

**STOPPING AS SUCCESS:  
TRANSITIONING TO LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT**

# CARE MOROCCO'S TRANSITION: FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

November 2018

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## CONTEXT

In Morocco, associations (one of several legal forms of civil society organizations) are most akin to the idea of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in other countries, though not an exact match. Two moments represent milestones in the legal and financial evolution of the associative sector: first, the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) funding of 2005, which aimed to empower associations to become service providers addressing Morocco's developmental challenges, and represented a financial windfall for the sector; and second, the 2011 Constitution, which, by expanding the legal space available, substantially increased civil society's role in policymaking and the public sphere.

## STORY OF TRANSITION

CARE Morocco is a Moroccan-registered association devoted to addressing the causes of poverty, with a programmatic focus on education, economic development, and governance programming. Founded as a local association in 2007 by CARE France, it was decided from the outset that CARE Morocco would become an independent, autonomous entity. Thus, its board of directors was split between Moroccan and French members, a collaborative governance structure that allowed CARE Morocco to mature over time, with Moroccans eventually taking all save two of the seats on the board.

With the bulk of CARE International's work taking place in the Global South, there was an acute need to include more



Southern voices within the confederation – an opportunity CARE Morocco seized to move up to the global platform. Thus, after an extensive application process, CARE Morocco was voted into the confederation in June 2017 as a member candidate. The impetus behind the decision to apply for membership came from director Hlima Razkaoui and the board of directors, whose heavy involvement was a source of inspiration for staff. Further buy-in was gained from the collaborative approach pursued by Razkaoui. Additionally, as CARE Morocco had been founded as a local association rather than a CARE France country office, it had clear governance and operational structures, providing it with a unique advantage in the application process.



The implications of CARE Morocco's ascension include the following: first, to become a member, CARE Morocco exerted significant efforts to become financially self-sustaining through a diversified funding portfolio; second, membership has altered CARE Morocco's organization in terms of additional staff and functions, professionalization, and, crucially, how it manages and communicates its identity; and third and perhaps most importantly for CARE Morocco as an organization, it acquired the ability to influence the global confederation, bringing the voice of Morocco and the Global South into the confederation's discussions.

## KEY LESSONS

**Developing a vision as well as a concrete plan from the outset is crucial to ensuring a seamless transition.** The embedded aspiration – that CARE Morocco would eventually become fully autonomous – was matched by an innovative governance structure (a split board) and a “crawl, walk, run” approach to developing into an independent and confident organization.

**Local leadership and clear communication are essential for inspiring staff to support the transition.** The transition would not have been possible without confident and competent leadership within CARE Morocco, which not only possessed the necessary vision, but also the managerial acumen to implement the transition, inspiring staff to buy in to the process.

**While CARE France offered ample support during the application process and will to support continue in a consultative role, the process of transition was a locally led effort.** CARE Morocco developed their financial strategy, and, also through self-reflection and assessment, was able to put forward a strong case – to be the voice of Morocco and the Global South – for why it should be a member of the confederation.

**Local leadership and clear communication are essential for inspiring staff to support the transition.** How willing USAID and other donors are to accommodate the localization of the international space, even at the expense of their own maneuverability, will go a long way in determining how the movement is embraced overall.