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Making Human Rights Real: New Manual Promotes Human Rights Awareness Among Moroccan Women

September 8 2004 (Rabat) — The *Global Rights* Morocco field office, in collaboration with 31 local women's rights groups and development associations, has published the second revised version of its manual, *"Making Human Rights Real: A Human Rights Education Program for Women in Morocco."*

Written in Arabic and 420 pages in length, the new version of the Manual is the result of a four year grassroots level campaign by *Global Rights* and local Moroccan organizations to promote human rights and to enhance legal awareness among illiterate women in Morocco.

"This Manual is a very helpful tool for our work with women in our community," said Hasna Allali, President of *Association Amal pour la femme et le développement* in El Hajeb. "The diverse topics addressed in program include introductory sessions on women's human rights concepts and the legal sources of human rights, as well as specific subjects such as women's rights in the family, the right to freedom from violence, and the right to work, education, property, health, and to participation in public life."

This new version of the Manual is the result of four years of collaboration between *Global Rights* and its local partners to promote women's rights education and advocacy. Designed for program facilitators, *Making Human Rights Real* contains an Introduction to human rights education, a Practical Facilitating Guide, 74 two-hour sessions on a wide diversity of women's human rights themes for program facilitators to hold with groups of women participants, and appendices with additional resources.

Each of the 74 program sessions contains a Lesson Plan accompanied by a legal reference sheet with relevant international human rights conventions, Moroccan laws, religious texts, and local customary law.

"This program is unique because it doesn't just provide women legal information about their human rights - it also develops their personal capacities to defend their rights and to mobilize collectively for change," explained Halima Oulami, President of *Association el Aman* in Marrakech.

The Manual targets human rights education with illiterate women, but was designed to be flexible and adaptable for implementation with other groups of women. However, using participatory methodologies rather than written materials, the essential characteristic of

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the program is that none of the sessions require reading or writing skills on the part of the participants.

Following publication of the first version of the Manual in February 2002, *Global Rights* held an intensive series of training workshops titled, "Facilitating for Women's Human Rights Education," for 90 facilitators from six regions in Morocco in spring 2002. Once trained, the facilitators implemented pilot human rights education programs for thousands of women across the country.

Global Rights and their local partners then evaluated and rewrote the Manual based on the field experiences and contributions from the women participants. The updated manual was enhanced to a total of 74 sessions with new subjects such as the right to development, the impact of terrorism on women's human rights, and the rights of physically challenged women. The new Manual also has an Arabic-Berber human rights dictionary, and updated legal reference materials that include the reforms made to the Moroccan Personal Status Laws in February 2004.

"On behalf of Global Rights, I would like to thank our partners in this Initiative, who were instrumental in the elaboration and updating of this important manual," said Stephanie Willman Bordat, Morocco Country Director for Global Rights. "Our partners come from a diversity of regions across the country, including the northwest (Tanger, Tetouan, Larache, Martil, Chefchaouen), East (Oujda, Al Hoceima, Taza), Tansift al Haouz (Marrakech, Ait Ourir), South (Zagora, Agadir, Essaouira), Middle Atlas (El Hajeb, Fes, Ain Leuh), Rabat and Casablanca. Thanks to their hard work, more Moroccan women will be empowered to protect their human rights."

In the coming weeks, *Global Rights* and its partners will distribute more than 3,000 copies of the Manual in book form and on CD-Rom for local NGOs to use in human rights education programs for women. The Manual also is being used in Algeria and Tunisia in the *Global Rights* Maghreb Initiative to produce country-specific manuals for these two countries.

The Manual soon will be available in PDF format on the *Global Rights* website at <http://www.globalrights.org>. To obtain a hard copy of the Manual, please phone the Morocco field office of *Global Rights* at 212.37.66.04.10 or send an e-mail to wrapmorocco@globalrights.ma.

GLOBAL RIGHTS is a human rights advocacy group that partners with local activists to challenge injustice and amplify new voices within the global discourse. With offices in countries around the world, we help local activists create just societies through proven strategies for effecting change.

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