

Women Leadership Digital Storytelling Project



Text by Imane Boumehdi. Photos provided by the interviewee Souad Brahma

This story is part of the Women Leadership Digital Storytelling led by the Stevens Initiative in collaboration with the Faculty of Letters and Humanities Ben M'sik/ Hassan II University of Casablanca and Kennesaw State University, Atlanta.

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Souad Brahma: A Bold Woman who aspires to change!



Souad Brahma: a lawyer and a social activist from Casablanca, Morocco.



The legal profession did not happen in a vacuum. For Souad Brahma, it was a passion since

childhood. She always defended her classmates, and anyone who was treated badly in front of her eyes, even before having a perception or a preconceived idea of a legal profession is. And she always heard that she had to become a lawyer in the future. The time would come and Souad Brahma would become more and more entrenched in advocacy. In 1985, there were political arrests, and her brother was among the detainees, which prompted her to attend the trial at that time. She was impressed with the large number of lawyers and the way they defended their cases. That was the moment Souad Brahma's dream changed. She decided to become a lawyer, and so she joined the Faculty of Law in Casablanca. She got her Licence in four years; then she became a lawyer in Berrechid due to some conditions that prevented her from registering in the city of Casablanca. And she registered with the Settat authority by passing some aptitude tests, and spending two years of training. And that was the beginning of Souad Brahma's career in law.



Souad Brahma faces a host of challenges just like any woman entering the field of law, which was until recently for men only, or where the number of women was very limited unlike today where the participation of women is almost close to men. Today, women make up nearly a third of the number of lawyers in Morocco. Here lies the challenge that makes Souad Brahma integrate with her male colleagues in the profession to be a competent lawyer, to have some courage as other men, and to face the court and people who used to see men in this field. There were many events that shaped the personality of the lawyer, and the human rights activist Souad Brahma. The most important of them is that she was influenced by her teachers who were modernists and intellectuals. They encouraged students to take initiatives and participate in seminars that contribute to

openness. Among those teachers, there was a unique and a very special teacher for Souad Brahma. He encouraged them to read and do poetry. Souad Brahma was also influenced by her brother, a leftist and a freedom fighter who always encouraged her to face the world and join associations.



In addition to the legal profession, Souad Brahma practices activism, and this makes the situation somewhat difficult, especially that she is married. But things become facilitated with the right choice of the husband, where life becomes shared and based on cooperation, and understanding. For Brahma, this means a husband who understands that his partner's job requires her to move between cities and spend so much time between offices and courts, bearing in mind that she is the President of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights branch in Berrechid, and a member of the central office of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights in Rabat. Both associations do not carry out any charity work, but rather they raise awareness to defend women and human rights. As for the status of women in Morocco now, Souad Brahma believes that it is relatively beginning to progress, and this is due to the Moroccan women's movement that has struggled since the colonial era to change the laws. These laws are for women to have the right to political participation, and decision-making positions. The movement ended up with bringing about a series of positive changes, including the Moroccan family code " Moudawana " in 2004, and the law to fight violence against women " 103.13 ". This is in addition to civil society organizations which now have centers of advice, guidance, and legal advice.



Souad Brahma's support for other women is essential for her. She encourages them to engage in everything that is professional and to participate in all meetings or activities carried out by the syndicate in terms of their profession. She also encourages them to be confident to enter the court and defend people without being afraid of anything. On the other hand, Souad Brahma, as an activist, motivates women and encourages them to face violence, to be united in their society, and to be engaged in politics in order to reach decision-making positions. And this is done through awareness-raising campaigns that educate women about their rights. Souad Brahma aspires to be the lawyer she has always dreamed of, a fierce defender of the rights of the people she represents. She also aspires to be the captain of the syndicate. Morocco has so far not had a female captain. Unfortunately, it is rare that we find one or two members within the syndicates. Souad Brahma dreams that Moroccan women will be able to change their future to a better one, and that the situation of young women becomes much better than the current one. She advises women of all ages to be ambitious, that every woman should protect her femininity in our societies and to fight the prevalent stereotypes that make a woman leader similar to men in order to be accepted in her society as a strong and an independent woman. "Women should stay women," said Souad Brahma and defend their rights. They should know very well that through determination, they can overcome and make change both within their families and through their work.



The advice that Souad Brahma gives to all the students involved in this project is to think about others. She hopes that everyone can help to achieve security, equality, and peace. She hopes that they try to change their societies to the better by standing hand in hand. The world today has become a small village, and everything that can affect a person in any point of the world will undoubtedly reach the other. This means that everything that affects Moroccans will affect Americans and vice versa; therefore, we must work hand in hand for a better world that accommodates everyone.