. To enhance the outreach of the television series, SFCG-M may also participate in radio and TV talk shows, prize draws for the public, create a viewer's guide, as well as games and other outreach events.

Combatting Violence Against Women

In partnership with the US Embassy in Rabat, Morocco, SFCG- M is conducting an international visitors program that aims to create a valuable exchange of expertise between Americans and Moroccans working to combat violence against women. The focus will be on innovative techniques and combined strategies in the struggle to protect women from violence, specifically aimed at addressing the violent perpetrators themselves. It will also help strengthen the collaborative relationship between Morocco and the US on issues of social importance.

Support to Penal System Reform

In partnership with the FCO, the British Embassy, and partners across the Maghreb, SFCG-M is engaging with youth prisoners in the Maghreb (Morocco and Tunisia) prisons through constructive dialogue and capacity-building. By fostering methods of non-violent communication and conflict management skills, SFCG-M aims to reduce violence inside prisons, foster moderation, engage prisoners in positive civic participation and reduce recidivism.

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Within the frame work of the project "Mitigating Communal Conflict by Engaging Youth Constructively in Local Democratic and Economic Development", a ceremony was held on September 25, 2009 in Casablanca, organized by SFCG Morocco in collaboration with project partners, including local associations from Casablanca and Tetouan, the National Initiative for Human Development and USAID.

This event was an opportunity to share the project's results and achievement with the partners and media, such as the finding that 70% of those surveyed in Casablanca and Tetouan directly link a reduction of social tensions to the work of mediation centers, increased from an average of 26% at baseline evaluation in Casablanca and Tetouan and 67% of youth reported that they can identify sustainable employment opportunities, up from an average of 36.5 % at baseline for Casablanca and Tetouan. In Addition, certificates of training were distributed to 100 youth who are now trained community mediators of whom 43 are now trainers of community mediators. After the morning conference, two community mediation centers were officially opened in Casablanca. The project will be sustained through local civil society partners, the Moroccan Association of Youth Mediators (recently created) and the permanent community mediation centers.

Official opening of two community mediation centres in Casablanca

Young mediator receiving her certificate of training

In the framework of MediAction project, youth mediators took the initiative under the supervision of the project manager Kamal Hachoumy to develop a website for social mediators at the national level. This website is an opportunity for the youth to share their experience as community mediators. The website contains training documentations and articles. In addition, youth can organize working sessions and brainstorm on line, see the link

www.mediateurs2fes.on.ma/ www.mediateurs2fes.new.ma

News in brief

In the framework of the MediAction project, public outreach led by youth mediators began in Fez in October to promote mediation as mean of social conflict resolution for the general public and local residents. A ceremony to distribute certificates and badges to all 28 trained youth mediators in Fez was held in the presence of official partners of the project on October 22. The ceremony was also an occasion to sign conventions to create 5 more mediation facilities around Fes which will be frequented by the youth mediators to spread mediation and conduct mediation in various communities.

SFCG would like to thank the following donors for their support: