

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Tarik Nesh-Nash
ICT4Dev Research Center, Mundiapolis University, tarikn@gmail.com

Zineb Mahrez
ICT4Dev Research Center, Mundiapolis University, mahrezineb@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The transition of a city to an Ecocity would require the social partnership of different stakeholders starting from citizens and civil society to the public and private sector at local, national and international levels. This paper presents the experience of the Ecocity bootcamp in the city of Mohamedia in creating synergies to deal with the local environmental issues. The model of social partnership is a win-win model where both from the citizen side as it strengthens transparency, social accountability and democratic governance, as well as from the government side as it provides elements to make field impact in the short and long terms using collective intelligence and scientific tools.

Keywords: Social partnership, Citizen Engagement, Ecocity

THE SILO PROBLEM

While environmental rights are increasingly getting higher attention in Morocco by different social actors, little effort is undertaken to create a shared strategic vision. Actors are engaged on improving the environmental issues, yet they have seldom worked together to create synergies.

This silo effect has direct negative implications on citizens at different levels:

- **Ineffective citizen engagement:** even though they are at the heart of concern for human development, citizens are considered private actors, who are far from being engaged on the decision making in environmental issues (1)
- **Limited access to information:** With the lack of communication between actors, there is an unbalanced demand and supply for environmental information. While the Moroccan constitution states the right to access to information (article 27), environmental information remains inaccessible.
- **Non-aligned priorities:** The priorities perceived by citizens are not necessarily the same established by the Government. For instance, citizens' concerns identified Ecocity Bootcamp described below, are different from the private company priorities.
- **Distrust:** With the lack of effective communication, the trust gap between the public and the government becomes considerable from both sides.

Ultimately, the lack of a good feedback loop impacts the quality of services and human quality of life.

THEORY OF CHANGE: SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Environmental issues are considered as a field with little antagonism between the different actors. The social partnership would lead to better results than confrontation and classical advocacy. The public administration will benefit from the expertise of civil society, private sector, academia and the international organizations to better solve its challenges. Similarly, each actor can learn and exchange with other actors.

Academia:

- Share Scientific results and establish capacity building programs with CSO's.
- Test new tools and methodologies in collaboration with private sector and international organizations.
- Sign MoU with public sector.



Government:

- Share information with citizens.
- Take action and act upon CSO's feedback.

Private sector:

- Share experiences and organize trainings for Academia.

Civil Society Organizations:

- Give feedback to Government.
- Advocacy for citizen's rights.

International organizations:

- Share best practices and current activities with Academia.

CASE STUDY: ECOCITY PROJECT IN MOHAMMEDIA MOROCCO

This section showcases the experience of social partnership in the 2014 Ecocity project in Mohammedia, Morocco.

Ecocity project aims to strengthen sustainable life ways and increase social awareness to reach effective citizen participation on environmental issues through new technologies.

In 2013, Morocco was selected as a pilot country to hold the “Ecocitizen World Map Project”, in parallel with Egypt and Columbia.

ICT4Dev Research Center of Mundiapolis University has worked in partnership with Ecocity Builders to experiment new ways of making a city more sustainable in balance with nature.

Context

Rio+20 conference on sustainable development was the opportunity for many leaders, ONG's, private and public actors to meet and identify potential solutions that lead to a sustainable future.

Ecocity Builders has participated to the Rio+20 conferences on sustainable development and had made a commitment to make cities and human settlements more sustainable in balance with nature and culture. (2).

On the national context, the Moroccan Constitution of 2011 has outlined some reforms about participative democracy emphasizing the new right for citizens to access to information as stated in the article 27. The Government published the related draft law (N°31-13) in August 2014.

As mentioned in article 31 of the Moroccan constitution, citizens have the right to live in a healthier environment: “The State, the public establishments and the territorial collectivities work for the mobilization of all the means available to facilitate the equal access of the citizens to conditions that permit their enjoyment of the right:

- To the access to water and to a healthy environment;
- To sustainable development” (3)

Phase 1: Actors Identification

As part of its field research, ICT4Dev team approached different actors from public administration, private sector and civil society in the cities of Casablanca and Mohammedia. The ultimate goal is to create a social model where environmental matters are managed with a focus on citizens interests.

Public actors:

It is a classical challenge to deal with the complex administrative hurdles. In the case of Ecocity Morocco, the focus was on the following actors:

- Local mayor: Request permission to do field work on the neighborhoods.
- Ministry of ICT: Request access to environmental data as part of Open Data initiative.

Private actors:

The focus was on working with the company Lydec, responsible of Water and electricity in Casablanca region. Lydec collected extensive environmental data in a GIS system.

Civil Society:

- National organization: The Moroccan Organization of Human Rights (OMDH) contributed to facilitate contact with the authorities, reach out to local organizations and organize field works.
- Local organizations: Four neighborhood organizations from Mohammedia: Al Âahd el Jadid, Al Ikhlass, Chabab Al Ghad, and Ahlam Tofola participated on data collection and analysis about their neighborhood.

Academic partners

- Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine Hassan 2, with expertise on GIS and GPS technologies.
- Cairo University as a knowledge exchange point as it is running a parallel Ecocity initiative.

Phase 2: Capacity building

The Ecocity project was part of the educational process in the University, where conferences and trainings were organized for students, by international and national organizations.

The integration of Ecocity concept in the University curriculum is part of the “Action Research”, with the following objectives:

- Empower students and enhance their role as citizens within the society with the aim of supporting and protecting the environment.
- Learn how to use new technologies and implement new methodologies to address environmental issues.

The content of the academic course:

| Seminar | Seminar Title |
|-------------------|---|
| Session 1 | The EcoCitizen Project |
| Session 2 | Participatory Action Research |
| Session 3 | Systems thinking |
| Lab 1 | Sustainable indicators methodology |
| Session 4 | Collecting and Visualizing Urban Data |
| Lab 2 | Metaflows and Sankey diagrams |
| Session 5 | Introduction to GIS |
| Lab 3 | Navigating ArcGIS |
| Session 6 | GIS Ethics and cultural competency |
| Lab 4 | ArcGIS Projections and editing features |
| Session 7 | PGIS in urban context |
| Lab 5 | PGIS platforms |
| Session 8 | Neighborhood archetypes |
| Lab 6 | Defining Boundaries and parcel types |
| Session 9 | Comunity auditing |
| Lab 7 | Geosensor networks |
| Session 10 | Surveying Techniques |
| Session 11 | Data input |
| Lab 8 | Aggregation and Analysis |
| Session 12 | Ecoindices integration |
| Session 13 | Community Development |
| Lab 9 | Strategic Development |

Phase 3: Bootcamp

The Bootcamp aims to engage all actors into the Participatory Action Research to reflect on environmental challenges and contribute to a model design of sustainable development, which may provide a healthiest way to live in harmony with economic developments.

The Bootcamp event was conducted in a neighborhood of Mohammedia City in Morocco, and has known the participation of over 300 citizens.

All residents of the neighborhood in Mohammedia expressed their interest in answering questions and sharing their concerns. Some relevant indicators about waste management and water problems are reported in the following section.

Methodology

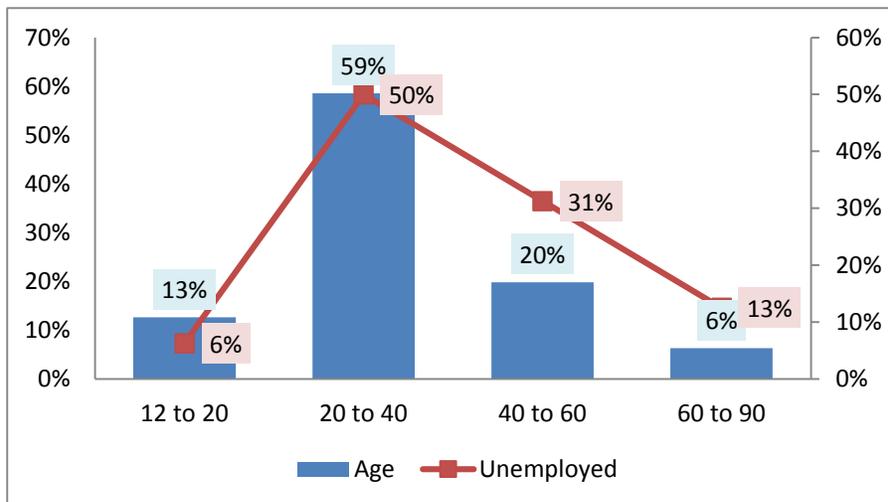
The Bootcamp was held in a neighborhood called Hassania 2, in Mohammedia city on September 27th and 28th, 2014 with the participation of about 45 participants representing 4 local NGOs, Mundiapolis University, and OMDH (Moroccan Organization for Human Rights).

New technologies have been used for environmental investigation to collect and analyse data related to environmental sustainability. The Bootcamp process of data collection was based on surveys and an open source tool called ODK “Open Data Kit” that enabled:

- The use of smartphone to collect the data on offline/online mode
- The quasi real time analysis of the collected combined data

Results (1): Waste management indicators

Citizen participation has contributed to get some relevant indicators based on their life experiences. The study related on waste management was conducted on population of 111 citizens. 45% of them are represented by women.



- Among 30% of unemployed people:
- 50% are between 20 and 40 years old
 - 31% are between 40 and 60 years old
 - 13% are between 60 and 80 years old
 - 6% are between 12 and 20 years old.

How do you manage your waste?



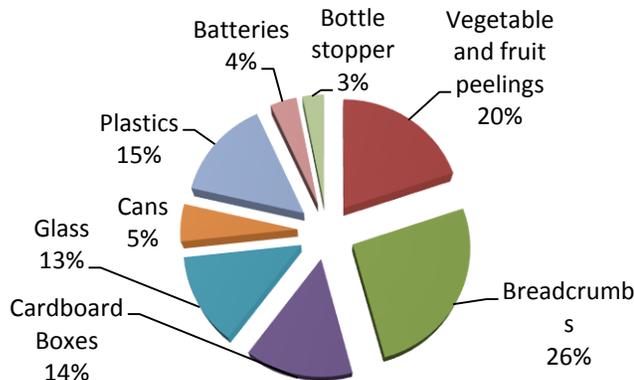
- Biological reprocessing (composting)
- Recycling (collection and reuse, reprocessing)
- Reduction methods (reuse of second-hand products, repairing broken items instead of buying new ones)

Do you sort your waste?



- Yes
- No

How do citizens sort their waste?



In urban areas, Moroccans generated about 0.67 kilograms of trash per day. (4)

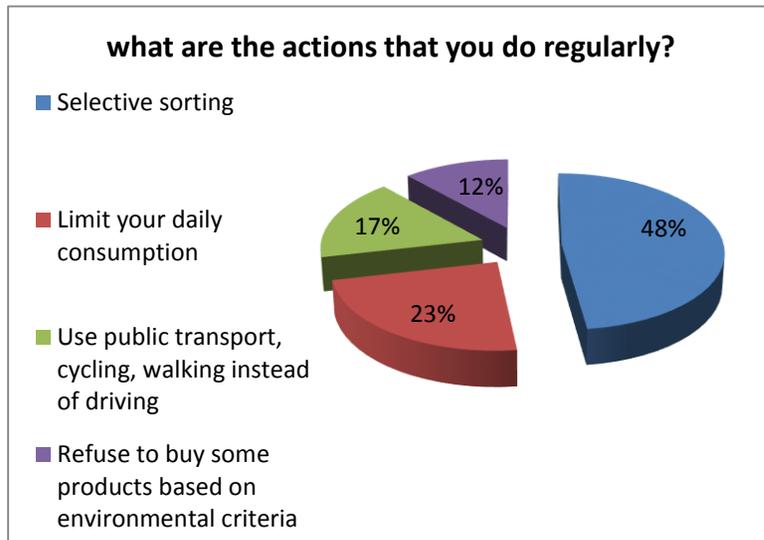
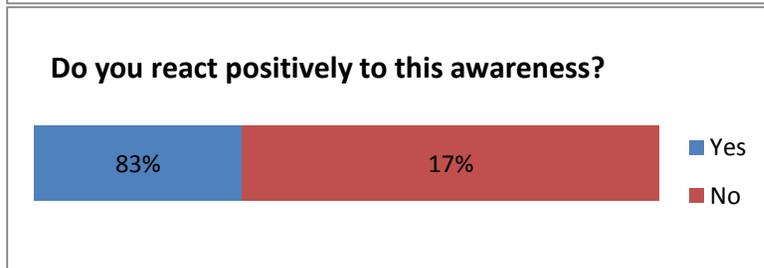
Morocco is making a good step to an effective waste management by launching the first sorting and recycling center in Casablanca, in October 2014. (5)

However, Moroccan citizens are still not very familiar with sorting waste, which is the case of the 73% of people.

In another way, people try to manage their waste in different ways such as recycling, composting or reduction method, to be able to save money and have less impact on the environment.

The last graph gives an overview of how citizens sort their waste.

List of figures. Waste management and waste sorting



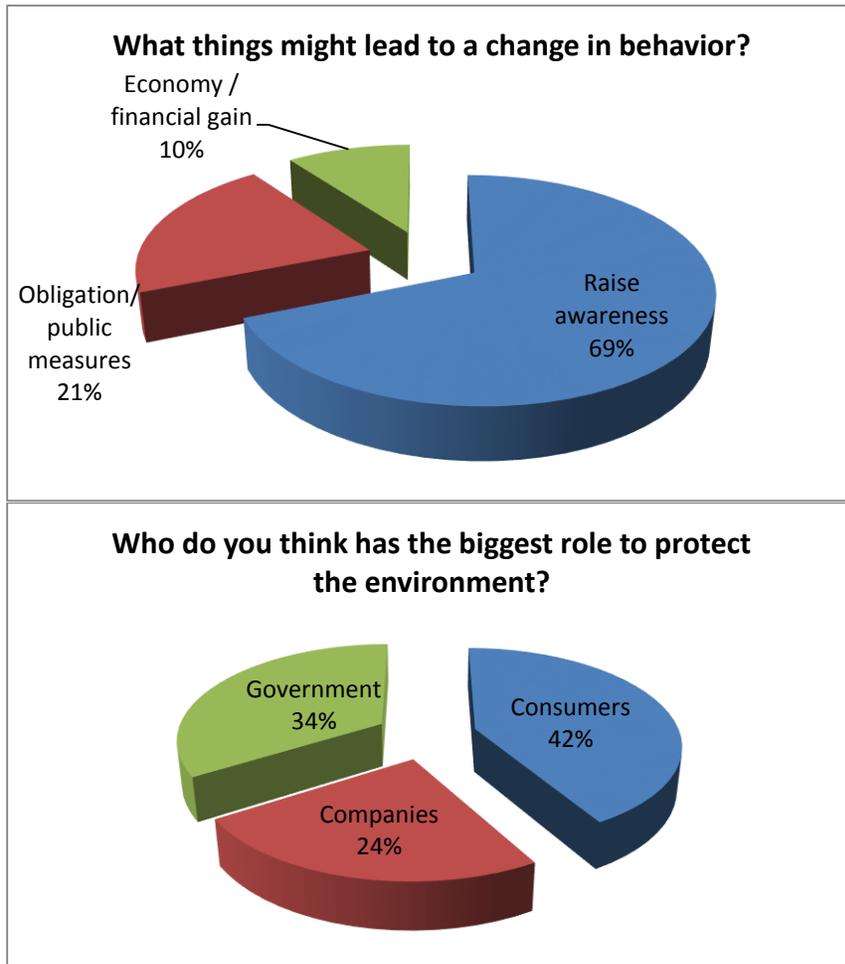
Raising citizen awareness is fundamental to establish an efficient policy on the waste management.(6)

However, it is necessary to encourage citizen engagement in supporting city and keeping their environment clean.

We conducted an on-site survey to evaluate citizen’s awareness and get a better understanding of their perception regarding waste problems.

The analysis of the survey findings has led to the following graphs:

List of figures: Raising awareness about waste management



69% of people think that raising awareness is one of the key factors to improve the service of waste management.

Moreover, the data collected have provided other information about citizen's suggestions:

- increasing the number of trash bins;
- increase the number of employees;
- increase the frequency of waste collection

According to 42% of citizens, consumers are the key actors who will considerably contribute to preserve the environment.

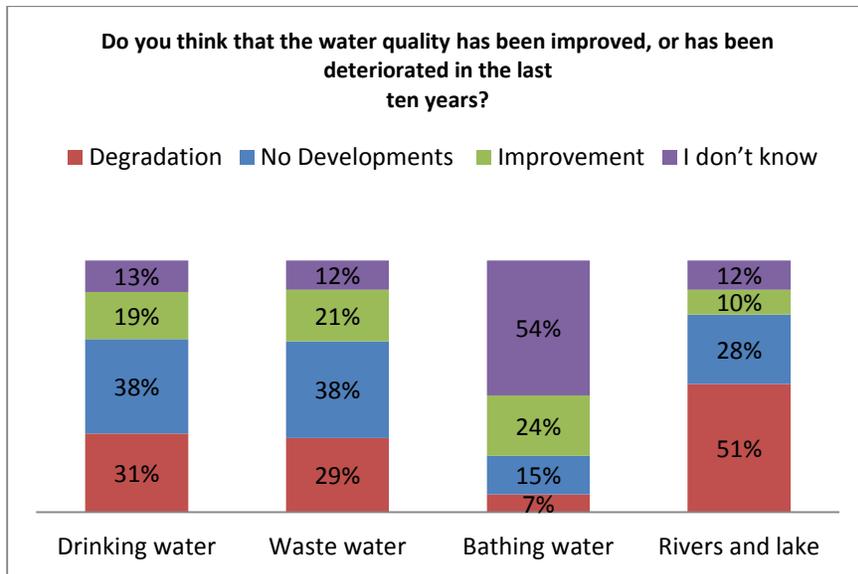
List of Figures: Citizens' suggestions

Results (2): Water indicators

Mohammedia has known a highly developed industrial activity and is considered as one of the largest industrial areas of Morocco. However, these activities have generated large amounts of air and water pollution which may affect citizen health.

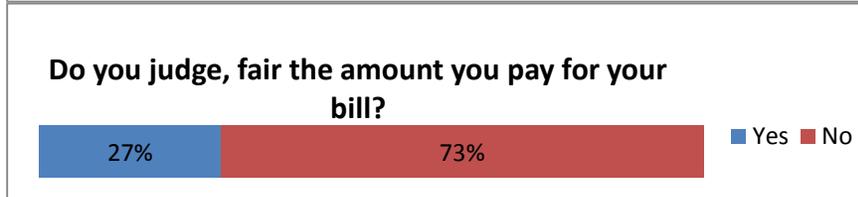
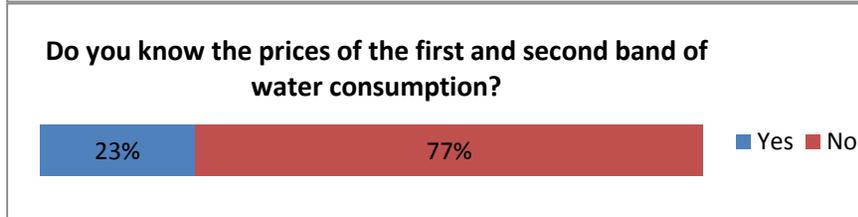
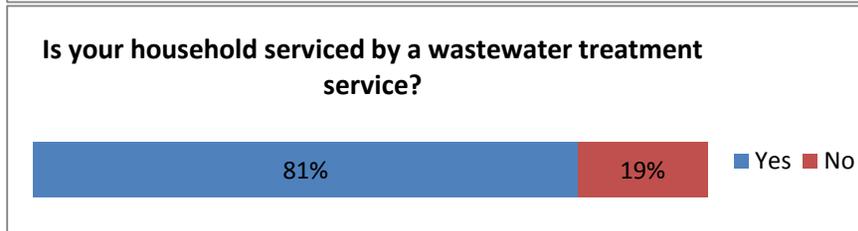
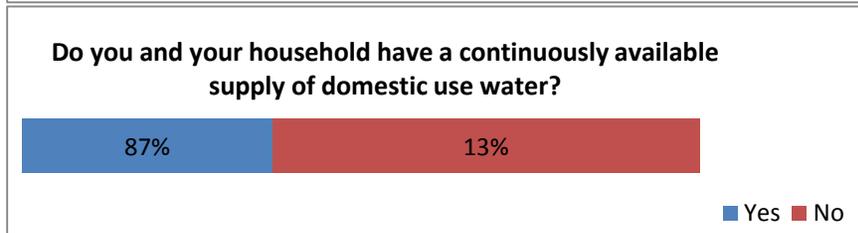
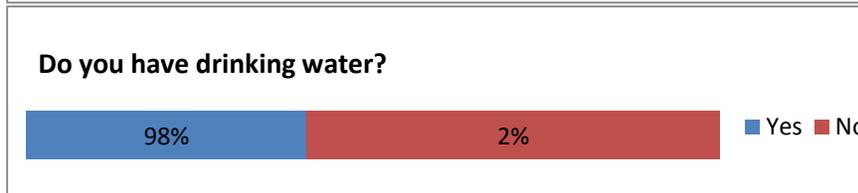
The citizen participation has contributed to get some findings on the basis of water quality survey. They all show their concern and complaining about the bad odor, taste and color of water.

Some results of collected data related to water quality are presented in the following.

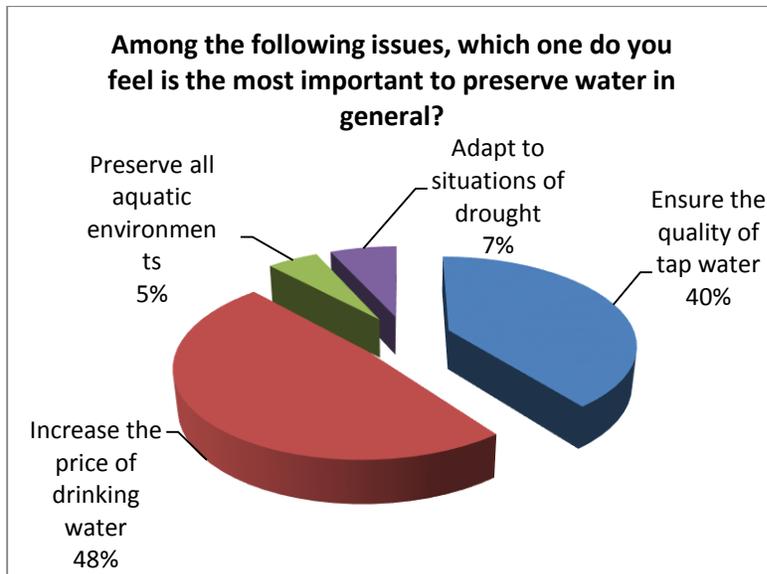


Some degradation related to drinking water quality as well as rivers and lake water quality was mainly perceived by citizens.

The following graphs provide some information about water service quality in the neighbourhood of Mohammedia city.

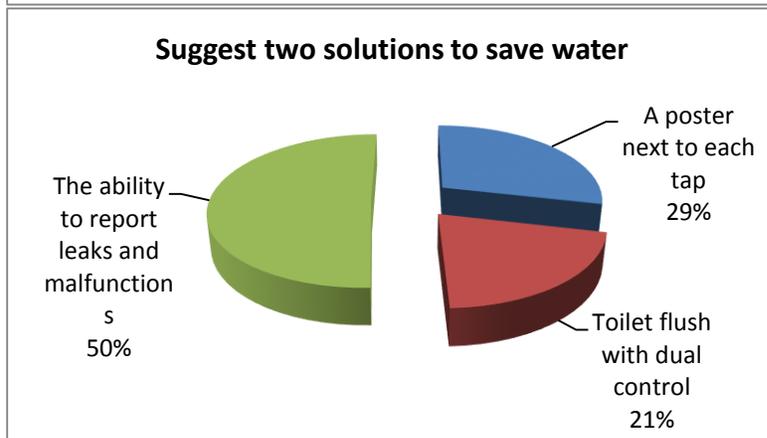


List of Figures: Citizens' perceptions regarding water services



Almost half local citizens think that increasing the price of drinking water would be the most important issue to preserve water.

Citizens have reported that the ability to report leaks and malfunctions would considerably save and protect water resource.



List of Figures: Citizens' suggestions regarding water issues

Phase 4: GeoSUMR conference

The results of the bootcamp was presented in the GeoSumr conference “GeoInformation for Sustainable Urban Management and Resilience” held in October 2014, at Mundiapolis University. It was the opportunity to share the lessons learned, exchange knowledge from different experiences, and most importantly create a sustainable network/community to engage in the process of urban planning for Casablanca specifically and for Morocco in general. The conference hosted participants from civil society, private sector, government and international organizations.

Outcomes

As a result of this partnership focused approach, the following milestones are achieved:

- The launch of a civil society coalition for Environnement in the city of Mohammedia. Its members are the four NGOs that participated on Ecocity and are planning to continue their engagement on this field.

- Signature of an MoU between ICT4Dev and OMDH. The partnership academia/Civil Society aims to transfer knowledge between from research to field work.
- Signature of an MoU between ICT4Dev and Ministry of ICT. The partnership aims to promote Open Data in Morocco.
- Signature of MoU between ICT4Dev with Lydec. The partnership aims easier communication to solve pressing concerns

These outcomes set the ground for fluent communication and partnership between different actors. It creates a healthy framework to create synergies for shared visions and action plans.

Future Work:

The signature of partnerships is the foundation of future work:

- Work with the Ministry of ICT to promote Open Data practices in the Ministry of Environment.
- Develop and study different environmental indicators; either from official sources or from citizen sentiments.
- Improve the usage of technology for better data collection, mapping and analysis.
- Expand the Ecocity concept to other regions in Morocco via knowledge transfer to CSOs

REFERENCES

- (1) The World Bank Group. Piloting Citizen Engagement in Projects. A Guidance Note for World Bank Staff Working in the Middle East and North Africa Region. April 2014.
- (2) International Ecocity Framework and Standards Initiative. Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development <http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?page=view&type=1006&menu=153&nr=66> [page visited on: 06/26/2015]
- (3) Jefri J. Ruchti. Draft Text of the Constitution Adopted at the Referendum of 1 July 2011. [Electronic document]. Buffalo, New York, William S. Hein & Co., Inc. 2011, http://www.ancl-radc.org.za/sites/default/files/morocco_eng.pdf
- (4) GIZ. Rapport sur la gestion des déchets solides au MAROC. April 2014. 57 pages.
- (5) Hamza Mekouar. Vers la généralisation du tri des déchets pour tout le Maroc. Media 24. October 7th, 2014. <http://www.medias24.com/SOCIETE/14865-Vers-la-generalisation-du-tri-des-dechets-pour-tout-le-Maroc.html>. [page visited on: 07/16/2015]
- (6) Citizens' participation and awareness building on solid waste and wastewater management. <http://www.msp.co.rs/en/programi-i-projekti/ostali-projekti/139-citizens-participation-and-awareness-building-on-solid-waste-and-wastewater-management> [page visited on: 07/16/2015]
- Christine Furedy. International Expert Group Seminar. United Nations Centre for Regional Development. Emerging concerts or citizen participation, cooperation, and education for responsive solid waste management in Asian cities.
- Royaume du Maroc. Ministère de l'Energie, des Mines, de l'Eau et de l'Environnement. Département de L'Environnement. Situation actuelle de la gestion des déchets ménagers et assimilés au Maroc. http://pndm.environnement.gov.ma/situation_gdma [page visited on: 07/16/2015]

- Neil Smith. To Build Your Business, Smash Your Silos. <http://www.fastcompany.com/1839317/build-your-business-smash-your-silos>. [page visited on: 06/24/2015]
- Rian van der Merwe. Breaking Down Silos, Part 1: The Consequences Of Working In Isolation. August 30th, 2011. <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2011/08/30/breaking-down-silos-part-1-the-consequences-of-working-in-isolation/>. [page visited on: 06/24/2015]
- Samuel Lee, Fabian Seiderer and Lida Bteddini. The untapped potential of digital citizen engagement in Morocco: a data-driven approach to online participation. July 25th, 2014. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2014/07/25/digital-citizen-engagement-morocco/> [page visited on: 06/26/2015]