

Call for Participation

As part of their participation in the **17th World Social Forum (WSF)**, to be held in **Cotonou, Benin, in August 2026**,
the **Center for Studies and Research in Social Sciences (CERSS)**
and the **Moroccan Democratic Civil Forum (FCDM)**
are organizing two online preparatory workshops to be held on **July 20 and 21, 2026**.

First Preparatory Workshop

Education in the Digital Age: A Driver of Human Development and Social Cohesion

Education is much more than the transmission of knowledge. It is a powerful driver of human development that nurtures intellectual growth, social responsibility, cultural awareness, ethical values, and active citizenship. By equipping individuals with knowledge, skills, and shared values, education enables them to think critically, act autonomously, assume responsibility, and participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and democratic life. As such, it remains one of the cornerstones of social cohesion, democratic citizenship, and sustainable development.

At the same time, the profound transformations of the twenty-first century are reshaping the very purpose of education. Digital technologies, artificial intelligence, changing labour markets, environmental challenges, public health crises, and geopolitical instability are redefining both the competencies and the values expected of future generations. In this rapidly evolving context, educational systems are expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to prepare learners to navigate complexity, embrace change, collaborate across cultures, innovate responsibly, and contribute to increasingly interconnected societies.

Yet educational systems continue to face significant structural challenges. Unequal access to quality education, persistent digital divides, territorial disparities, rapidly evolving teaching practices, and growing societal expectations all raise important questions about their capacity to provide education that is truly inclusive, equitable, and supportive of every learner's success. Addressing these challenges requires rethinking educational policies, curricula, teaching methods, and learning environments to better equip learners for the realities of the twenty-first century.

The workshop welcomes contributions addressing, among others, the following questions:

- To what extent do educational systems respond to the needs and challenges of contemporary societies?
- How can academic excellence be reconciled with equity, inclusion, and success for all learners?
- Does the integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence foster educational innovation, or does it risk widening existing inequalities?
- How can equitable access to quality education be ensured regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, geographical location, or vulnerability?
- Which pedagogical models and teaching practices best combine knowledge acquisition, skills development, critical thinking, and citizenship education?

- How can educational systems better prepare learners for ecological, digital, economic, and social transitions?
- What role can education play in strengthening citizenship, social cohesion, solidarity, and sustainable development?

These questions are intended as guiding themes rather than an exhaustive list. Contributions offering original theoretical, empirical, comparative, or interdisciplinary perspectives are warmly encouraged.

First workshop date: 20 July 2026 | 5:00–7:00 p.m. (Morocco time)

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Second Preparatory Workshop

Equality, Inclusion, and Social Justice: Challenges for the Global South

Equality lies at the heart of every democratic society. It is founded on the principle that every individual possesses equal dignity and should enjoy the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities, regardless of gender, origin, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, or any other characteristic. While this principle is firmly embedded in constitutions and international human rights instruments, its significance extends far beyond the legal sphere. Equality is also essential to social cohesion, human development, and meaningful civic participation.

Despite this broad recognition, a considerable gap often remains between equality in principle and equality in practice. Economic, social, territorial, educational, and digital inequalities continue to restrict access to resources, essential services, education, employment, positions of responsibility, and decision-making processes. These realities remind us that equal rights alone do not necessarily translate into equal opportunities or equitable outcomes.

This discussion is particularly timely as societies face profound transformations driven by globalization, digitalization, artificial intelligence, changing labour markets, and overlapping environmental, health, and geopolitical crises. While these developments create new opportunities, they may also reinforce existing inequalities or generate new forms of exclusion, especially for already marginalized populations.

Understanding these challenges requires moving beyond single-dimensional analyses. Inequalities related to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, or place of residence frequently intersect, creating complex and cumulative forms of disadvantage. Intersectional perspectives therefore provide valuable analytical tools for understanding how multiple forms of discrimination interact and shape unequal life trajectories.

Against this backdrop, the workshop seeks to explore how public policies, governance models, and inclusion strategies can move beyond formal equality toward more substantive and transformative approaches that enable everyone to fully exercise their rights and participate equally in economic, social, cultural, and political life.



Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Rethinking equality in the context of twenty-first-century economic, technological, environmental, and social transformations.
- From equal rights to substantive equality: achievements and remaining challenges.
- Contemporary mechanisms that produce, reproduce, and deepen social inequalities.
- Public policies for reducing economic, territorial, educational, digital, and gender inequalities.
- Inclusive governance and democratic representation.
- Intersectionality as a framework for understanding and addressing multiple forms of discrimination.
- Institutional, social, and digital innovations promoting equality, inclusion, and social justice.

These themes are intended to stimulate discussion rather than limit it. The workshop welcomes theoretical, empirical, comparative, and interdisciplinary contributions that offer fresh insights into these pressing issues.

Second workshop date: 21 July 2026 | 5:00–7:00 p.m. (Morocco time)

Researchers and practitioners interested in participating are invited to submit an abstract to:

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Submission deadline: 18 July 2026