

The Center of Arab Woman for Training and Research
(CAWTAR)

Master in Democratic Governance: Democracy and Human Rights in the MENA Region
2015/2016

The role of NGOs in women's empowerment:

The case of Tunisia

Author: Hafsa Bennis

Supervisor: Ms. Soukaïna Bouraoui

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Bouraoui Soukaïna for her monitoring during my internship, and for her availability. She was very motivating and helped me achieving my objectives. I would also like to thank my colleagues Anna Selma and Amani who never failed providing me with help when needed. On a more general ground I would like to thank the team of CAWTAR.

I would also like to thank the "Ligue des Electricies Tunisiennes" (LET) for being available and giving me all the information I needed.

Thanks to the DEMA staff and director for the efforts they have made to make the best out of the first edition of this master.

Finally, thanks to all the friends I met and who made me spend really great time in Tunisia.

Abstract

CAWTAR is an international NGO based in Tunis that implements projects and programs in the Arab world, in cooperation with local NGOs. The main goal of CAWTAR is to eradicate discrimination against Arab women and to reduce inequalities through the promotion of research, education and training. During this internship, I became aware of the crucial role NGOs play in women's empowerment, especially in countries where the States fail to guarantee gender equality and a decent life to all citizens. In fact, women's empowerment became very popular in the last decade and NGOs proved being an efficient actor in this field, helping States to eradicate poverty and guarantee gender equality. In this report, an attempt has been made to define empowerment in the general context, and to present it in the Tunisian one through examples of programs that have been carried out by three NGOs: CAWTAR, LET and TAHADI.

Content

Introduction.....	1
<i>Presentation of CAWTAR</i>	1
Choosing the topic	3
The historical background of “empowerment”	4
Power and empowerment’s theories	6
Tunisian NGOs and women’s empowerment	8
<i>Economic empowerment</i>	8
<i>Political empowerment</i>	9
<i>Cultural empowerment</i>	12
Conclusion	14
Bibliography.....	15
Annexe1:	16

Introduction

Within the framework of the Master "Human Rights and Democratic Governance in the MENA region", we had to complete an internship in one of the following countries: Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine or Lebanon. I was attracted by Tunisia from the beginning because it is designated as the success story of the "Arab Spring", so I was curious to live the Tunisian experience and to observe and understand the changes that happened in the Tunisian society after the "Arab Spring" and how the mentalities and realities changed because of it.

In fact, during the first semester in Venice, I wrote a paper about the evolution of feminism in Tunisia. This helped me to get familiar with the Tunisian feminist movement and its evolution from Bourguiba to the post-revolution era. It also aroused my curiosity for observing women's NGO and their influence on the empowerment of women in particular, and of society in general.

I had the opportunity to complete my internship in the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) which is an international NGO working on women's rights in the 22 Arab countries.

Presentation of CAWTAR

CAWTAR is located in "Box n°105, Cité Al Khadra, Tunis, Tunisia". It was created in 1993 to answer the demand of Arab countries to have a center of academic research on women's condition and status.

CAWTAR cooperates with a network of local NGOs established all over the Arab world in order to implement new projects and programs aiming to promote and enhance women's status. It also collects data and statistics about every aspect of women's life (economic, social and political) and analyses them.

Therefore, CAWTAR has many activities and projects, but all of them fall within 3 main axes:

- "Economic, political, socio-cultural empowerment of women", which covers the following topics: Adolescence, Women and decision making, Women's political participation, Women participation in the economic sphere, and gender based violence.
- "Women in water resource management" which aim is to integrate gender dimension in programs and policies in order to ensure women's access to water resources.
- "Policies and mechanisms to improve women status in the Arab region", which covers the following: gender and Human Rights, Women and legislation, Women and the media.

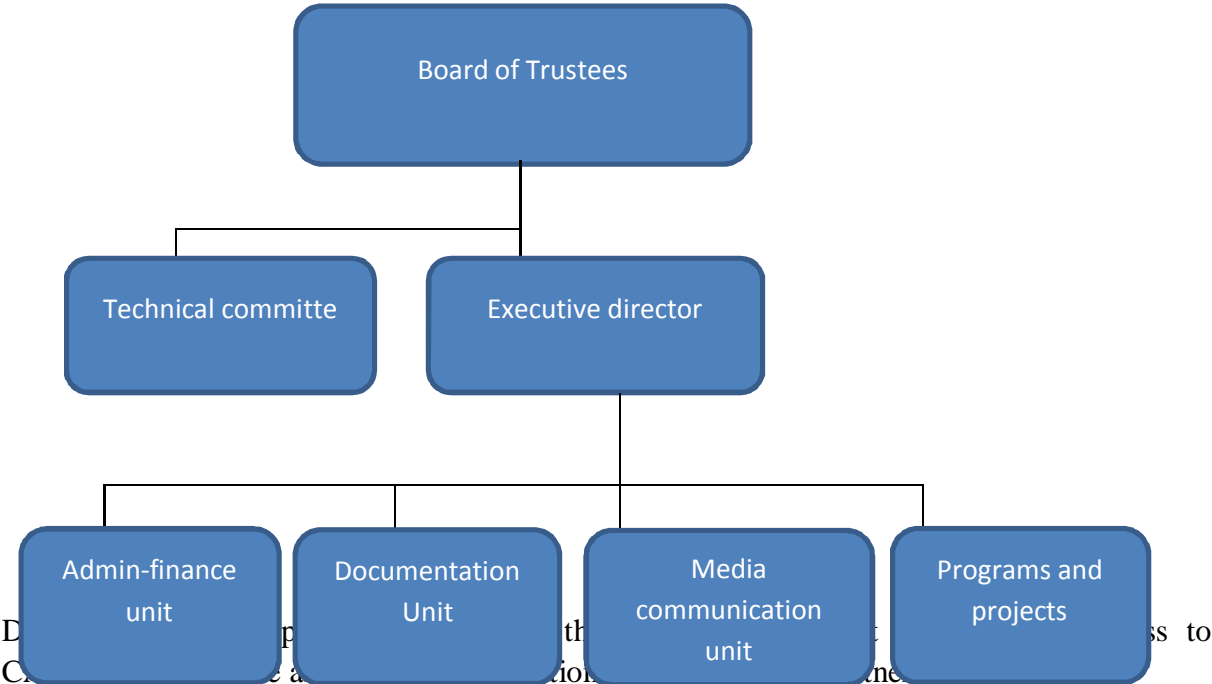
However, in order to implement a program relevant to the topics mentioned above, CAWTAR goes through these steps:

- Policy-oriented research
- Advocacy
- Networking and partnership
- Capacity-building and training
- Media and information
- Documentation and databases

CAWTAR's activities have for aim to heighten awareness, advocate for rights, engage pertinent partners and support them, but also contribute to widen the knowledge of the society on gender issues.

In reference to CAWTAR's internal structure, it is composed of a Board of Trustees chaired by HRH Prince Talal Ibn Abdulaziz, and meets periodically in order to give the guidelines for the general policy and monitors its implementation. CAWTAR has an executive director, Ms. Soukaina Bouraoui, who implements the policies decided in the Board of Trustees and manages the center; a technical committee that helps defining the strategic objectives and operational orientation of the center; a scientific advisory committee that advices on technical issues related to the center's programs, in order to ensure a better quality of the outputs, and an expert committee in charge of ad hoc projects and programs.

CAWTAR's organigram:



However, I did not have any specific task inside my host institution. I visited a few NGOs working in different fields (Ligue des Electricies Tunisiennes, Tahadi, I-Watch, and Laboø Démocratique) in order to have an overview of the Tunisian civil society, but also to collect information for my report.

Moreover, I had the opportunity to meet the journalist and activist Ms. Lilia Weslati, to discuss my topic with the professor and researcher Ms. Meriem Bensalem, to witness a life-story interview conducted by the professor and researcher Ms. Lilia Othman. I also attended a political salon organized by the activist Ms. Ikram Bensaid, who gave a lecture at the EIUC in her capacity as the president of the NGO òAsswat Nissaö, and last but not least, I attended a conference where a group of researchers presented the results of a study they conducted on womenø image on the Facebook pages of conventional media in the Arab world.

Choosing the topic

Since Tunisiaø independence in 1956, Habib Bourguiba øfirst president of the Republic and historical figure of the independence- implemented the Code of Personal Status, which is a family legislation that abolished polygamy, reformed divorce in order to give equal rights to both men and women and enable the latter to start the divorce process and it also raised the minimum age of marriage.

Since this major step was taken, many other reforms were carried out, like the legalization of abortion and the possibility given to Tunisian women married to foreigners to transfer their nationality to their children.

However, even if Tunisia has the best legal framework in the Arab world regarding women, the latter do not have equal rights with men in real life and are always kept at an inferior position. Thus, the work of NGOs to empower women became very important, especially since 2011, because they finally gained the freedom they lacked under the rule of Ben Ali.

So, I wanted to understand how the feminist movement has taken over the State feminism to achieve a real equality between men and women, not only on the legal level, but also in the daily life.

In fact, after the revolution, Tunisia became a good place to conduct every kind of study on NGOs and their work, since the Tunisian civil society witnessed a mushrooming of NGOs working in various fields. Moreover, many of them work to empower women on diverse levels.

Empowerment can be applied to all underprivileged communities (ethnic, religious, economic, social, political groups); however, this work will focus on womenø empowerment, because women are a cross-cutting category that overlaps with all the other groups. My keen interest is to analyze how NGOs in Tunisia help enhancing and strengthening womenø capacities, economically, politically and culturally.

The historical background of “empowerment”

In the English-speaking environments, *empowerment* is used since the 1970s in diverse fields like social service, social psychology, public health, adult literacy and community development¹. Today, this word became very popular since it also integrated politics and business. However, there are references to this word that date back to the 1960s, notably in the African-American movement.

The field of international development did not escape to this craze, so the word *empowerment* occupies a key place in the contemporary rhetoric of international development organizations. This concept integrated the gender and development international agenda since the 1990s.

Moreover, since 1985, the feminist movements started claiming *empowerment* as a way to take power and to reinforce self-esteem and the ability of the person to choose her/his life, and as the power to change the gender relations in the economic, political, legal and socio-cultural spheres.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, *empowerment* means “to give (someone) the authority or power to do something” and to “make (someone) stronger more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights”. In fact, *empowerment* helps individuals and communities to move from the status of assisted to the status of actors of their lives and leaders of their communities.

It enables individuals, communities and organizations to increase their power of action and decision, and to have a greater influence on their environment and life². This approach can be used in various fields (social, political, economic, cultural...- and is applied to victims of social, economic, racial, gender inequality in order to provide them with the resources and the power to control the latter³ and reach equality.

Empowerment is also a reference to the ability to mobilize resources in order to produce a positive social change. Schuler distinguished three components of the empowerment process: individual consciousness raising, collective consciousness development, and mobilization⁴. The third component can only exist if the first two are already established, and only then collective skills and resources may result in political and legal action.

In fact, the concept of *consciousness* developed by Paulo Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the oppressed* played a key role in inspiring the studies on *empowerment*. The vast majority of works on empowerment refer to it. Taking as a starting point the “dominated consciousness”⁵ in the Brazilian rural areas, as an expression of the “domination that a small number of people

¹ Barbara Simon, *The Empowerment Tradition in American social Work : a History*, New York Columbia University Press, 1994

² Smita Mishra Panda, *Women’s empowerment through NGO interventions: a framework for assessment*, Institute of Rural Management Anand, p.1, April 2000

³ S. Charlier and L. Caubergs, « *L’approche de l’empowerment des femmes: un guide méthodologique* », Genre en Action, 2007

⁴ Margaret Schuler, « *Empowerment and the law : strategies of the Third World women* », OEF International, Washington, 1986

⁵ Paulo Freire, « *Pedagogy of the oppressed* », Herder and Herder, New York, 1970

exercise over a large mass of people in each society⁶, Paulo Freire wants to achieve a "liberated consciousness". He promotes an active method of education that helps the people to be aware of their problems and of their condition as "subjects". This method will also allow them to have the tools to make the choices that will inevitably lead them to become politicized. The mission of the educator is not merely to teach something, but to find together with the people, the means enabling them to change the world where they live.

The concept of the "critical consciousness" developed by Freire, that allows moving from understanding to action within a context of oppression, impressed the researchers, but also the activists and the NGOs working in the field of international development. So, the prevailing model that reduces development to economic growth was more and more criticized since the end of the 1960s.

The failure of the development policies and programs led an always growing number of researchers and NGOs to advocate for taking into account the social aspects of development.

However, the formal appearance of the word "empowerment" is due to the feminist movement in Southern countries. The publication of "Development, crisis and alternative visions: Third World women's perspectives" in 1987 marks a turning point in the understanding of the concept. In fact, this book is a result of reflections of a network of women researchers, militants, and feminist political actors from Southern countries. The network was created in 1984 in India, and was called "Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era" (DAWN). The book presents the main principles of an approach to the question of women in the development issues, which will quickly be labeled as the "empowerment approach"⁷.

Nevertheless, the empowerment approach developed by the feminists from Southern countries was judged radical and did not get any support from government nor from multilateral and bilateral development agencies, but thanks to the advocacy activities made by the feminist NGOs, the word started taking place in the institutional discourse on women and development, in the mid 1990s.

The international conference on population and development that was held in Cairo in 1994 is one of the first United Nations Conferences where this concept was highlighted. Although the conference was not about women, the action program that was adopted places sexual and reproduction rights and women empowerment at the heart of the population's issues. In fact, the feminist activists' networks, like the Women's Health Coalition (WHC) and the DAWN, were very active during the conference, and also during the debates and the preparatory meetings, thus, they highly contributed in orienting the agenda in this sense.

Two chapters of the action program tackle the questions on equality between men and women and the lack of women's empowerment across the world. Many major topics were therefore discussed, like the political representation and participation, education, employment,

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Caroline O. N MOSER, « Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs » World Development, Vol 17, No. 11, pp. 1799-1825, 1989

reproductive and sexual health, violence and rape, equality before the law, property rights, income inequity and the workload⁸.

The fourth United Nations conference on women that was held a year later in Beijing represents a decisive step in the apparition of the word 'empowerment' in the UN discourse on women and development. According to official documents, the Beijing Platform for Action constitutes an 'agenda for women's empowerment'⁹.

The Beijing's declaration (paragraph 13), presents women's empowerment as a key-strategy for development: *'Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace'*.

Following the Beijing's conference, the word 'empowerment' became familiar in the bilateral development aid agencies, like in the Canadian Agency for International Development (ACDI) which made, in 1999, of women's empowerment one of its eight principles of its policy on gender equality. So, by the end of the 1990s, women's empowerment became a notion politically correct, that international organizations could not leave behind anymore, at least in terms of discursive statements.

Furthermore, 'Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment' is the third of the eight Millennium Development Goals that were adopted during the Millennium summit in 2000, at the United Nations Headquarters.

Unfortunately, the approach used by development organizations and the quantitative indicators they propose are more likely to reduce the sense of empowerment to the capacity of women to support themselves individually. Indicators do not take into account the change of the economic and social structures, which refers to the collective empowerment that is related to social changes.

In fact, it is not enough to be interested only in the quantitative aspect, like the number of women who are deputies or companies' directors. Empowerment needs to question the development policies from within, the role of the different actors whether they are men or women.

Power and empowerment's theories

The works of Michel Foucault consider power in its plural forms: 'the powers'. Foucault says that there is not only one dominant power, but there rather are multiple powers diffused as a 'constellation of stars', in other words: 'power is everywhere'¹⁰. Thus, according to Foucault, on the one hand, the male domination expresses the power of men over women, but

⁸ Saul Halfon , *'The Cairo Consensus : demographic Surveys, Women's Empowerment, and Regime Change in Population Policy'*, Lexington Books, 2006

⁹ United Nations, *'Report of the fourth World Conference on Women'*, 1995

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *'Discipline and Punish : the birth of a prison'*, Penguin, London, 1991

on the other hand, women exercise a usually indirect domination over men, as the proverb says "Behind each great man, there is a great woman".

In fact, empowerment is considered as a process of power acquisition at both the individual and collective levels. It designates the ability to act in an autonomous way, but also the necessary means and the process to reach the ability to act and to make life decisions.

It is therefore viewed as a process, a dynamic identity building with two dimensions: individual and collective. In their book called "A new weave of power, people & politics", Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller describe four expressions of power¹¹, which will be used by many development NGOs and feminist organizations:

- The "power over": this notion is about relationships of domination or subordination. It supposes that power can only exist in limited quantity, and it is a power that is exercised on someone or in a less negative way, it allows "guiding the other".
- The "power to": it includes the capacity of taking decisions, of having authority, of resolving problems and of developing a creativity which enables to achieve things. This notion therefore refers to intellectual abilities (knowledge and know-how), and also to the economic means: access and control over production means and benefits.
- The "power with": social and political power that highlights the notion of solidarity and organization in order to negotiate and defend a common goal (individual or collective rights, political ideas, lobbying). Collectively, people feel powerful because they share the same vision, so they gather together to fight for a common objective.
- The "power within": this notion refers to the self-image, the self-esteem, the identity and psychological power (know-how-to-be). It refers to how the individual can influence his life and make changes through his own analysis of life and his inner power.

¹¹ Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller, "A new weave of power, people, and politics: the action guide for advocacy and citizen participation", p.55, World neighbors, Oklahoma City, 2002

Tunisian NGOs and women's empowerment

In order to understand the dynamics of NGOs working for women's empowerment in Tunisia, I chose three projects -as study cases- of three different NGOs that tackle a specific issue and target a specific population. In fact, in the sake of having an overview, I selected different kinds of structures. For the economic empowerment I chose the CAWTAR that is a regional structure that implements projects all over the Arab world, and for the political empowerment I selected the Ligue des Electricites Tunisiennes that is a national structure working in different regions of Tunisia, and finally for the cultural empowerment I designated a NGO operating as a local youth center in a difficult neighborhood in Tunis.

Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment is the key to autonomy, gender equality, and eradication of poverty. It allows women to be independent, and protects them against violence. It also let them access the decision making spheres within the family. Taking decisions is not a granted right for women in our society, hence they need to gain it.

CAWTAR is a large NGO that operates in many fields: political, social and economic empowerment. However, I chose a project that was carried out in 2012 as a study case for economic empowerment.

Within the framework of the Regional Economic Empowerment of Women Project (REEWP) and after conducting a field survey to analyze the components of a decent life, like health, education and infrastructures, CAWTAR selected the municipality of Oued Sbaihia in the Governorate of Zaghouan to develop an economic empowerment project in partnership with Oxfam Québec and the Export Market Access Fund (FAMEX).

In order to establish an appropriate action plan, CAWTAR held a series of meetings with the Ministry of Women, Family, Children and the Elderly Affairs, the National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT), the National Office for Family and Population (ONFP), and also with local actors such as the Self-Development Support Organization (ASAD), and the Women's Group for Agricultural Development in Oued Sbaihia, and finally the Association for the Promotion of Employment and Housing.

This project's objective is to create new income generating activities through the production of essential oils from forest plants, in a sustainable way.

Therefore, 165 members of the Women's Group for Agricultural Development were selected by this structure in order to participate in CAWTAR's project. The selection was based on some criteria like proximity, access to another income

The project created a good environment for rural women's integration in the economic sphere whilst enabling them to take decisions, to have access to information, to markets and to resources.

However, technical support (distillation technique, hygiene, good production practices, equipment) was not the only kind of support provided by CAWTAR and its partners, but they also offered a marketing support that allowed the women to target the Canadian market.

CAWTAR gave other in-puts through forming, coaching, and accompanying the women all through the processes of distillation, of packaging and marketing and also of exposing the products in international fairs.

Moreover, in order to raise their awareness, women involved in this project received an education to Human Rights, women's rights, and fair trade.

This project allowed the women participants to discover the reality and the size of the Canadian market for essential oils, the business practices in North America, notably the customers' needs and requirements, the respect of the contract notice, the order accuracy, the quality control at the reception, and the management of the finished goods' stocks

In fact, economic empowerment helps reinforcing self-esteem, self-confidence, and the positive feeling about one's self; many women were noticed to develop leadership skill within their work groups and also within their families.

Political empowerment

After the revolution of January 14th, Tunisia engaged in a transitional phase. In order to achieve a successful transition and to build a State where the rule of law prevails, women need to participate in political and social life as full citizens. In fact, there is neither a democracy nor Human Rights without the active participation of the half of the population.

The second case study is the "Ligue des Electricies Tunisiennes" which is a NGO created in 2011 by women from different fields but that are sharing the same ideas about women's participation in political life. It is currently present in Tunis, Kelibia and Jendouba, and in January it will open its office in Djerba. It observes the electoral process, mobilizes and

heightens awareness of women concerning their civic rights, and coaches women to become leaders in their organizations, whether it is a political party, a NGO or a union. What matters the most is to enable the participants to reinforce their leadership capacities.

However, LET does not train women enrolled in non-democratic parties or organizations. It considers as democrats all the NGOs, unions and political parties who signed the Tunisian chart for Rights and Freedoms on the 2013 edition of the World Social Forum. Ennahda is one of the parties designated as non-democratic by the LET. Actually, the LET was training women from Ennahda in the beginning, but these women vote for whatever their party says, even when it goes against women's rights.

In order to achieve its mission, LET implemented a series of projects in this sense, but the one I chose to work on is called "Capacity building of women's leadership in political parties and civil society" which aims to contribute to the reinforcement of women's participation in Tunisia within the framework of the democratic transition and electoral process, not merely as voters but also as observers and candidates.

As part of this program, 150 women were trained in political communication and profiling, interpersonal and leadership communication, strategic planning, electoral campaigns, financing, advocacy, and women's rights in the new Tunisian Constitution and in CEDAW.

The objectives of the project is to enable women to become active leader in their communities, at the local, national and international level, and also to form young coaches and accompanying women to become vector for awareness for the participants.

However, LET's main objective is to ensure follow-up and monitoring to women leaders throughout their training with the NGO, and especially to help them reinforce and enhance their capacities in public communication and to improve their political discourse by integrating the Human Rights and gender approaches.

In fact, the innovation that the LET came up with, is that it provides the participants with accompanying women (one per a group of 10 participants) that establish a relationship of trust with the women leaders, and ensure active listening to the candidates, prepare a monitoring plan, hold regular meetings, follow the training sessions, inform the candidates about the places and the dates of the trainings and conferences, prepare the necessary documentation according to the candidates' needs, present meeting and follow-up reports.

The team of the project was itself trained to the reinforcement of leadership capacities, to political and public leadership in particular, to non-violent communication skills, to conflict management and resolution, to communication means, to awareness- raising of communities, and finally to electoral campaigns management.

Moreover, an observatory on political violence against women was implemented in order to collect material in case of violence during the electoral campaigns (political, legal, financial violence), as this is one of the important issues to deal with for women who want to be candidates.

Throughout the program, 21 participants made an important evolution in their careers, some created NGOs, others were elected in the executive offices of their political party or union, and others held popular meetings or were designated as spokeswomen by their organization.

Hence, LET could observe a growing implication of the women leaders in political life, and as a result to this program, 50% of the beneficiaries expressed their interest to run for legislative elections.

Therefore, 23 participants of the program ran for the 2014 legislative elections within the following parties: Al Jomhuri, Tunisian Work Party, Popular Front, Nidaa Tounes, Afek Tounes, Al Qotb and the Socialist Party. 10 women among those came first or second in the electoral lists, and 7 were elected to the Parliament. Moreover, women that could not run for legislative elections will run for the locals in 2016.

But, as I mentioned above, this is not enough to call these women empowered. Political empowerment is when the women speak out and defend their ideas, even if the latter are not in line with their party's ideology.

Unfortunately, I did not have enough time to meet the women coached by the LET and ask them about their understanding of empowerment.

It is important to mention that the coming elections will be the first of their kind in Tunisia. In fact, Bourguiba was choosing the governors among the laureates of the National School of Administration, while Benali was appointing them randomly, or more exactly according to his preferences.

Cultural empowerment

Cultural empowerment strengthens communities as it is believed to give them a sense of values and pride, it also gives to the people forming these communities a higher self-esteem and self-confidence. It is therefore a factor of cooperation between young people as they feel that they are building a community through the art they are doing together.

So, for the cultural empowerment of women, I chose a NGO called *õDéfi/Tahadiö* meaning challenge. It works like a youth center because the actual one was completely deserted (annexe) and the State did not do anything about it. Tahadi was created in 2011 and is situated in a difficult neighborhood called *õAttadamouneö* which is the largest popular district in North Africa, and a stronghold of radical Islam.

In fact, in its beginnings, the NGO faced many problems because of their neighbors the Salafists, as the latter were blaming Tahadi because it's a mixed location where men and women coexist and practice their art.

The creation of this organization is due to a group of teachers and supervisors who wanted to fight marginalization through culture and education to Human Rights. The NGO's approach is to form new competencies by building a bridge between arts and Human Rights.

The NGO is working locally with the youth of the neighborhood and is opened 24/24 and 7/7. It promotes free access to information, so it provides them with free internet and a free library where most of the books and publications are about civil society and Human rights. One of NGO's projects was to establish a studio where are recorded women talking about their life experience. These records are sent to policy makers as it's thought to have more effect as it makes women's voice heard (literally). The purpose is not only to advocate for women's rights but also to teach them how to advocate for themselves.

The NGO promotes a participative approach so there is no office for the president, as everybody is held responsible of the NGO as much as she is.

I chose to highlight the program *õThe New Undergroundö* that gives the possibility for the youth of the neighborhood to practice street arts, hence, the association provides them with a scene and a professional training on graffiti, rap, slam, dance

In fact, in this particularly violent neighborhood where they live, the youth's main occupation and fantasy was beating the policemen, symbol of the State domination and dictatorship, but a

space where they could express themselves helped them to externalize their energy in a safe way, by singing, dancing, painting and in general by creating.

Through arts, these young people from underprivileged backgrounds now have the possibility to develop their personalities, express their opinions, be aware of their citizenship and their rights, and also of their leadership skills. Moreover, Tahadi provides them with the opportunity to perform on stage. In fact, within the locals of Tahadi, there is a stage on which the youth of the neighborhood can perform in front of an audience who comes to cheer them; the NGO furthermore organizes arts events the streets of the capital, and they are animated by the youth of Hay Attadamoune.

Conclusion

Women's empowerment is today a key pillar of international development agencies' work and of local NGOs. Empowerment is the ability of an individual or a community to control its environment. In order to improve women's status, the socio-economic empowerment should be put on top of the list because it is the first step to autonomy, independence, and to take power over the resources.

Moreover, through political and cultural empowerment, women can make their voices heard, they can defend their rights and ideas, they can gather together and advocate, as they can also exist through their art, and deliver their messages through music and dance.

The work of women NGOs is important, especially in the Southern countries where the States usually fail to establish a democracy where all citizens' rights are respected, and where women can have access to information, education, health and resources.

In fact, NGOs help the State to achieve those goals, and they also raise awareness about specific issues facing a specific population. Sometimes, the lack of information is not only from the citizens' side, but also from the State's. One major part of NGOs' work is to deliver the messages of the underprivileged categories and to train the latter to advocate for their rights.

The internship I have completed in CAWTAR helped me understand the notion of empowerment and how it affects women's lives. It is true that I did not have time to meet the beneficiaries of the programs I presented above, but whilst talking with the people working in those NGOs, their eyes lit up when they started speaking about the programs they carried out and they were proud of being the actors of change in the lives of the women of a village, of a neighborhood, or of Tunisia in general.

Bibliography

- Charlier S. and Caubergs L., « *L'approche de l'empowerment des femmes: un guide méthodologique* », Genre en Action, 2007
- Foucault Michel , « *Discipline and Punish : the birth of a prison* », Penguin, London, 1991
- Freire Paulo, « *Pedagogy of the oppressed* », Herder and Herder, New York, 1970
- Halfon Saul , « *The Cairo Consensus : demographic Surveys, Women's Empowerment, and Regime Change in Population Policy* », Lexington Books, 2006
- MOSER Caroline « *Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs* » World Development, Vol 17, No. 11, pp. 1799-1825, 1989
- Schuler Margaret, « *Empowerment and the law : strategies of the Third World women* », OEF International, Washington, 1986
- Simon Barbara. « *The Empowerment Tradition in American social Work : a History*, New York Columbia University Press, 1994
- United Nations, « *Report of the fourth World Conference on Women* », 1995
- VeneKlasen Lisa and Miller Valerie, « *A new weave of power, people, and politics: the action guide for advocacy and citizen participation* », World neighbors, Oklahoma City, 2002

Annexe: the situation of the actual youth center

