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EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ELECTRIC MOBILITY

SESA LIVING LAB IN MARRAKESH

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Gender-Inclusive Innovation at the SESA Living Lab in Marrakesh

The Smart Energy Solutions for Africa (SESA) project is committed to delivering decentralized, sustainable energy and mobility solutions across the continent. A key example of its gender-responsive approach is the urban living lab in Marrakesh, Morocco, which places women at the center of electric mobility innovation.

In partnership with POGO, a Moroccan e-mobility start-up, and Green Energy Park, the Marrakesh pilot has introduced 40 solar-charged electric mopeds, including seven vehicles made available free of charge to female students from low-income backgrounds at Cadi Ayyad University. These mopeds offer a vital mobility solution for young women who previously walked long distances—often 7 to 8 kilometers—to reach campus. The initiative directly supports SDG 5: Gender Equality by removing mobility barriers to education and participation in public life.

To ensure safe and confident use of the vehicles, the selected students received targeted training sessions, covering general road safety, the technical operation of e-mopeds, and basic maintenance. These sessions were conducted in collaboration with the Association for the Education of Rural Girls (A.S.J.F.R.), a long-standing partner focused on improving educational access for girls in rural areas. The initiative also works closely with Dar Ettalliba, a dormitory and support program that provides affordable housing and services to female students from remote regions.

Beyond student access, the e-mopeds are also available for public use through a smart sharing system managed via the POGO app, promoting sustainable first- and last-mile transport across Marrakesh. The mopeds are charged using solar-powered infrastructure, including ten charging hubs and a battery-swapping system, ensuring continuous, emission-free operation.

A detailed monitoring and evaluation system has been built into the living lab. Since the launch in November 2023, data on usage patterns, CO2 reduction, and user behavior has been collected across Marrakesh, Fez, Agadir, and Benguerir. Surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction among female users, who value the affordability, ease of use, and environmental impact of the e-mopeds. While only 31% reported feeling fully safe riding the vehicles, many attributed their concern to limited familiarity with EVs and expressed interest in additional training.

This project is more than a transport initiative—it is a model for gender-sensitive innovation in public infrastructure. It shows that e-mobility, when thoughtfully implemented, can offer freedom of movement, safer travel, and expanded educational and professional opportunities for women.

Looking ahead, the success of the Marrakesh living lab is guiding replication efforts in several additional cities. POGO, with support from SESA partners, is exploring the rollout of similar programs in Agadir, Fez, Benguerir, and potentially Essaouira, Tangier, and Tetouan. The insights gained from Marrakesh—especially those concerning women's mobility needs—will inform the design of these future initiatives.

The SESA e-mobility pilot in Morocco stands as a powerful example of how sustainable technology, gender equality, and local innovation can intersect to drive transformative change across Africa.

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