

Well-being in Morocco (yassine tahiri)

People do not strongly use the term well-being in the Moroccan Darija (informal language). It is a word that is used exclusively in institutional and academic contexts; the majority of people here in Morocco are not well aware of what well-being means as they are when we talk of concepts such as happiness, self-realization and social justice. This may be due to people's preoccupation with day-to-day needs. This is made clear through the daily activities that are achieved by the majority of people depending on traditional tools which make their income low and limited.



photo of an example of agricultural activities using traditional tools in the region of Marrakech-Safi, Morocco.

My long conversation with these interviewees about what well-being means to them has made us discuss other contexts that are important to them. For example, they start talking about the problems of marginalization, unemployment, social vulnerability, deprivation and instability. Thus, we are no longer looking for the meaning of well-being, but they lead me to find solutions to these problems which are mainly associated with intersectionality including employability and education, far from thinking actually of well-being. This is an important discussion that shows us that the path to well-being goes mainly through addressing all the problems associated with intersectionality (Gender problems, education, employment, social vulnerability, public transport).

The majority of those interviewees about well-being have a middle-income job and a middle level of education; they all show their urgent desire to achieve other goals such as having a better job, a house, a car, a family. Besides, they all express their need to overcome all problems they are facing, and they insist on looking for stability at all levels, economic, social, and psychological. As everyone here in Morocco is looking for stability, it might not be the case if we interviewed some rich men and women who have guaranteed at least their daily higher income though we live in the same country. If it is so, does having high income make the rich fulfil the meaning of well-being?

If the definition of well-being in general means achieving self-sufficiency at all levels physical, moral and spiritual, it may mean for others achieving certain goals such as obtaining a certain job, for example, and in this regard says FatimaZahra:

“As a woman working as a nurse, Well-being is achieved only at the psychological level, when guaranteeing Financial autonomy which makes me have a good status in the family and in society, but the lack of money to meet all daily needs hinder me to achieve well-being psychologically and materially together .”

Ibtissam is another example of the fact that training a sense of well-being is related to being hired and far from being jobless and penniless. For her to stop working is being out of well-being. As she said:

“Well-being is what we deprive ourselves of and then achieve, and we only have to stand in front of the seaside because we live in the countryside and miss standing in front of the sea. Well-being can't be achieved at all. When you get a vacation, you need a car. We always need something. Well-being is a momentary moment once we get there, it quickly disappears and it only comes back to achieving other things that we have been deprived of and aspiring to achieve”

Generally speaking, deprivation and exclusion is the only obstacle to having a sense of well-being which is realized once we meet our day-to-day needs and disappears in case we become subject to deprivation.