



ALDA'S WORK IN THE MED AREA

Context

ALDA has identified several priorities for its work in the Mediterranean area:

- Decentralization and capacity-building for local activities;
- Citizen participation and strengthening of civil society;
- Women political participation;
- Socio-économique empowerment of women;
- Migration and intercultural relations;
- Professional youth training.

Where ALDA can be effective ?

The Maghreb region has been identified as priority areas for ALDA, which is especially working in Tunisia, supporting the democratization process, but also conducts activities and projects in Morocco and Algeria.

The first activities that ALDA carried out in Tunisia took place in 2014 within the framework of the project **"Vox in Box"** funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and implemented by Lam Echaml. This project aimed to ensure the successful conduct of the 2014 elections through the dissemination of information to young people and the implementation of a permanent platform enabling an open discussion.

Other projects in North Africa have followed "Vox in Box": thus, in October 2016, ALDA in partnership with ARDES – l'Association Régionale de Développement Economique et Social (Morocco) launched the one-year project "AVEC - Villages Associations of Savings and Loans for the Economic and social empowerment of vulnerable women" in the Tiddas region of Morocco, co-funded by the Raja Foundation (France).

The same year, the project **"For a sustainable and shared mobility in Kairouan"** was launched in Tunisia with the objective of improving urban mobility and the quality of life of the citizens of Kairouan. The municipalities of Strasbourg and Kairouan and their partners ALDA and CODATU (Cooperation for Urban Mobility in the Developing World) cooperate to propose the setting up and sharing of technical and methodological tools allowing to develop a global and coherent vision of mobility in the city. Besides, in the framework of the LADDER project (www.ladder-project.eu), a MED working group has been established as a platform of reflexion, exchanges and action at the EU level concerning DEAR (« Development Education and Awareness Raising »). This "Med Path" encompasses Local Authorities and CSOs from all over the Mediterranean, from Morocco to Israel. In this framework, a Special Initiative "Local democracy in the two shores of the Mediterranean" has been held, in October 2016 in Tunis and a Mediterranean Charter of Democracy and Local Autonomy was elaborated by the Path: <http://www.ladder-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/1.CHARMEDAL-EN-FINAL-VERSION.pdf>

In 2017, ALDA launched its two-year project "PARFAIT" – PARTicipaton des Femmes pour l'Avancement et l'Innovation de la Tunisie co-funded by the European Union and in partnership with EPD – the European Partnership for Democracy and la Coalition pour les Femmes de Tunisie. PARFAIT aims at increasing women participation at local level by giving them the means to fully access the public sphere – as voters, and



candidates, but also as empowered, informed and involved citizens in order to make the implementation of decentralization a success for all citizens, women included.

Finally, the end of 2018 was accompanied by the introduction of new projects to be implemented in Morocco. Indeed, the AVEC 2 project was launched in September 2018, and aims, in line with the first AVEC, at providing women beneficiaries with a training programme that enables them to consolidate their skills in order to make their income-generating activities sustainable.

In 2019, the EGAL project, fully funded by the Fons Mallorqui, will also be implemented in the province of Tétouan for one full year. The project consists in strengthening both women and local authorities' capacities in the field of inclusive and participatory democracy, by taking into account the gender dimension.

Themes & Priorities

For ALDA, citizens' participation and civil society empowerment are the priorities to focus on in the MED area. Decentralization is also a priority due to the lack of coordination of local authorities (LAs) in the area. ALDA's experience in this field, which proved its worth in the Balkans, contributes to empower LAs in achieving this goal. Besides, migration has been identified as one of the main topics to consider together with intercultural relations, culture and professional training for young people and LAs. Gender equality and women empowerment are also at core of all ALDA actions in the Mediterranean area, and this engagement for women rights is demonstrated especially by the projects AVEC, AVEC 2 and EGAL implemented in Morocco, as well as PARFAIT in Tunisia. ALDA is giving a higher importance to the integration of the gender dimension in all its projects.

Enhance collaboration with active stakeholders in the Mediterranean area

ALDA has developed strong partnerships with several institutional actors working in the Mediterranean area. Thus, ALDA is regularly working with PASC Tunisie - Programme d'Appui à la Société Civile en Tunisie (<http://pasctunisie.org/>), in the framework of capacity building activities (on decentralization, youth volunteering, etc.) and opened a Local Democracy Agency in Tunisia in 2017. ALDA is also collaborating with the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) and the Committee of the Regions. In October 2016, ALDA and ARLEM organized a joint conference on the theme "Local and Regional authorities exchanging experiences on circular migration" in Tunis. In July 2013, ALDA and UNDP Art Programme signed a Memorandum of Understanding, highlighting the common features of the programmes. This agreement allowed the development of synergies in fostering cooperation at the local level between local authorities and civil society and aims at the implementation of further common projects and strategies, especially in the Mediterranean area.

ALDA is continuously identifying cooperation opportunities in the MED area. ALDA is seeking to enlarge its network involving new active actors with common interests in the area. Indeed, ALDA is in the process of joining the Euromed France Network (REF), which gathers 34 French civil society organisations (associations, collectives and trade unions) working in the countries around the Mediterranean, with actions covering a range of topics as education and youth, art and culture, migration, social and solidarity economy, environment, equality between women and men, human rights, research. In parallel, ALDA applied to join the Programme Concerté Multi-Acteurs (PCPA), a capacity-building programme for Tunisian and French civil society organisations aiming at reducing inequalities in access to rights. The PCPA brings together 67



associations, trade unions, cooperatives, local authorities and public authorities from both shores of the Mediterranean.

Next Steps: working towards a North African network of Local Democracy Agencies and prospects for expansion in the Middle East

The opening of the LDA in Tunisia in 2017 and the upcoming opening of an LDA in Morocco give the opportunity of a permanent local presence and closer ties with the region. These steps pave the way for the opening of other Local Democracy Agencies in the area, constituting a North African Network of LDAs and strengthening the multilateral decentralised cooperation, which is at the core of ALDA's approach.

Indeed, In 2017, ALDA opened the first Local Democracy Agency (LDA) of the Mediterranean region, in Kairouan (Tunisia). The LDA supported the implementation of ALDA's projects on the ground but also launched itself some local initiatives with citizens, local authorities and civil society. The LDA Tunisia built up a valuable network, and is supported by international partners (municipalities of Strasbourg in France, Sardinia in Italy, as well as the Fons Mallorquí de Solidaritat i Cooperació in Spain and Auxilia in Italy), and locally by the Tunisian associations Sawa Med, AKDI (Kairouan Association pour le Développement Intégré) and APNEK (Association for the Protection of Nature and Environment of the Governorate of Kairouan).

At the end of 2018, ALDA worked towards the opening of a Local Democracy Agency in Morocco. The LDA will be based in the North of Morocco, in the city of Tétouan, with several focal points in Tanger, Larache and Chefchaouen. Although it should open in March 2019, the Moroccan LDA has already generated significant interest internationally, with settled partnerships with The Fons Mallorquí, the Fons Menorquí, the United Regions Organization/Forum of Regional Governments and Global Associations of Regions (ORU FOGAR) and the Cooperative Nocello.

The future LDA in Morocco and the existing LDA Tunisia constitute a great added-value in terms of putting in place a mechanism to support the development of local self-governance in the Maghreb and sharing best practices of cooperation of local authorities, associations of local authorities, civil society and local communities. These two field agencies are bringing an outstanding support for ALDA-Med's projects, by enabling the development of partnerships with local authorities and NGOs from all over Europe, giving to the whole network direct access to an international framework. The cooperation and partnership between local and international partners, between local authorities and NGOs, will give added values to the process of designing projects and implementing local activities in the Maghreb region. Indeed, ALDA's experience from the Balkans has demonstrated the benefits of multi-stakeholder approach to regional cooperation with the specific focus on people-to-people contacts, best practices and lesson learnt sharing, as well as trans-border cooperation.

ALDA's prospects in Middle East

Besides these activities, ALDA aims to extend its action throughout the Mediterranean, including the Middle East. ALDA is currently in the process of identifying opportunities for actions and partnerships to bring its experience and expertise on topics as local democracy, migration, youth capacity building, support for socio-economic empowerment and women's political and civic participation.