

Leadership in Action (LIA): Justice and the Social Solidarity Economy in Morocco

Project Reflections – Summer 2025



Over the summer, I spent six weeks working with Réseau Marocain de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire ('REMESS') in Salé, Morocco. REMESS is a Moroccan network for the social and solidarity economy and works towards meeting the needs of communities by pursuing specific social objectives and fostering solidarity.

REMESS aims to ensure that social and economic justice are considered essential by the government and focus specifically on empowering the economic and social integration of women. Their work directly supports several UN Sustainable Development Goals, including:

- Goal 1: No Poverty
- Goal 5: Gender Equality
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Goals and Objectives:

Across the six weeks, I worked in the Salé office with the regional team, on multiple overlapping projects and tasks. Broadly, they included:

- 1) Researching and developing ideas for ongoing development projects for REMESS, providing feasible plans and solutions.
- 2) Researching similar NGOs and coordinating meetings to discuss partnerships.
- 3) Managing the social media presence and expanding outreach, as well as producing content.
- 4) Translating from French into English across a range of information, including statute and informational documents.
- 5) Producing a suite of legal literacy guides with a number of intensities, aimed to help women in grassroots cooperatives understand their rights under the law.

Legal Guides for Loi 112-12

One of my favourite tasks across my time in Morocco was the compilation of legal literacy guides to help to navigate Loi 112-12. Loi 112-12 is the main cooperative law for Morocco, and it is a very formulaic and very detailed, which makes it incredibly inaccessible for many of the people who need it most, particularly women and young people from more marginalised communities who often rely on cooperatives as main forms of employment. Turning what was initially a very daunting (and very long!) French statute into an infographic, presentation, written guide and video explanation was such an incredible experience and taught me a lot about how the law can be used to advance people, but also about how the structure of the law can be a barrier for many. This was particularly important to me, as it restated an idea that first arose during the completion of my Summer Research Project – the law is a malleable tool that can be used for better and for worse, but barriers to justice exist in many ways, whether systemic or structural. It showed me another way to get to my goal of ensuring and exploring justice, and the different ways that it manifests.



A photo of us after we had filmed the informational video, and the promotional videos to be used on the social media

Trips to Parliament!

One of the highlights of my LIA was visiting the Moroccan Parliament, having a tour of the legislative chamber and an explanation of how the legislative process differs from that in the UK, and speaking to the party director of the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS). We discussed a range of topics, speaking about how they intended to promote

women's economic empowerment in Morocco, at the grassroots level and in Parliament, how they intended to ensure that the youth were not forgotten, and how they were going to ensure that there were fair advancements in healthcare across the country.

I was also lucky enough to experience Parliament from the perspective of a non-partisan organisation by meeting Westminster for Democracy. From them, I learned a lot about the similarities and differences from the UK parliamentary structure, the work they did in ensuring that there were sustainable parliamentary quotas to ensure involvement of women and young people, and the way that they used uniquely Moroccan innovations to ensure success.



A photo of the REMESS interns at the Moroccan Parliament (for the first time!)

Personal Stories of Women

One thing that I found particularly striking during my time at REMESS were how many women had stories of how they had been helped, and what they had gone on to do, and how their lives and their cooperatives had been changed by engaging with the social solidarity economy. These women had so much to give, and so much life when sharing their stories and it was inspiring to hear from them about not only how they are benefitting, but also how they are giving back to communities. It was a striking reminder of how important it is to ensure that economic freedom and empowerment are equal for all, and of the privilege I have in my life that I fail to recognise often. This experience has reminded me to use my privilege, connections and opportunities to ensure that I can always do more to help those around me, as many of those I met did also.



A photo of a group of people who gave worked with REMESS, the interns at the time, and the leadership team at the Salé office.

Reflections:

When I arrived in Morocco, I came in with so many preconceived ideas of what I could do, how I could contribute, and what I could change. However, as time went on, and I got to know the community I was working in, I realised that the people around me *knew* what they wanted, and how they wanted to go about it, and it was my job to support them. Being a leader during my time at REMESS meant going out of my comfort zone to facilitate goals that helped for the future, even if they were not things I would usually be comfortable doing; it meant listening and caring and going above and beyond to assist effectively and set a framework for the interns that will come after me, and the work that REMESS will go on to do.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in REMESS, and my time in Morocco more widely. Many thanks must be passed to all the other interns who listened to me (attempt to) speak French, navigate Arabic, and spent time with me at home in Rabat, and whilst travelling across the country. I am incredibly thankful again to all the team at REMESS, particularly Ferdaous Tazi, who welcomed me and made me feel at home for six weeks. Finally, I am incredibly grateful to the Laidlaw Foundation and Trinity Hall for making this possible – there is no way I could have had an experience like this without their incredible support.

Merci beaucoup, and shukran for everything!