

Morocco Poverty Report, 2004:
Strengthening Policy by
Identifying the Geographic
Dimensions of Poverty

*How a cooperative process led to a
better understanding of poverty
across space*

Context

- Concern for social conditions has taken on new importance since King Mohammed VI came to the throne in 1999. Concerns accelerated after Casablanca bombings in 2003.
- Policymakers have realized the importance of information on the locus of poverty and how the poor are affected by government policies. Stakeholders expanded beyond those interested primarily in poverty - became political and security concerns.
- Government completed first poverty map in 2004 with extensive WB TA; a second, updated poverty map was produced in September, 2005.

Analysis with Poverty Maps and Key Findings

- Strong heterogeneity in poverty across communes in Morocco: neighboring communes with greatly different poverty rates (previous poor area programs targeted at provincial level).
- Pockets of poverty in rural and urban areas (previously rural poor verses urban rich)
- Decomposition Analysis of inequality – Greater inequality between communes than within in rural areas; but greater inequality within communes than between in urban areas. (i.e. where one lives is a better predictor of poverty in rural than urban areas, except Fez.)

Analysis with Poverty Maps and Key Findings (contd)

- Nevertheless, still inequality within poor communes indicating need for additional targeting.
- Analysis of Local Condition and Government Programs necessary to know what programs are needed where. Local poverty estimates (provincial) combined with database on local conditions, indicators, and public expenditures.
- In rural areas, government social development programs generally are well targeted to poor zones. In urban areas, most government programs have been strongly biased towards the *non-poor* zones.

Implications of Maps and Analysis

- Geographic targeting would work well in rural areas where there is homogeneity among the commune populations.
- It would work less well in urban areas, as communes are larger, and within them poor and non-poor households live more closely together – requiring other targeting methods, such as self targeting.

Impact

1. Dialogue with government and strategic shifts:
 - Work program pursued on two levels: technical and policy.
 - Technical component was very hands-on TA
 - Policy component involved significant effort of outreach to different government ministries and palace and stimulate interest and debate on geographic targeting even before poverty map was completed. By the time the map was completed, environment ripe.
 - Helped improve understanding of nationally consistent poverty measurement

2. Targeting of resources:
 - The National Human Development Initiative (INDH) uses the information to target Morocco's poorest 410 rural communities with public funds for local infrastructure.
 - INDH targets 250 most vulnerable urban neighborhoods targets areas based on "social exclusion" rather than poverty. Criteria not transparent and confusing.
 - Story is still evolving: INDH details still being determined.

3. In addition to INDH, poverty maps will be used for planning in different sectors (e.g. water tariffs).

4. Local governance: Poverty mapping can play a role in promoting local governance: transparent and objective information enables local officials to question the allocation of central funds. Information is empowerment.

Impact

5. Status and position of the Statistics Department
 - Responding to strong demands from the Statistics Department, the World Bank used part of the poverty study budget for Technical Assistance to transfer poverty mapping capacities. Fully successful as demonstrated by 2nd poverty map being done by government.

6. Public access to information:
 - Sensitivity of poverty map and question of whether or not the government would make it publicly available. Bank strongly encouraged dissemination and financed publication of glossy report and CD Rom but directed credit to government to encourage ownership. Bank has continued to play role pushing government to publish the second poverty map, despite sensitivities due to large PE implications.
 - Statistics department still slow to produce and release data; but other ministries, and civil society now demand access and it is more readily available.

Contact details and web link

- Contact details: Jennie Litvack
jlitvack@worldbank.org
- Morocco – Poverty Report – Strengthening Policy by Identifying the Geographic Dimensions of Poverty
- This report is available on ImageBank