

### Morocco Program Summary

The International Republican Institute (IRI) has conducted democracy strengthening programs in Morocco since 2000, with an office in-country since 2004. IRI's current program focuses on political party building and municipal governance, with an emphasis on economic policy development and supporting rising women and young leaders.

### Political Party Building

IRI works with Morocco's political parties to strengthen their ability to represent and improve the lives of Moroccan citizens. A series of multi-party conferences on platform building and policy formation covering a range of issues—including job creation, housing, agriculture and trade—have brought together political parties, civil society and business and academic leaders to produce policy analysis and recommendations. These efforts are helping parties develop innovative policies and platforms.

Public opinion research is an important tool for policy makers to better understand the concerns of their constituents and shape policies that address voter priorities. To support IRI's political party training program, the Institute has conducted nationwide public opinion polling and focus group research. Survey research provides national political leaders and party activists with critical information about the priorities of voters, public opinion on the necessity of political reforms, and the performance of political parties.

IRI's first poll following the 2002 parliamentary elections provided insight into the public's perception of political parties. Subsequent polls have examined the underlying reasons for voter apathy and the public's perception of the country's current reform projects. The polls have shown overriding concern about unemployment and living conditions. IRI has used these results to help the political parties utilize modern campaign techniques and develop platforms that address these issues.

In 2008 and 2009, IRI conducted an extensive research project with Moroccan political parties to examine the make-up of party supporters and activists through focus groups and survey questionnaires. This program provided valuable data on the composition of supporters and activists, and the parties have used the information to better organize membership databases, mobilize supporters and target outreach efforts.

### Women Municipal Leaders Program

With a new quota reserving 12 percent of seats for women in the June 2009 municipal elections, Moroccan party officials wondered how they would get enough women to fill the slots on electoral lists. The number of women municipal councilors was set to jump from around 100 to more than 3,200.

IRI conducted an intensive program to help train women to run strong campaigns that address the top concerns of Moroccans. IRI launched the training program in March 2009 at an event with Moroccan Minister of Social Development Nouzha Skalli and all of the major political parties with national media coverage. In less than two months, IRI trained 2,733 women at 50 seminars in 28 cities and towns across Morocco. The women trained by IRI were highly sought after by political parties for their women's lists, with parties often seeking to recruit on the margins of IRI's trainings. IRI reached even more women by distributing more than 5,000 training manuals and videos, and by providing the training video series through a website: [www.formationmaroc.org](http://www.formationmaroc.org).

In the June 12, 2009 elections, 20,458 women ran and 3,406 were elected—3,200 in seats reserved by the quota and an additional 206 winning seats in open competition. This marks a dramatic increase from 127 women councilors serving prior to the elections.

## Young Leadership Development

High levels of mistrust towards political parties have led to voter apathy. Citizens, especially women and youth, do not believe that the parties are addressing their concerns. To help address this, IRI is working with political parties to develop the capacity of party youth wings in the areas of recruitment, internal communication, grassroots organization, youth voter outreach and messaging. Emerging young leaders and activists, particularly women, are being targeted for leadership and candidate training.

## Governance

At the municipal level, IRI has worked with local and regional elected officials and grassroots development associations to encourage and reinforce good governance practices. Through hands-on development programs, IRI is helping to strengthen the performance of elected government, and increase dialogue between elected officials and the communities that they represent.

