

## Clicking for Change? A Sociological Study of the Unbalanced Impact of Digitization on the Effectiveness of NGOs in Remote Areas of Morocco

Local Associations in Al Haouz Province and the Paradoxes of Digital  
Transformation

هل الرقمنة تؤدي الى التغيير؟ دراسة سوسيولوجية للتأثير غير المتوازن  
للرقمنة على فعالية المنظمات غير الحكومية في المناطق النائية بالمغرب  
الجمعيات المحلية في إقليم الحوز ومفارقات التحول الرقمي

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### Abstract:

This paper presents a sociological field study on local associative organizations in the Haouz region, southwestern Morocco, as a model for the study of NGOs in North Africa. The study explores the use of modern digital technologies and digitization trends in organizational and associative work, focusing on how associative actors perceive these tools and their impact on organizational performance. It also identifies the main challenges that hinder the integration of digitization in these organizations, especially in a global context characterized by rapid technological progress and increasing reliance on digital tools for efficiency. While the public and private sectors are increasingly adopting digital strategies, many NGOs struggle to do so due to limited resources and support. Using a qualitative approaches, data was collected from 10 local associations in Al Haouz and analyzed through theoretical and methodological frameworks in the sociology of organizations and technology. The study highlights the gap in digital technology adoption by NGOs and emphasizes the need for tailored strategies to enhance their effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Digital Transformation, Associative Organizations, Al Haouz Province, Local Development, Sociology of Organizations.

## المخلص

تقدم هذه الورقة دراسة ميدانية سوسيولوجية حول المنظمات الجمعوية المحلية في منطقة الحوز، جنوب غرب المغرب، كنموذج لدراسة المنظمات غير الحكومية في شمال إفريقيا. تستكشف الدراسة استخدام التقنيات الرقمية الحديثة واتجاهات الرقمنة في العمل التنظيمي والجمعي، مع التركيز على كيفية إدراك الفاعلين الجمعويين لهذه الأدوات وتأثيرها على الأداء التنظيمي. كما تحدد الدراسة التحديات الرئيسية التي تعيق دمج الرقمنة في هذه المنظمات، خاصة في سياق عالمي يتسم بالتقدم التكنولوجي السريع والاعتماد المتزايد على الأدوات الرقمية من أجل الكفاءة. بينما يتبنى القطاع العام والخاص استراتيجيات رقمية بشكل متزايد، تواجه العديد من المنظمات غير الحكومية صعوبات في ذلك بسبب محدودية الموارد والدعم. باستخدام أساليب نوعية، تم جمع البيانات من 10 جمعيات محلية في الحوز وتحليلها من خلال الأطر النظرية والمنهجية في سوسيولوجيا المنظمات والتكنولوجيا. تبرز الدراسة الفجوة في اعتماد التكنولوجيا الرقمية من قبل المنظمات غير الحكومية وتؤكد على الحاجة إلى استراتيجيات مخصصة لتعزيز فعاليتها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التحول الرقمي، المنظمات الجمعوية، إقليم الحوز، التنمية المحلية، سوسيولوجيا المنظمات.



## Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, digital transformation has emerged as a critical driver of success for organizations across sectors. Defined as the integration of digital technologies into all areas of an organization to fundamentally alter how it operates and delivers value, digital transformation encompasses various types, including process automation, data analytics, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and social media engagement (Nikita et al. 2024). For businesses operating in the for-profit realm, these advancements have proven instrumental in enhancing operational efficiency, optimizing resource allocation, and maximizing profitability. By streamlining workflows, personalizing customer experiences, and enabling data-driven decision-making, digital tools have become essential for achieving competitive advantage and sustaining growth in an increasingly interconnected world.

While the benefits of digital transformation are well-documented in the corporate sector, its application within non-profit associative organizations (AOs) remains underexplored yet equally vital. Unlike their for-profit counterparts, AOs are driven by social missions rather than financial gain, focusing on addressing societal challenges such as poverty, education, health, and environmental sustainability (Nikita et al. 2024). These organizations often operate with limited resources, relying heavily on volunteerism, community support, and donor contributions. As societal expectations shift toward greater transparency, accountability, and measurable impact, AOs face mounting pressure to modernize their operations and communication strategies. Digital transformation offers a pathway to meet these demands by improving program delivery, expanding



outreach, and fostering deeper connections with stakeholders, including donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries.

The value of this research lies in extending the positive dimensions of digital transformation from the for-profit domain to the non-profit sector. By examining the experiences of associative organizations in specific local contexts— “Al Haouz province” in southwestern Morocco—this study seeks to uncover how digital tools can be leveraged to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of non-profit work without compromising core values. It highlights the unique challenges faced by AOs, such as financial constraints, resistance to change, and a lack of technological expertise, while emphasizing the importance of developing localized approaches that align with cultural, social, and economic realities. Ultimately, this research aims to provide practical insights and theoretical frameworks for bridging the gap between technological innovation and the social missions of non-profit organizations, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful in an ever-digitizing world.

### **Chapter 1 : Digitization and Enhancing the Effectiveness of NGOs**

In sociology, precise concept definition is essential for objective research and understanding complex social phenomena. Digital transformation is frequently misunderstood as simply adopting digital tools, but it actually involves deeper organizational and social changes driven by technology. These changes are disruptive (Jong & Ganzaroli, 2024), transcending traditional ICT developments to reshape broader social and organizational ecosystems. The social sciences play a critical role in unpacking this concept, moving beyond surface-level interpretations to explore its impact on structures and relationships, particularly within local NGOs. For these organizations, digital transformation offers opportunities to enhance capacity



but also presents significant challenges. Understanding these dynamics requires linking clear sociological definitions with practical applications, helping us analyze how digital tools can reshape associative work while respecting its social mission.

### 1.1 Digital Transformation

Transformation, as a social concept, refers to a deliberate and radical reorganization of social, economic, or cultural systems, often driven by political will or collective action (Wagener, H.-J. 1998). Rooted in theories such as Karl Polanyi's analysis of market interventions and Norbert Klöten's emphasis on systemic transformations, transformation entails a qualitative change where old structures are replaced by new ones, reflecting both human agency and structural dynamics. From a structural functionalist perspective, it involves the reconfiguration of social institutions to restore functional equilibrium, where societal parts adapt to meet emerging needs. Conversely, conflict theory views transformation as arising from conflicts between dominant and subordinate groups, leading to shifts in power relations and institutional reforms. While transformation differs from spontaneous social change, which may occur without intentional planning, it can be categorized into structural (planned) and organic evolutionary (emergent) forms (Wagener, H.-J. 1998). Accordingly, digital transformation extends this concept by leveraging digital technologies to bring about profound changes in organizational boundaries, management mechanisms, and social relationships, including physical and symbolic dimensions.

Digital transformation is a complex socio-technical phenomenon that reshapes organizational and societal structures through the incorporation of digital technologies, reflecting a broader process of social and economic



change. Academic definitions vary in their scope and focus. (Vial,2019) offers a procedural perspective by defining digital transformation as “a process aimed at improving an entity by bringing about fundamental changes in its characteristics using combinations of information, computing, communication, and telecommunication technologies” (Mühlburger & Krumay, 2024 p.2). This definition emphasizes the interaction between technology and existing organizational frameworks. In contrast, (Jung & Reber,2021) offer a more strategic view, describing digital transformation as a process of radical change enabled by innovative technology, leveraging resources and capabilities to redefine value propositions for stakeholders. (Wessel,2021) further highlights the role of organizational identity, suggesting that shifts in identity are key distinguishing features of digital transformation. However, these definitions face challenges in balancing generality and specificity; while broad definitions risk broadening the concept, narrower definitions may exclude contexts where transformation occurs gradually or within rigid organizational environments, such as the public sector.

From a sociological point of view, transformation extends beyond artistic execution to include a profound reconfiguration of social interactions, relationships, and values, necessitating a multidimensional understanding that integrates artistic, cultural, and institutional dynamics. The tension between inclusive and precise definitions reflects the inherent complexity of transformation as an artistic and socio-organizational process shaped by interactions between social actors and institutional structures. This dichotomy emphasizes the need for adaptive frameworks that take into account contextual differences, such as those found in relational organizations. Relational organizations, which embody social values within





structured work mechanisms, serve as critical sites for analyzing how collective action intersects with technological and social transformations. Digital technology not only redefines organizational identities and processes, but also serves as a microcosm of broader societal transformations, highlighting the interplay between technological innovation and enduring social values. This intersection raises key questions about how organizations can navigate these dynamics while maintaining their mission-oriented ethics in an evolving digital landscape.

## 1.2 Associative Organization (AO)

In sociology, **organization** is defined as a social pattern consisting of a group of individuals who interact in an organized manner to achieve specific goals. This pattern relies on rules and laws that govern the relationships between its members and define roles and responsibilities. Max Weber is one of the most prominent theorists who established an understanding of organizations through his idealized model of bureaucracy. According to Weber, modern organizations are characterized by rationality and hierarchy, where work is organized through written rules and strict hierarchical structures.

The sociology of organizations is based on a range of theories and approaches offered by leading sociologists. Among these theories, Max Weber's contributions are at the forefront of theoretical efforts to understand organizations. Weber presented an idealized model of bureaucracy, which is an analytical tool for understanding real-life organizations. According to Weber, bureaucratic organizations have characteristics such as hierarchy, functional specialization, and adherence to written rules (Giddens & Birdsall, 2005).





Along with Weber, Talcott Parsons presented a vision of organization as a social construct that expresses the prevailing values of a society. According to Parsons, organizations are a means of achieving goals beyond the capabilities of individuals, and human and material resources are mobilized to achieve these goals. Parsons also identified four basic requirements for organizations: Adaptation, integration, goal attainment, and goal pattern (Bellah, 1979). If organization is of great importance at the level of individuals within societies, its impact also extends to society as a whole, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping social, economic and political structures. The study by Pamela S. Tolbert and Richard H. Hall, entitled “Organizations Structures, Processes And Outcomes”, confirms that organizations form and develop within specific societal contexts, which differ from one society to another. They argue that the patterns that organizations adopt have profound effects on society, whether by reshaping patterns of social division of labor, deepening equality gaps between individuals, or influencing public policies and political decision-making processes. Organizations may also generate externalities, the costs of which, whether positive or negative, are borne by society as a whole.

On the other hand, theoretical frameworks for the study of organizations contribute to clarifying and understanding the patterns of thinking that govern their development, especially in the case of bureaucratic organizations. In Gareth Morgan's study entitled “Images of Organization”, the researcher argues that the view of organizations as “machines” leads to their design and management as mechanical systems consisting of interlocking parts, each of which plays a specific role in the functioning of the organization as a whole. G. Morgan points out that this view may be effective at times, but it can also lead to negative repercussions, especially



when the human and social aspects within the organization are ignored. He explains that modern organizations face fundamental issues with the prevailing management thinking, as the focus on the mechanical model makes it difficult to manage organizations flexibly and effectively in the face of rapid changes in social and economic environments.

In contrast, Michael Crozier (1922-2012) offers a different view of organization, arguing that researchers in the field of information and communication sciences possess sufficient theoretical and methodological tools to accurately define the concept of organization. M.Crozier defines regulation as a distinct field of organized social action, where relationships between individuals are organized according to specific rules and structures. M.Crozier adopted the concept of “power” as an analytical tool to understand the dynamics of organizations, especially in the context of the introduction of new technologies and the restructuring of interpersonal relationships within the organization. He sees organization as a field of communication and the “activation of cultural structures” (Belin, 2007), where shared values and norms are activated among members.

Together with Erhard Friedberg, M.Crozier argues that organization is a social construction based on power relations between actors. In this framework, organization is not a static entity, but a dynamic pattern that is shaped by interactions between individuals and organizational structures. In this sense, organizational goals, whether political, social, economic, or cultural, are achieved by promoting the organizational behavior of members and organizing their integration into the organizational culture. Thus, organizational action is not a natural given, as classical analyses in the sociology of organizations assumed, but rather a social construction that is



shaped by the conditions and contexts prevailing within the organizational system.

However, the concept of organization is associated with everything that is organized, i.e. those processes that are carried out in a planned and purposeful manner. On the other hand, organization can be seen as the ideal model of bureaucratic organization, as pointed out by Max Weber, where emphasis is placed on hierarchy, clear division of authority, and adherence to formal rules and procedures.

In the past, the existence of associations was not considered a necessity compared to other strategic organizations that form the backbone of society. However, with the increasing complexity of modern societies, the creation of associations has come to reflect this complexity and is seen as a mechanism to address the structural imbalances that individuals face in their daily lives. The establishment of associations is no longer seen as a luxury or a secondary activity, but rather as a social necessity aimed at filling the gaps resulting from the limited interventions of public actors, or the inadequacy of these interventions in the face of increasing social demand and growing crises.

The sociological perspective considers an association: A group of individuals who are voluntarily, voluntarily and teleologically organized to pursue collective, participatory and continuous action. The generalized and vague nature of this definition also encompasses the union, party, company, and other social forms. However, it is cooperation within the framework of a kind of voluntarism that determines the fate of organized associative work and thus distinguishes it from other such organizations.

The social approach makes the association a group of individuals who have developed a desire to carry out a specific activity that existed before or did



not exist; for their benefit or for the benefit of their community, which means their neighborhood, city, village or the whole national territory, within a framework of cooperation, volunteering, sharing, collaboration, and practicing the activities and relationships that the association carries out in the educational, artistic, social, sports, and so on. As sociologist Mohamed Jassous pointed out in relation to the state of Moroccan society: “The importance of associations today has clearly emerged in light of the pathological or pathological conditions that the country is experiencing as a result of the structural adjustment program, and in light of the general inability of many public social institutions to cover the basic needs of members of society.” (Jassous, 2002,p.15-16)

## **Chapter 2 : The Transformation of Associations in Morocco**

Moroccan society has historically relied on traditional institutions such as the family, the tribe (AL KABILA), ALZAOUIA, and AL'JAMAA (El Atri, 2009, p.60), which functioned as social infrastructures that met individual and collective needs. These entities fostered organic solidarity and integrated individuals into the social fabric. However, with French colonization, these institutions began to lose their authority due to social, economic, and political transformations.

The first phase of this transition, from traditionalism to modernity, saw colonial laws impose Western models of association, marginalizing Moroccans and pushing association work underground. After independence in 1956, the “Dahir” of public freedoms in 1958 ushered in a new era of modern associations, especially in the fields of education, culture, and sports, in line with the goals of national liberation. (Boukhriss 2013, p.143).

In the second phase, from the 1970s to the 1990s, the focus of associations shifted from national to local development, reflecting a move towards



mechanical solidarity. State-created organizations emerged, which often tried to control the activities of associations that ventured into the political and social spheres.

Since the 1990s, associations have specialized and professionalized, adopting modern management techniques and focusing on specific areas such as human rights and sustainable development. This shift is indicative of a shift from categorical to thematic concerns, reflecting the theory of modernization. Through this evolution, Moroccan associations have become a public sphere, shaping public opinion and defending marginalized groups, albeit in a context of negotiation and tension with state power. This development highlights how economic and political changes are reshaping social structures and transforming traditional solidarity into modern institutional forms.

### 2.1 Research Problem:

In the context of a global and local society characterized by rapid developments in the field of technology and digital tools, organizations of all forms are moving toward adapting to these developments that impose themselves, and this adaptation appears in the search for the integration of technology to achieve the goals of the organization, especially those organizations that are established for specific goals: for example, "profit", "no profit" "development", "culture" and "defense of rights" ... etc.

In this study, we explore a type of organization that is not primarily governed by profit logic but has characteristics and features that make it distinct from profit-oriented organizations. They are also organizations that intervene to meet the needs of the public and the local community. Therefore, this research raises a question about the effects of NGOs' use of technological and digital tools in local development.

The distinctive characteristics of these organizations raise questions about the rationality of their practices and, consequently, about the extent to which they adopt technological and digital tools. This leads us to assume that structural, cultural, and technical barriers also hinder the easy integration of these tools. In this research, we aim to answer the following questions:

- Which civil-society aspects do technology and digital tools influence?  
What impact does this have on local civil society?
- How do NGOs integrate digital technology tools? How does this influence their intervention, organization, and effectiveness?
- What are the main structural, cultural, and technical barriers to the adoption of technology and digital tools?.

## 2.2 Study Objectives:

This research aims to achieve the following goals based on the identified problem and key questions:

- Describe how local NGOs use technology and digital tools.
- Identify the impacts of technology and digital tools on the organization's interventions, internal performance, and effectiveness in the local community.
- Deduce patterns of adoption of technology and digital tools by local NGOs.
- Analyze the attitudes of local NGO actors toward the use of technology and digital tools.
- Highlight the structural, cultural, and technical factors that hinder the adoption of technology and digital tools.

## 2.3 Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to provide an in-depth understanding of the digital transformation process within associative





organizations. By focusing on semi-structured interviews and content analysis, the approach aims to explore the complexities and nuances of how these organizations navigate technological change while maintaining their social missions.

### - Participants, Setting, and Procedures

The study focuses on associative organizations operating in the Al Haouz province in Morocco. This area was selected due to their distinct socio-cultural and economic contexts, offering valuable insights into the interaction between technology and local communities. Participants include key stakeholders such as organizational leaders, staff members, donors, and beneficiaries. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with these individuals to capture their perspectives, experiences, and challenges related to digital transformation. The flexibility of this interview format allows for open-ended discussions, enabling participants to elaborate on topics that may not have been initially anticipated.

### - Measures

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, the following measures are employed:

**Semi-Structured Interviews:** This is the primary data collection tool, designed to gather detailed narratives from stakeholders about their involvement in and perceptions of digital transformation. Questions address motivations, barriers, successes, and resistance encountered during the adoption of digital tools.

**Content Analysis:** In the case selection phase, content analysis is used to review organizational documents, digital strategies, and communication materials. This helps identify patterns and assess the extent to which digital transformation has been integrated into the operations and mission of the selected organizations.





## - Design and Data Analysis Plan

The study follows a qualitative method centered on thematic analysis. Data collected through semi-structured interviews will be transcribed and coded to identify recurring themes and patterns. These themes will then be analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions about the digital transformation journey of associative organizations. Additionally, content analysis of organizational materials will complement the interview findings, providing a broader context for understanding the implementation and impact of digital initiatives.

### **Chapter 3: Organizational Characteristics and Digital Transformation Dynamics in Local Associations within the Al Haouz province.**

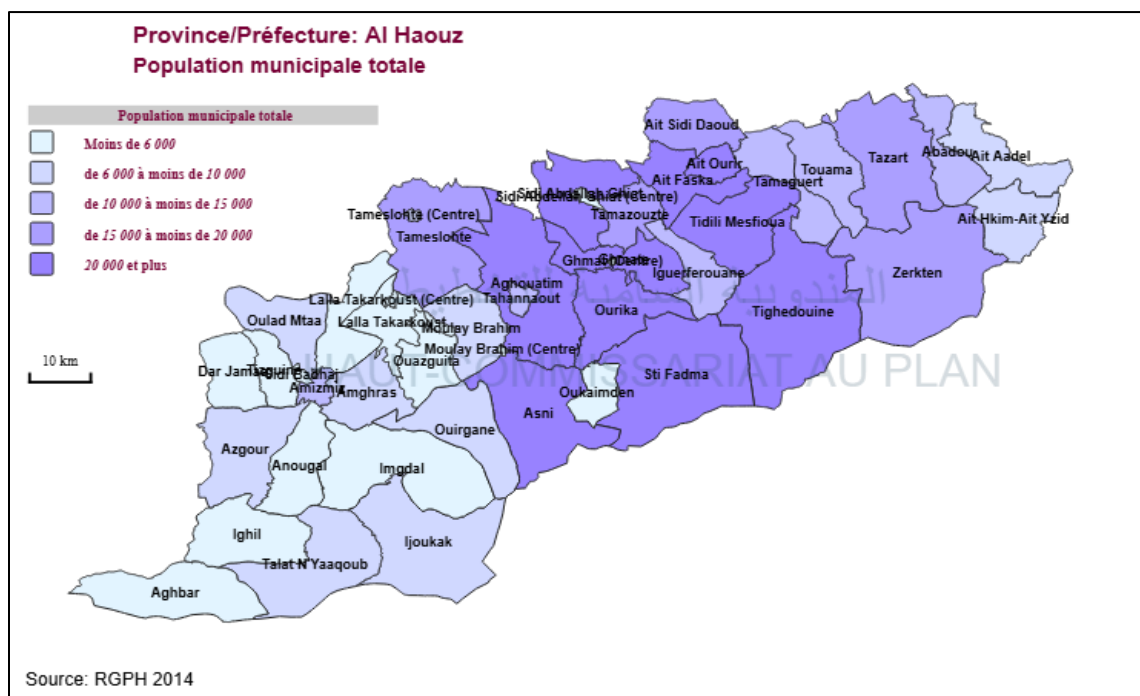
Local associations are social institutions that play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development and meeting community needs, especially in rural areas. With the acceleration of digital transformations at the global level, it has become necessary to study how these associations are adopting digital technology to improve their performance and enhance their effectiveness. This theme aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the organizational characteristics of local associations operating in the Al Haouz province, with a focus on their use of digital technology and its impact on their work. The organizational aspects of these associations (areas of intervention, terms of reference, number of members, activities, partners. etc.) and how they integrate digital technology into their functional structure will be reviewed.

#### **3.1 Geographical Distribution and Administrative Organization of the Al Haouz Province:**

Al Haouz province are prominent example of geographical and administrative diversity in Morocco, reflecting an interplay between high mountainous terrain and extended agricultural plains, which contributes to

the formation of differentiated socio-economic structures within the societal fabric. Is characterized by its diverse terrain ranging from the High Atlas Mountains, which includes the highest peak in North Africa "Toubkal", to low-lying plains, making it a strategic point at the national level (Farsi, 2022 p.14). The Al Haouz includes three urban municipalities and 37 rural communities, This administrative organization reflects a bureaucratic organization inspired by the theory of social functions, where administrative structures work to integrate different regions to meet the needs of the population and provide basic services.

**Figure 1 : Map of the communities and districts of the Al Haouz Province.**



Source: HCP, 2014

### 3.2 Association Organizations in the Al Haouz Province:

Data from the 2019 National Survey of Non-Profit Organizations indicates a remarkable growth in the density of associations in Morocco, with the number of active associations reaching 187,834, with an average annual



growth rate of 12.7% since 2007. This expansion reflects the growing role of associations as important frameworks for promoting social cohesion and local development, especially in light of achieving an 89% activity rate among registered associations, equivalent to 528 associations per 100,000 inhabitants (compared to 145 in 2007), with an annual growth rate of 11.4%. From a regional perspective, the Marrakech-Safi region ranks second at the national level in terms of association density with 13.1% of all national associations. Within this context, Al Haouz province is an essential part of this associative dynamic, contributing significantly to the regional associative density, especially in urban and peri-urban centers such as Tahannaout, Ait Ouarir, and Asni. This associative concentration can be explained based on the theory of “functional complementarity” (Parsons, 1951), where associations act as a mechanism to adapt to local socio-economic needs and play a pivotal role in organizing grassroots activities targeting neighborhoods, villages, and rural or urban communities, thus strengthening community cohesion and responding to the challenges of sustainable development in areas with diverse economic and social characteristics.

Based on the associational dynamism observed in the Al Haouz province, which reflects the pivotal role of associations in promoting social cohesion and local development, it is important to study how these associations rely on digital transformation as a tool to improve their performance and enhance their effectiveness. In this context, the study aims to provide sociological analysis to the uses of digital transformation in internal and external communication among local associations.

However, the following table summarizes key information related to the selected associations, including their mandate, scope of work, and the digital transformation tools they are adopting.

**Figure2 : Profile of Selected Local Associations in Al Haouz Province: Activities, and Digital Transformation Adoption.**

Name of the association	Geographic	Foundati on Date	Areas of interventions	Activities	#of members	Partne rships	DT's
Al Aahd association for social development	Al haouz	2010	Youth & sport, Social development	workshops and training in the sport of football. To promote physical fitness among young people. football competitions between the youth of different neighboring villages to strengthen social ties.	6	Yes	Yes
New Generation Association for Rural Development and Agriculture	Al haouz	2002	Rural Development and Agriculture	Agricultural activities, Social and entertainment campaigns, Awareness of climate change	15	Yes	Yes
Al-Hanayen Association for Agricultural and Social Development and Environmental Conservation	Al Haouz	2010	Environment & Sustainable Development	Managing potable water and public bathrooms ensures hygiene and accessibility in the roundabout area. Partnering with external stakeholders and coordinating with local associations can drive public benefit projects, like building a bridge, to enhance infrastructure, safety, and community value.	9	Yes	Yes
Organ Association for Development and Solidarity	Al Haouz	2023	Socio-economic development	Providing potable water ensures clean drinking access. Partnering with the Federation of Women's Rights Marrakech Branch, sheep heads are distributed to village women, and a public bath is built for roundabout residents, improving hygiene and community support.	9	Yes	Yes

Source: Original field research conducted by the researcher, 2025.

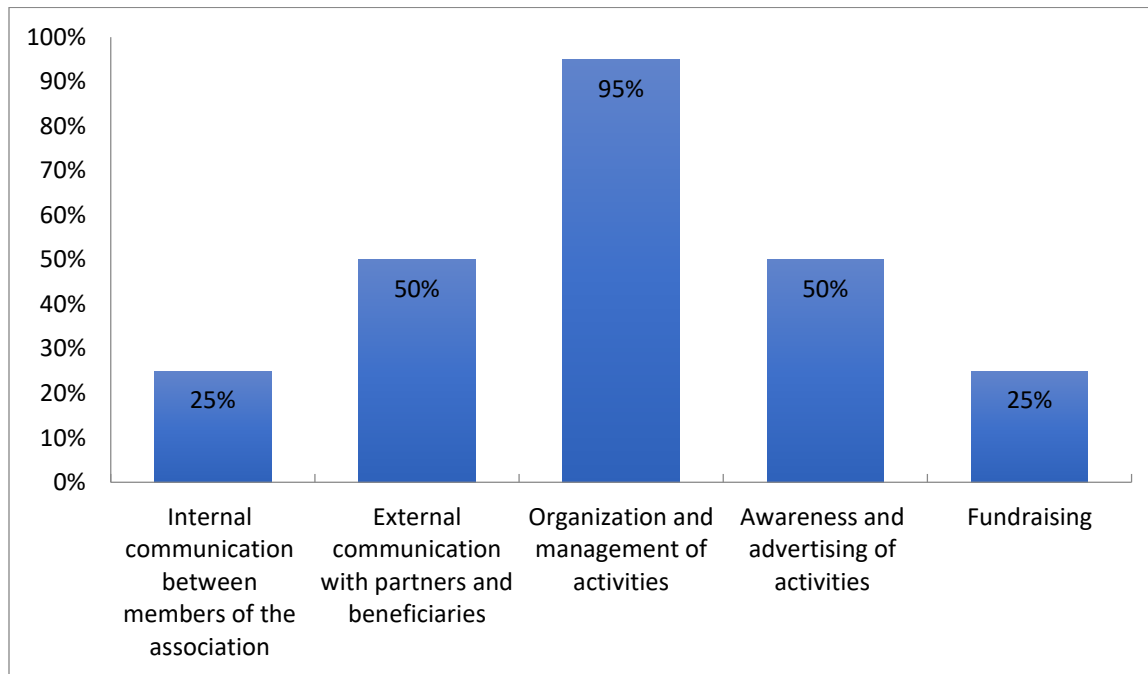


Through field research and interviews with members of associations, it became clear that the majority of local associations in the Al-Houz province do not effectively utilize social media in their community work. For example, in the Ijoukak Valley, where we conducted our study, we counted 35 local associations in the exploratory research, and although half of them have social media pages, but what we discover, that - the process of continuity is absent -. This led us to select only four associations that met the conditions of our study, which focuses on associations that employ social media in their activities on an ongoing basis.

However, These four associations represent a general picture of the work of associations in the region. They highlight key areas of intervention such as youth and sports, rural development, agriculture, environmental conservation, and socio-economic development. Their activities include workshops, training, agricultural campaigns, infrastructure projects, and partnerships with external stakeholders, demonstrating their commitment to community improvement and sustainable development.

Respondents also stated that Facebook as a means of sharing and publishing the activities of associations is one of the most important technological social media that helps them to keep up and achieve continuity in the process of using digital transformation in their association life. And the goal to achieve when using these technologies? , is Improving the administrative efficiency (internal of the association), Scaling the impact and Enhance transparency.

**Figure3: Adoption Rates of Digital Technologies in Association Activities-A Functional Breakdown**



Source: Original field research conducted by the researcher 2025

The data reveal a compelling case of institutional isomorphism in organizational technology adoption, with local associations exhibiting what J.W.Mayer and B.Rowan, would define as a ceremonial alignment with digital modernity (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The near-complete technological integration into administrative functions (95%), explicitly justified as promoting efficiency (100%), embodies the rational institutional mythology embedded in organizational practice. However, continued low adoption in fundraising (25%) and internal communication (25%) suggests what (Coleman 1988 p.96) would characterize as the robustness of embedded social capital networks that resist digital mediation. The 50% utilization rate in outreach activities represents a typical case of disengagement, where organizations maintain legitimacy through performative digital engagement while maintaining traditional operational cores.



The near-complete technological integration into administrative functions (95%), explicitly justified as promoting efficiency (100%), embodies the rational institutional mythology embedded in organizational practice. However, continued low adoption in fundraising (25%) and internal communication (25%) suggests the robustness of embedded social capital networks that resist digital mediation. The 50% utilization rate in outreach activities represents a typical case of disengagement, where associations maintain legitimacy through performative digital engagement while maintaining traditional operational cores.

While associations unanimously endorse the potential of technology for project implementation (100%) and most seek training in digital finance (100%), their 75% failure rate in actual technology-based fundraising and their continued prioritization of physical infrastructure projects suggests what we might call field maintenance of strategic action. The 50% sporadic use of social media coupled with 75% online partnership formation exemplifies structuration theory, where agents reproduce existing social structures even as they attempt to digitize. The data ultimately presents a paradox: Partnerships are caught between the pressures of coercive similarity and the pressures of embeddedness in economic action, leading to what might be called “digitally legitimized traditionalism” - adopting technologies that reinforce existing hierarchies while resisting those that might enable resource redistribution or network democratization.





## Conclusion

In conclusion, through this study, we tried to shed light on the dual reality of digital transformation in local associations in the Al Haouz Province. While these organizations recognize the potential of technology to enhance efficiency and expand their reach, their adoption of technology remains selective - concentrated in administrative functions while lagging behind in areas such as fundraising and internal communication. This uneven integration reflects a tension between modernization and tradition, with digital tools often used to reinforce existing structures rather than transform them. The persistence of face-to-face networks and the prioritization of physical projects underscores the enduring value of local trust and social capital, even as associations deal with the demands of a digital world.

Going forward, associations must take a balanced approach: Embrace technology where it adds clear value while maintaining the human connections that define their community impact. Strategic capacity building, peer-to-peer learning initiatives and optimizing digital infrastructure can support this shift. However, making tangible progress will require associations to think carefully about how to align technology with their missions-not as an end in itself, but as a tool to deepen transparency, engagement, and local development outcomes. Future research should explore how these dynamics evolve over time, particularly how the adoption of digital technology affects the distribution of power and popular participation in Morocco's rapidly changing civil society landscape.



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