



N°21

THE SAHARA OF CULTURES AND PEOPLES

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT "THE SAHARA OF CULTURES AND PEOPLE" IS TO ASSIST THE MEMBER STATES OF THE SAHARA IN THE ELABORATION AND IMPLEMENTATION, ESPECIALLY BY LESSONS LEARNED FROM FIELD PILOT PROJECTS, OF STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY, BASED ON THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL HERITAGE.



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HUMAN RIGHTS

Food, housing and clothing

Safe environment and access to water

Education and training

Decent work

Cultural identity

Gender equality

UNESCO OFFICES INVOLVED

Paris - France

Rabat - Morocco

Cairo - Egypt

Bamako - Mali

REGIONS COVERED

Arab States

Africa

DURATION OF PROJECT

2002-2007

Description

/// This objective includes: strengthening of capacity-building for local actors; safeguarding and enhancement of heritage for the benefit of populations in situations of poverty; promotion of the cultures and civilization of the Sahara; improvement of the conditions of preservation of the Saharan ecosystems; support for responsible tourism policies; promotion of the local participatory governance and the strengthening of partnerships at the local, national and international level (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)..

Key Accomplishments

/// A strategy and an operational Plan of Action were prepared at a meeting in Sidi Bou Saïd, Tunisia and adopted at the international workshop in Ghardaïa, Algeria, in May 2003. This was followed by a conference for international funding agencies in Algiers in January 2004.

/// Several operational projects illustrating the strategy to fight against poverty through cultural development have been implemented including: the "Roads of the ksour", a cultural tourism itinerary following the ancient caravan tracks and Sahara oasis: rehabilitation of the ksour, awareness raising and training activities. This project, which is supported by the authorities of Algeria and the UNDP, will be extended to Tunisia and Morocco and in a second stage to Libya and Mauritania.

/// Rehabilitation and reuse of traditional houses in a multi-function cultural center in Timbuktu, Mali. Feasibility study to create a cultural centre in Agadez, Niger, for training activities in the fields of culture and tourism.

/// Cultural tourism circuit in Niger, based on listening to the Touareg musical instrument Imzad, and training of 30 girls in playing this instrument. Job creation and training for people living in poverty. Support to a training center of 70 girls for learning to play the

PUBLICATIONS FORESEEN

///“The “Power of Culture” in the Fight against Poverty in the Sahara region: Stakes and Prospects”, policy paper

///“Poverty Alleviation in the Sahara: Safeguarding Heritage, Enhancing Cultures, Controlling Tourism Development. Strategies, Projects, Training”, training kit

///“The Sahara of Cultures and People” 25mn. film

COOPERATION / PARTNERSHIPS

Member States of the Sahara

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Fondation Déserts du Monde, Algeria

Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel, Tunisia

Desert Research Center, Egypt,

Barth Institute, Germany

Tourism enterprises

Association pour le développement de la vallée du Dra (ADEDRA NGO) , Morocco

NGOs

Imzad instrument and support to a seminar on that instrument to be registered on the Intangible World Heritage List , Tamanrasset, Algeria.

/// Capacity-building of 45 participants in Mauritania, on the the role of culture and tourism in the fight against poverty. Feasibility study of a development project on poverty alleviation in the North of Sudan through eco-cultural tourism.

/// Strengthening of local capacities of NGOs in the Dra Valley, in Morocco and identification and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage (dances, songs, music) by the local population, for their own benefit. Support to the publication of a tourist guide book.

/// Different activities, aiming at promoting the project “The Saharan Meetings at UNESCO”, where organized from 9 to 13 May 2005 and gathered thousands of visitors and participants who took part in the different activities including a photo exhibition by well known artists, a lecture by a specialist of the Sahara, a workshop on the travel in the desert with school boys and girls of a “UNESCO Associated School”, a round table with experts and debate with the room , a documentary film festival on the Sahara and a concert. Presentation of the first results of the project in International Conferences with other UN Agencies in Toulouse (March 2006), Algiers on the occasion of the World Environment Day (June 2006).

/// Publication of a tourist guide book for Tour Operators “Tourism and Deserts” (UNEP with UNWTO and UNESCO and Tour Operators).

Poverty as a Human Rights issue

Through well targeted field activities, poverty reduction engages in the process of regaining dignity and the exercise of human rights.

/// The implementation of the project includes the rights-based approach to poverty eradication through the promotion of the concept of “public good” for the poor populations, especially through respect for cultural and natural heritage, and spiritual and economic resources, in order to safeguard these in a sustainable manner and protect human dignity.

/// The human-rights based approach includes basic human rights: education, housing, culture and health care, that affect vulnerable sections of the population such as women and children.

/// The awareness-raising meetings, training and participation of the local population in various activities helped in capacity-building and in improving the social status of women and marginalized people. It also helped in providing access to basic needs: food, water, housing, education, culture and health care.

Policy implications

/// The “Ghardaïa Declaration” adopted at the Ghardaïa (Algeria) workshop in May 2003, and addressed to Governments, Intergovernmental Organizations, Non Governmental Organizations, tourism enterprises and to all the stakeholders of the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage recommended an integrated, ethical and multidisciplinary approach on sustainable development in the Sahara. The Declaration states this to be “the only one able to encourage the search for solutions to the question of reducing poverty among the populations in the Sahara: for better access to education, training and scarce but necessary commodities such as water, for greater participation in cultural and social life, and in safeguarding the cultural and natural heritage and its enhanced value through tourism under the control of the populations of the Sahara” [extract from the Ghardaïa Declaration].

/// This strategy, which links the safeguarding of heritage, the fight against desertification , participation of local populations and poverty reduction, is inspired by the conclusions of the United Nations Summit for sustainable development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002; the first of the Millennium Development Goals – the fight against poverty; and various UNESCO Conventions and Declarations, especially the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). The recommendations included in the publications presenting the results of the project proposes Policy guidelines.

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