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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN MOROCCO: THE WRITING OF THE MUHAMMADI MUSHAF BY MOROCCO WOMEN IN THE ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY PROGRAM

Fauzan Adim

fauzanadim@iainkudus.ac.id

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Indonesia

Fouad Larhzizer

fouad.larhzizer@uhp.ac.ma

Hassan First University, Settat, Morocco

Abstract

This article aims to reveal the Moroccan Government's efforts in empowering women, by involving them in real terms in the Literacy Eradication Program in mosques. This research is a qualitative research, with data collection techniques through interviews with several people related to the Literacy Eradication Program in Morocco and library data. By using descriptive analysis methods and the concept of women's empowerment as a tool for reading data, this article finds that the Moroccan government's efforts to empower women through the Ministry of Endowments in the Literacy Eradication Program in Mosques are carried out by involving women as teachers and participants. It is recorded that more than seven thousand teachers and instructors, program coordinators and education advisors from among women are actively involved in efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Morocco. In addition to being expected to develop social, economic and educational status, as well as improve the standard of living of individual program participants and also the community, this program concretely produced a mushaf written jointly by 75 thousand female program participants, which was then published under the name

Al-Mushaf al-Mohammadi min Naskh an-Nisa` al-Mustafidat min Barnamij Muharabah al-Ummiyah fi al-Masajid bi Riwayah Warsy `an Nafi`.

Keywords: *Women Empowerment, Muhammadi Mushaf, Eradication of Illiteracy, Morocco.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan mengungkap upaya Pemerintah Maroko dalam pemberdayaan perempuan, dengan melibatkan mereka secara riil pada Program Pemberantasan Buta Huruf di masjid. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara dengan beberapa orang yang berkaitan dengan Program Pemberantasan Buta Huruf di Maroko dan data kepustakaan. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif analisis dan konsep pemberdayaan perempuan sebagai alat membaca data, artikel ini menemukan bahwa upaya pemberdayaan perempuan pemerintah Maroko melalui Kementerian Wakaf dalam Program Pemberantasan Buta Huruf di Masjid, dilakukan dengan melibatkan perempuan sebagai pengajar dan peserta. Tercatat lebih dari tujuh ribu guru dan pengajar, koordinator program serta penasehat pendidikan dari kalangan perempuan terlibat aktif dalam upaya pemberantasan buta huruf di Maroko. Selain diharapkan dapat mengembangkan status sosial, ekonomi dan pendidikan, serta meningkatkan taraf hidup individu peserta program dan juga masyarakat, secara konkret program ini menghasilkan mushaf yang ditulis secara bersama-sama oleh 75 ribu perempuan peserta program, yang kemudian diterbitkan dengan nama *Al-Mushaf al-Mohammadi min Naskh an-Nisa` al-Mustafidat min Barnamij Muharabah al-Ummiyah fi al-Masajid bi Riwayah Warsy `an Nafi`.*

Kata Kunci: *Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Mushaf Muhammadi, Pemberantasan Buta Huruf, Maroko.*

A. Introduction

Around 770 million people in the world are currently illiterate, and two-thirds of them are women. This was stated by Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in her remarks at the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII) held in Marrakech, Morocco, in June 2022.¹In Morocco itself, based on the report of Le Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP – High Commission for National Planning) Morocco, it is stated that the illiteracy rate among the Moroccan population has decreased by almost two-thirds over 54 years, where it was recorded that 9 out of 10 Moroccans were illiterate in 1960, to 3 out of 10 Moroccans in 2014. Previously it was stated that 6 out of 10 Moroccans were illiterate and had poor literacy in 1982, and 4 out of 10 in 2004.²

In recognition of the Kingdom of Morocco's efforts in eradicating illiteracy, in 2012 Morocco received international recognition by receiving the Confucius Prizes for Literacy from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). However, despite the award for eradicating illiteracy, the Moroccan HCP noted that the reality of illiteracy in Morocco remains a major concern.³In terms of gender, two-thirds are women, while in terms of age, around 61 percent of Moroccans who are illiterate are over 50 years old.

Some concrete steps taken by the Kingdom of Morocco in an effort to combat illiteracy among its citizens, including: First: Freeing school fees from elementary school to college, from strata 1 to strata 3. Second; establishing the Agence Nationale de Lutte

¹ RTM News, “7770 Juta Penduduk Dunia Buta Huruf,” 2022, <https://berita.rtm.gov.my/dunia/senarai-berita-dunia/senarai-article/770-juta-penresiden-dunia-buta-huruf> accessed January 11, 2024.

² Haut-Commissariat Au Plan, “Agenda 2063,” 2024, https://www.hcp.ma/Agenda-2063_r536.html.

³ Au Plan.

Contre l'Analphabétisme (ANLCA-National Agency for the Eradication of Illiteracy) in 2012. A national agency under the direct supervision of the Head of Government with the main task of proposing to the Moroccan government special programs for handling illiteracy, both for men and women so that they can integrate economically and socially with Moroccan society in general. The Moroccan ANLCA also functions significantly in carrying out cooperation at the national and international levels, bilaterally and multilaterally, and contributing to encouraging and supporting research and scientific studies in the field of eradicating illiteracy, preparing courses, books, and didactic methods for literacy programs that are appropriate for the groups that are the objects of the illiteracy eradication program.

Third; maximizing the role of mosques as centers of education and transfer of knowledge by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in collaboration between Ministries to maximize the function of mosques in the *Mahwa al-Ummiyah bi al-Masajid* program (Eradication of Illiteracy in Mosques). The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs is the first gateway for the Kingdom of Morocco in efforts to eradicate illiteracy. Most of the efforts to stop this terrible state problem have been carried out from within the mosque. At least since 2000, a year after King Mohammed VI, the current King of Morocco ascended the throne as King in 1999 replacing his late father, King Hassan II. Until 2017, no less than 2,353,866 Moroccan citizens, most of whom are women, have benefited from the literacy eradication and strengthening literacy program. The Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs prepared for them 3,430 mosques throughout Morocco, both in cities and villages, at the beginning of the launch of the program. *Fourth;* In supporting this literacy eradication program, in 2014, the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs launched a special TV channel for learning to read and write the Quran, named the King Mohammed VI Quran Channel. In the mosque empowerment program and the

Quran Channel, the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs involved approximately 7,000 female Quran teachers and approximately 900 male teachers.

The last two programs have proven to be very effective in efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Morocco, especially among female participants. This cannot be separated from several factors, namely the empowerment of mosques, the involvement of women in large numbers as teachers, and making the Quran the object of learning. The choice of mosques as the center of the literacy eradication program is very strategic and affordable. All mosques in Morocco are under the management and regulation of the state, in this case the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, so the use of mosques for the benefit of improving the human resources of Moroccan citizens, including eradicating illiteracy, is very easy to implement.

The involvement of women as teachers or lecturers in large numbers in the literacy eradication program, as a significant policy of the Moroccan Government in an effort to empower women, in addition to the fact that more than two-thirds of the participants in the literacy eradication program are women. The Quran then becomes the main object of learning material for the participants in the literacy eradication program. The Quran is actually something familiar to Moroccan Muslims, not only because the Quran uses Arabic which is the everyday language of Moroccans, but because the Quran theologically since it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. has claimed itself as a book that is easy to learn (QS Al-Qomar: 17).

Literature Review

In the author's research, there are several previous studies that discuss women's empowerment in Morocco and the eradication of illiteracy, including those written by Lassaya et al. entitled "The Role of the United Nation Industrial Development

Organization (UNIDO) in Empowering Women Workers in the Argan Oil Production Sector in Morocco",⁴ which reveals the dominance of female workers in the argan oil production sector in Morocco with various problems faced by them, such as wage inequality and limited access to capacity building. Rahmi Nur Fitri wrote about "Fashion Designer as an Alternative for Moroccan Women's Involvement in Public Space", touching on patriarchal traditions and women's limited access to public space, as well as the Moroccan Government's Efforts to increase women's involvement.⁵

Siham Es-Sibaie Lkayhl and Essaeed Ezzouhri write about the need for literacy teacher training from their perspective in relation to life skills - a field study in northern Morocco, Tetouan Province,⁶ which reveals and focuses its study on the standard of ability of teachers and instructors of literacy programs in the northern region of Morocco. Seeing some of the studies above, the author is interested in revealing about women's empowerment in Morocco, especially related to literacy and one of the products produced by them, namely the Writing of the Muhammadi Mushaf. In addition to the above, Hamzah Bnouna, from the Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Chouaib Doukkali University El Jadida, Morocco wrote about the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women's Cooperatives Through the Literacy Eradication Program: Field Study of a Sample of Female Participants in the Casablanca

⁴ Lassaya, "Peran United Nation Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) dalam Pemberdayaan Perempuan Pekerja Sektor Produksi Minyak Argan di Maroko" (Universitas Katolik Parahyangan, 2021), <https://repository.unpar.ac.id/handle/123456789/15055>.

⁵ Rahmi Nur Fitri, "Fashion Designer as an Alternative for Moroccan Women's Involvement in Public Space," *Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* 6, no. 1 (2021): 31–49, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jkii.v6i1.1116>.

⁶ Siham Es-Sibaie and Essaeed Ezzouhri Lkayhl, "Al-Ihtiyajat al-Tadribiyah li Muallimi Mahwi al-Ummiyah min Wijhati Nadzrihim fi Dlaui al-Maharat al-Hayatiyah: Dirasah Maidaniyah bi Syimali al-Maghrib Iqlim Tetouane," *Rihan Journal for Science Publishing*, no. 24 (2022): 116.

Region - Morocco as a Study.⁷This study contains information about how cooperatives can improve the economic, social and individual standards of Moroccan women, who are still hampered by illiteracy, especially in the city of Casablanca as the most populous area in Morocco.

B. Discussion

1. Empowerment Concept

Empowerment is an effort to build power by providing motivation and raising awareness of one's potential and making efforts to develop it.⁸Suharto stated that empowerment includes two things, process and purpose. As a process, empowerment is a series of activities aimed at strengthening the capabilities and empowerment of vulnerable groups in a society. While as a purpose, empowerment refers to the results to be achieved from the empowerment process. The purpose is to form a society that is empowered, knowledgeable, and has the ability to meet its life needs.⁹In this study, the Literacy Eradication Program through teaching reading and writing in mosques in Morocco uses an empowerment method known as Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is oriented towards community empowerment. Because empowerment must always meet the needs and solve problems that exist in the community. In addition, PAR is also oriented towards the development and mobilization of knowledge in the community so that the community can become an actor of change, not an object of service. In this PAR paradigm, the community is the main agent of social

⁷ Hamzah Bnouna, "At-Tamkin As-Susiu Iqtishadi li Nisa'i Ta'awuniyat min khilal Baramij Mahwa Al-Ummiyah: Dirasah Midaniyah li 'Ainati min Munkharithat Jihhat Al-Dar al-Baidla', Al-Maghrib Namoudzaja," *Journal of Social Science* 27 (2023): 289–325.

⁸ Totok Mardikanto and Soebianto Poerwoko, *Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dalam Perspektif Kebijakan Publik* (Bandung: CV. Alfabeta, 2015), 30.

⁹ Edi Suharto, *Membangun Masyarakat Memberdayakan Rakyat* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2004), 59–60.

change, individuals implementing service are other parties who facilitate the process of change. Servants from universities must position the community as the main actor in development and change. The presence of individuals as facilitators who participatory empower the community.¹⁰

In this study, the empowerment process referred to here is a reading and writing training program held by the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments. This activity is not specifically for women as participants, but it turns out that 80% of the participants are women.¹¹ Therefore, this program involves teaching staff from women who have qualifications and abilities, especially reading and memorizing the Qur'an. The goal of this literacy eradication program is to form a society that is able to read and write which is a basic need of society. This goal can be achieved by writing the Muhammadi mushaf by 75 thousand women participants in the literacy eradication program in mosques in Morocco.

2. Women and the Literacy Eradication Program in Morocco

In a report entitled, "Gender and Empowerment in North Africa", issued by one of the European platforms, Modern Diplomacy in 2023, it was stated that Morocco, together with Tunisia, occupies a significant position among the North African countries because they have been able to achieve extraordinary progress in the economic field, in the field of women's empowerment and the fulfillment of their rights,

¹⁰ Haqibul Mujib et al., "Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Melalui Forum Diskusi Akad Ekonomi Syariah: Laporan Pengabdian Masyarakat di Desa Cineam Kecamatan Cineam," *Khidmat* 2, no. 2 (2022): 102–15.

¹¹ "Wizarah al-auqaf wa al-syu'un al-islamiyyah," nd, <https://www.habous.gov.ma/> accessed January 14, 2024.

especially in urban areas, where women's access to education and employment opportunities has increased significantly.¹²

Given the development of women's empowerment in recent years, it is not surprising that Morocco, along with Tunisia, is included in the category of special countries in the involvement of women in all sectors of community life, compared to a number of other northern African countries, such as Libya, Algeria and Egypt. This is in line with the vision and mission of King Mohammad VI of Morocco who instructed the Moroccan Government to adopt legal reforms to improve women's rights, such as introducing laws related to ending all forms of discrimination and violence against them, strengthening their status, and facilitating and improving their access to their needs.

Among the Moroccan Government's policies related to women's empowerment, in addition to easy access in the economic and social fields, also touches on the field of education, which at the same time becomes an opportunity in providing employment. Through the literacy eradication program in mosques in every corner of Morocco which in Arabic is called "*Barnamaj Mahwa al-Ummiyah bi al-Masajid*".

Since its launch in 2000, the Mosque Literacy Program has been managed by the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, with the direct instruction and supervision or patronage of the Moroccan King Mohammed VI. The Mosque Literacy Program is one of the first and main human

¹² Khalid Cherkaoui Semmouni, "Gender and Empowerment in North Africa," moderndiplomacy.eu. (Rabat, 2023), <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/08/30/gender-and-empowerment-in-north-africa/>. The report was written by Khalid Cherkaoui Semmouni, Professor of political science at University in Rabat -Morocco and Director of Rabat Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

resource development and public policy initiatives initiated by King Mohammed VI since he ascended the throne a year earlier.

Since the beginning of registration, this program immediately received enthusiasm from the adult community, and continued to receive an extraordinary response in the following years. In the first year of its launch in 2000-2001, there were around 10,000 registrants when the program was first launched and became 302,699 in the 2016-2017 season. There is an increase of around 22.18% each year. Thus, the need for mosques, as the center of program implementation, continues to increase until in 2021-2022 it reaches 6,677 mosques, an increase of almost one hundred percent from the number of mosques since the program was first launched in 2000 with a total of 3,430 mosques.¹³

In 2021-2022, there were around 300,000 registrants, but those who then registered and actively participated in the program were 283,758. The target for participant success reached 94.59%, of which 90.92% were women. The large number of female participants in this literacy eradication program is intertwined with the need for thousands of teachers and instructors who can guide and teach participants to read and write. At this point, the involvement of women as teachers and instructors becomes very important, essential and certain, therefore to meet this need, the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in 2016-2017 alone ensured the active involvement of 6,617 female illiterate instructors and only 853 male instructors.

Table 1. Illiterate Teachers in Moroccan Mosques
Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs of Morocco¹⁴

¹³ “Wizarah al-auqaf wa al-syu'un al-islamiyyah.”

¹⁴ “Wizarah al-auqaf wa al-syu'un al-islamiyyah.”

المنسقون والمستشارون التربويون			موظفو الدروس			الموسم الدراسي
الاجموع	ذكور	إناث	الاجموع	ذكور	إناث	
-	-	-	200	141	59	2001-2000
-	-	-	200	141	59	2002-2001
-	-	-	200	141	59	2003-2002
-	-	-	792	733	59	2004-2003
-	-	-	904	725	179	2005-2004
142	114	28	2261	1148	1113	2006-2005
250	191	59	2547	934	1613	2007-2006
258	197	61	3661	1246	2415	2008-2007
326	223	103	4012	1162	2850	2009-2008
342	227	115	4238	975	3263	2010-2009
343	190	153	4537	1010	3527	2011-2010
341	184	157	4249	812	3437	2012-2011
426	209	217	5168	1008	4160	2013-2012
464	210	254	5550	939	4611	2014/2013
562	322	240	5798	920	4878	2015/2014
882	384	498	6182	959	5223	2016/2015
986	489	497	7470	853	6617	2017/2016

3. Muhammadi's Mushaf

As a reward for the participants of the Literacy Eradication Program, the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, the Moroccan Government made an original idea as a reward for the participants of the program, namely by publishing a Qur'anic manuscript written by 75 thousand women participants of the Literacy Eradication Program. One participant of the program got a valuable opportunity by writing one word in the Qur'an, and as is known, the number of words in the Qur'an is around 77 thousand words, and not a single word of the Qur'an in the manuscript was written by men.

In the introduction to this Qur'an manuscript, it is stated that the idea of writing the Qur'an manuscript by these women is the only initiative and an original idea that has never been done by anyone and in any country in the world. The complete Qur'an manuscript is named *Al Mushaf Al Mohammadi min*

Naskabi An Nisa Al Mustafidat min Barnamij Muharabat al Ummiyah fi Al Masjid bi Riwayat Warsy `an Nafi' (Mushaf Muhammadi written by Women Participants in the Illiteracy Eradication Program in Mosques according to the Warsy History from Imam Nafi), and has gone through a process authenticity and research from the Mohammed VI Foundation for Publishing the Qur'an, Morocco.

This Mushaf Mohammadi was written using the Maghribi script standard, which when compared with the Mushaf Al Qur'an published in Indonesia, or Mushafs from several other countries, there are a number of differences in the writing of several letters and punctuation marks, such as the writing of the letters fa and qaf.

The letter fa in the Maghreb writing system is written using one dot below the letter, while the letter qaf uses one dot above the letter. This Maghribi khat standard was written based on Warsy's history from Imam Nafi', one of the internal histories recitation the mutawatir sab'ah. The idea of writing the Qur'an by 75 thousand women began when King Mohammed VI was appointed, who ordered the opening of mosques in Morocco as widely as possible for learning and training in reading and writing the Qur'an for illiterate Moroccan citizens.

Physically, the appearance of the Muhammadi Mushaf Al-Qur'an is quite large with a size of 32cm x 24cm. The cover of this Mushaf is dark red and there is the writing of Al-Qur'am Al-Karim in Arabic written using gold ink decorated with a flower frame of the same color. The left side, top and bottom are deliberately colored red to create a luxurious impression for the outer appearance of this Muhammadi Mushaf. The type of paper used is of good quality and is not slippery, with a white base color. Each page consists of 15 lines with an average of 7 or 8 words per line.

In the information on the early pages of the Mushaf, it is stated that the process of writing this Mushaf was completed and received a tashih in 2010, according to the method of the Warsy History of Imam Nafie and the *madzhab magharibah* (North African countries) in writing the Mushaf of the Qur'an, in terms of rasm, dots, number of verses, waqf at the beginning and end of the letter, the beginning of the juz and the place of the verses of sajdah.¹⁵ After going through the authentication process, the Muhammadi Mushaf was first published in 2015 by the Mohammed VI Al Quran Publishing Foundation of Morocco.

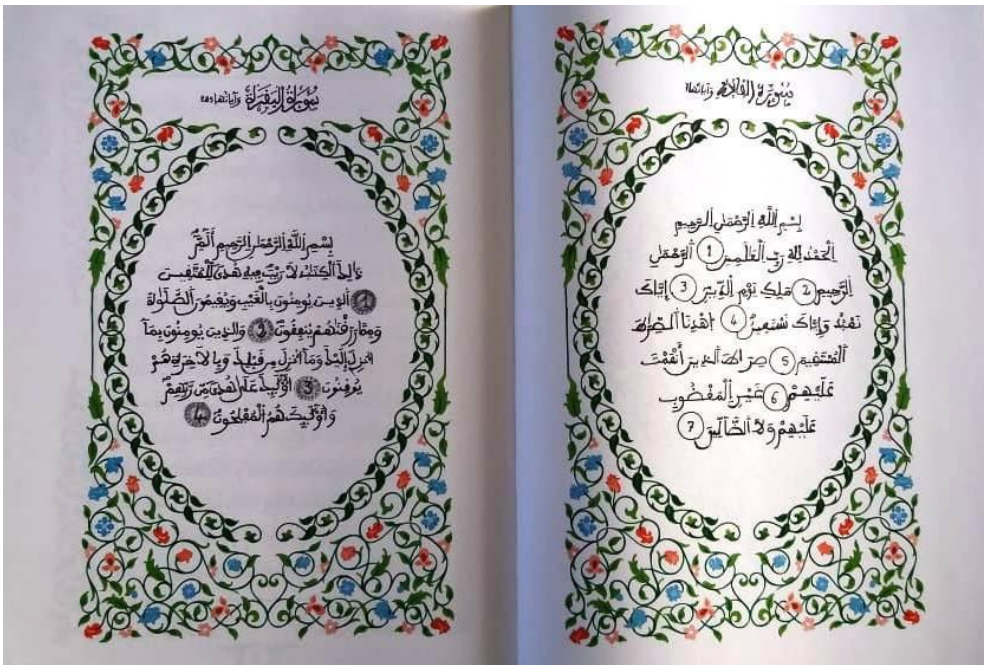


Figure 1. Surah Al-Fatihah and the First Four Verses of Surah al-Baqarah, p. 1-2

¹⁵ Directorate of Traditional Education under the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs of Morocco, *Al-Mushaf Al-Mohammadi min Naskhi an-Nisa Al-Mustafadat min Barnamij Mubarat al Ummiyah fi Al-Masajid bi Riwayat Warsy 'an-Nafi'* (Rabat: Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Islam, 2015). The first page of the mushaf

The uniqueness of the Muhammadi Mushaf lies in the idea it carries, which involves 75,000 writers from the Moroccan Illiteracy Eradication Program participants. Several years earlier, the Mohammed VI Mushaf Publishing Foundation had also published a Mushaf written by 7 *Nussakh* (Quran Writers) under the name Al-Mushaf Al Hasani Al-Musabba' which was then reproduced and sold to be used by Muslims, not only in Morocco, but also in several African countries around Morocco. Unlike the Mushaf written by 7 Nussakh, Al Mushaf Al Mohammadi min Naskhi An Nisa Al Mustafidat min Barnamij Muharabat al Ummiyah fi Al Masajid was printed in limited numbers in Austria and was not widely circulated in the community.

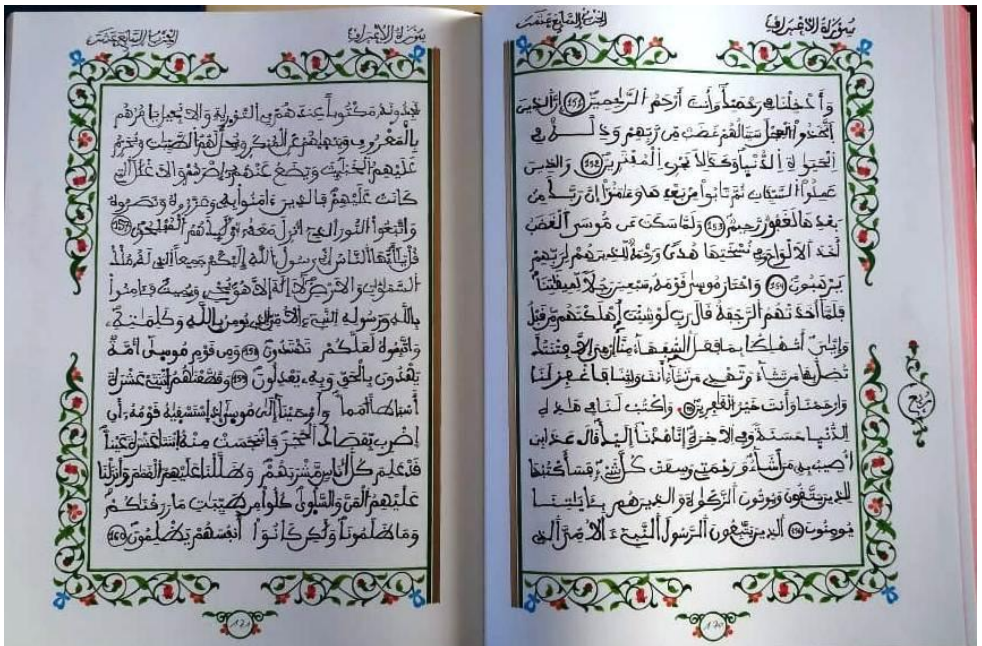


Figure 2. Surah Al-A'raf 151-160, pp. 170-171

The publication of the Muhammadi Mushaf requires coordination with a number of parties. Of course, it is not easy for the Muhammadi Mushaf to be published without the efforts

and efforts of a number of parties in Marko. In the writing process, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs of Morocco in this case the Directorate of Traditional Education and Eradication of Illiteracy, coordinated with illiterate teachers and instructors, who were asked to determine several people from their students to write one sentence per selected participant representing each group from the class they teach. So it can be said, the writing process like this is part of the *fardhu kifayah* without the participants knowing.¹⁶

Judging from the appearance of the inside of the Muhammadi Mushaf, the impression of a feminine appearance can be seen clearly since the early pages, flower decorations with a combination of pink, green and blue dominate the decorations at the beginning of the pages of the mushaf. Even specifically, there are two early pages that are decorated with a picture of a flower vase complete with stems, leaves and flowers that are written with the phrase "*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*" on top, and the phrase *al-Mulku Lillah*" on the bottom.

On the next sheet, still at the beginning of the page, there are two decorations with verses from the Koran written in the middle. On the first decoration is written verse 77-79 of Surah Al-Waqiah, while on the second decoration is written verse 98 of Surah An-Nahl. At the beginning of each letter, the name of the letter and the number of verses are explained, for example the explanation of Surah Al-Fatihah is written as follows, "*Surat al-Fatihah wa Ayyatuba 7*" or in Surah Al-Baqarah it is written, "*Surat al-Baqarah wa Ayyatuba 285*". Regarding the Al-Fatihah letter, it is stated that this Muhammadi Mushaf has 7 verses, the same as other versions of the Mushaf, such as the Medina Mushaf or the Indonesian printed Mushaf of the Qur'an. However, what is different from other mushafs is that in the Muhammadi Mushaf, "*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*" is not

¹⁶ Morocco.

included as the first verse of the Al-Fatihah Letter, and in the verse, "shirathalladzina Am'amta... wa ladh Dhalin", the Muhammadi Mushaf is divided into two verses with dividing it into the words "shirathalladzina An'amta Alaihim" verse 6, and "ghairil Maghdlubi alaihim wa ladh Dhalin" into verse 7.

On the next page and sheet, it contains verses of the Quran. The feminist impression is also very visible in the illumination section that frames each page in the Muhammadi Mushaf with a dominant green color. The Muhammadi Mushaf is written using the Maghrib script, and is divided according to the division of hizb or ahzab following the method used in the Wasy an Nafie narration, different from the division in the Al-Quran Mushaf ala Riwayati Hafs an 'Ashim which divides it according to Juz or Ajza'. Related to the writing of numbers, on pages, verses and other information, it is written with Latin numerals, not written with the numbers we know as Arabic numerals.

At the end of the page, the approval sheet from the Pentashih of the Muhammadi Mushaf is displayed complete with the signatures of the Pentashih Team, namely Lhassan Rahmouni, Abdulhadi Hamitou, Mohammed Assahabi, and Abdullah Hamoudi. At the end of the page it is stated that the publisher of this Mushaf is the Ministry of Waqf and Islamic Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco and it was printed in Austria and the year of publication was 1436 H/2015 AD.

4. Empowering Women through the Muhammadi Mushaf

Among the goals to be achieved from the Literacy Eradication Program in Morocco is that participants can develop their abilities and make them effective elements in community development, in addition to being expected to develop social, economic and educational status. Le Haut Commissariat au Plan Morocco, as an institution that handles

national planning and statistics, through the program that has been running for the eradication of illiteracy, stated the target in 2026 that the illiteracy rate in Morocco could be less than 10 percent.¹⁷

The literacy eradication program does not make reading and writing skills the ultimate goal of the program, but rather a means to improve the standard of living of individual program participants and society in general. By reading, program participants know what is happening in their society and what is happening in the world, and they can even obtain information that can help them improve their standard of living, improve their economic conditions, carry out their civic duties, participate in community activities, satisfy their spiritual and moral side, because reading and literacy skills can help them solve the problems they face, improve their standard of living and contribute to the progress and development of society.¹⁸

All of these ideal goals and ideals are not easy to achieve except with the growth of collective awareness driven by the government in overcoming the country's terrible problems. The Moroccan government's efforts to eradicate illiteracy have actually begun since the early decades of Morocco's independence, but in terms of the most satisfying results and enthusiastic responses, when this literacy eradication effort was driven by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs with

¹⁷ Morocco.

¹⁸ "Al-Mamlakah Al-Maghribiyah, Wizarat Al-Tadhamun wa Al-Idmaj Al-Ijtimai wa Al-Ussrah," 2020, <https://social.gov.ma/> accessed January 14, 2024. The report of the Moroccan Ministry of Social Affairs presented at the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in 2016 contains the efforts of the Kingdom of Morocco to advance the situation of Moroccan women by adopting an economic empowerment approach. women to involve them in the process of sustainable development.

the direct patronage of the King of Morocco Mohammed VI since 2000.

The enthusiasm of the participants was well responded by the Moroccan Government. Until 2021, the number of beneficiaries of the Illiteracy Eradication Program in Mosques reached a total of 3,911,384 participants. This number of participants certainly requires thousands of teachers and educators as well as coordinators and education advisors for the success of the program. It is stated in the Annual Report of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, in 2017 alone it required 7,470 Teachers (6,617 women and 853 men) and 986 Coordinators and Education Advisors (497 women and 489 men). The number of female teachers, coordinators and education advisors for this literacy eradication program is not a small number. The empowerment of women in this program is clear and real for the benefit.

Concrete cooperation was carried out by all parties in Morocco, both directly and indirectly in the framework of eradicating illiteracy. This cooperation was more clearly seen during the writing and compilation of *Al Mushaf Al Mohammadi min Naskhi An Nisa Al Mustafidat min Barnamij Mubarabat al Ummiyah fi Al Masajid bi Riwayat Warys 'an Nafi'* known as the Mushaf Muhammadi min Naskhi Nisa or the Mushaf Muhammadi which in the writing of its verses, decorations and illuminations did not involve men. 75,000 female participants were involved in the writing of this Mushaf Muhammadi, with the involvement of 7,000 female teachers and instructors.

It does not stop when they, the participants are declared to have passed the stages of the literacy eradication program. The Moroccan government also provides a program called "*Ma ba'da al-Ummiya*". An integrated program carried out after passing the integrated literacy eradication program, namely by equipping participants, especially women and adolescents with

professional competencies and abilities, in addition to basic competencies in reading, writing, and arithmetic, to prepare them for social and economic integration, including being given handicraft skills and vocational skills that will help them integrate into the labor market, or create small businesses that generate income within the framework of encouraging entrepreneurship and benefiting from microcredit mechanisms, so that they do not return to being illiterate and can access more literacy. Thus, they can work and apply the learning outcomes in their lives, both for personal, social and economic life.

The involvement of Moroccan citizens in this program is very broad, both as participants receiving the program, teachers and administrators as government employees. Some of them positively appreciate the extraordinary steps of King Mohammad VI in the efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Morocco. Ustadzah Zenab (28 years old) one of the teachers in the literacy eradication program in the city of Rabat, said that this literacy eradication program is carried out almost every day, except Saturday and Sunday and is divided into two sessions, morning and evening. The involvement of women, both as participants and teachers in this program, is really felt for their empowerment, especially the teachers and improving the literacy skills of the participants. The enthusiasm shown by all groups in Morocco is extraordinary, especially the participants, they get reinforcement in the fields of reading, writing and arithmetic for free and well coordinated. The teachers realize the importance of this literacy eradication program, just as they also realize the target that must be achieved, namely that by 2026 at least the illiteracy rate in Morocco can be reduced to 10 percent. It doesn't stop there, this program can also be continued with

memorizing the Quran which is also done in mosques in cities in Morocco in general.¹⁹

One of the beneficiaries of the Literacy Eradication Program in Moroccan Mosques is Rabia Murchid (52 years old), a Moroccan citizen who lives in Hay Nahda II, Rabat City. She praised and said that she received significant benefits from the Literacy Eradication Program, not only her, but the other participants also felt the same way. Rabia participated in this program for one year in the period 2014-2015, because of her work and daily activities, both at her workplace and at home, Rabia has not continued to participate in the continuation of the Literacy Eradication Program in Moroccan Mosques. By participating in this program, she said that she is more confident in interacting with her community, and can develop herself in positive things.²⁰

In addition to the two Moroccan citizens involved in the Literacy Eradication Program in Moroccan Mosques mentioned above, Mohamed Bousbaa (30 years old) a Civil Servant in the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs based in Fes City, Morocco and directly involved in the administrative process of the Literacy Eradication Program said he was proud to take part and help the participants and teachers. It was conveyed that the involvement of women in the Literacy Eradication Program in Morocco was very large and significant, both among the participants and the teachers. The participants, especially since 2005, have experienced an extraordinary increase among women, even almost four or five times more than male participants. Seeing this fact, the Moroccan Government decided to involve and empower more female human resources for teachers. In order to make the Illiteracy Eradication Program

¹⁹ Zainab, "Interview with the teacher of the literacy program in Rabat," 2024, October 23, 2024.

²⁰ Rabia Murchid, "Interview with a Moroccan citizen residing in Hay Nahda II, Rabat City," 2024, on October 26, 2024.

in Moroccan Mosques a success, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs appointed by King Mohammed VI, does not work alone, but must coordinate and cooperate with other parties, both ministries or government agencies and private parties. The target as stated in the blueprint of this program is that illiteracy in Morocco can be reduced by 10 percent by 2026 and can be overcome completely by 2029. This requires the involvement of all parties, especially women by empowering them positively and significantly to eradicate illiteracy in Morocco.²¹From several Moroccan citizens interviewed, enthusiasm and great hope were seen from the implementation of the Illiteracy Eradication Program in Moroccan Mosques. The hope is that in the future, the program can be a role model for several countries in Africa that are currently still struggling with the eradication of illiteracy.

C. Conclusion

The Moroccan Government's special attention and efforts to combat, eradicate and eradicate illiteracy are indeed very serious. Through several programs that were initiated and launched, Morocco was able to reap the results of the efforts made. Some of the efforts that have been made include, freeing school fees from elementary school to college, from undergraduate to undergraduate. Establishing the Agence Nationale de Lutte Contre l'Analphabétisme (ANLCA-National Agency for the Eradication of Illiteracy) in 2012. Maximizing the role of mosques as centers of education and knowledge transfer by the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in collaboration with other Ministries to maximize the function of mosques in the Mahwa al-Ummiyah bi al-Masajid program (Eradication of Illiteracy in Mosques) and launching a Special TV Channel for Learning to Read and Write the Quran called the King Mohammed VI Quran Channel. This

²¹ Mohamed Bousbaa, "Interview with a Civil Servant in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs based in Fes City," 2024, on October 28, 2024.

activity involves women as teachers and participants. This program produced a mushaf written jointly by 75 thousand women which was then published under the name *Al-Mushaf al-Mohammadi min Naskh an-Nisa` al-Mustafadat min Barnamij Muharabah al-Ummiyah fi al-Masajid bi Rimayah Warsy `an Nafi'*.

The above efforts will continue to be carried out by the Moroccan government, until the target is reached at least in 2026 the illiteracy rate in Morocco can be less than 10 percent. However, as a note, although in general the Moroccan people support this program, there also needs to be a review from the Moroccan government to continue to improve the welfare of teachers and instructors in the literacy eradication program through regulatory improvements. In addition, a review of the use of language and educational terms used in the module book is also needed because some participants find it difficult.

Some recommendations that can be considered in order to achieve the target desired by the Moroccan Government, namely zero percent illiteracy by 2029, include the need to improve the continuous education formula functionally and specifically in an effort to eradicate illiteracy, because the literacy eradication program, both in schools or mosques, is often taught by undergraduate graduates who after graduating from their undergraduate degree do not have jobs and some of them do not even have the pedagogical competence to teach adults.

Furthermore, there must be a tiered program for participants in the Literacy Eradication Program in Morocco, not only stopping when they can read, write and count, but more than that, that the certificates obtained by participants remain discretionary, and therefore the certificates do not allow them to register for higher levels of training, but by trying to have a follow-up program related to the eradication of illiteracy, ensuring that their reading, writing and arithmetic skills are maintained and developed.

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