

Promoting reading – an urgent necessity



Committee Chair:
Mr Amine Mounir
Alaoui



Rapporteur of the theme:
Mr Abdalah Deguig

A participatory approach was adopted in preparing this report, with input from Council members across the board and data from interviews with relevant key economic, social and cultural actors. The report was adopted by the unanimous vote of all Council members during the General Assembly's 99th regular session on 27 June 2019.

Reading is key to active community participation in a nation's economic and social development, which makes the lifelong pursuit of reading a necessity. However, the Council highlights in this report the decline in our country in terms of reading culture and the activities that help spark prior knowledge skills and prepare citizens for reading.

This situation can be explained by several factors. These include the absence of a family environment and an educational system that foster a love for reading and nurture children's literacy, the insufficient number of school and public libraries, reading spaces and the very limited production of national reading material.

It's with these weaknesses in mind that there have been public authority and civil society actions and initiatives to promote reading. This includes the effort to promote infrastructure, develop programs in support of the publishing and book industry, conduct reading prizes and book events as part of Morocco's annual International Publishing and Book Fair (SIEL), and participate in such world-class reading competitions as the Arab Reading Challenge.

However, these actions have not brought about a truly national drive to build a reading culture among Moroccans.

In this work the CESE recommends rolling out a concerted national strategy for cultivating a lifelong reading habit everywhere. Proposed measures include:

- Organize national conferences to develop integrated and shared public policy that promotes reading.
- Advocate the explicit inclusion of reading into Morocco's territorial development policy.
- Support civil society to develop a multi-level, multi-format reading promotion program for each local authority.
- Promote Moroccan authors and their works through incentive and recognition programs.
- Establish free online libraries for national and international cultural heritage promotion.
- Launch a national e-book reading apps ecosystem development initiative to foster a society-wide reading culture, while reflecting the wide and diverse interests of all.