



Mainstreaming cultural heritage and gender in local strategic planning (district development plans)

BACKGROUND

Cultural heritage has not systematically been considered as a vehicle for local development. Other priorities, such as agriculture and the environment, are considered more essential. The JP thus attempted to incorporate cultural heritage into local planning policy, or, medium and long-term municipal development plans. Strategic fundraising objectives were set at the local, regional, national, and international level to equip municipalities with an identified tool for the mobilization of funds and the contracting of local actors. The plan was based on a participatory process involving elected officials, youth, associations, and grassroots entities, and encompassed tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as sustainable tourism. Special attention was given to gender.

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PROCESS

Surveys were successfully conducted in four pilot municipalities to establish a "cultural inventory". Women, associations, youth, local actors, and elected officials indicated that they viewed cultural heritage as a fundamental component of their own identity and as an important element for development.

Participatory workshops, supplemented by meetings with national experts, were organized to better identify actions and projects that could be included in the plans. This participatory approach led to a high degree of local ownership.

Gender representation was accounted for in all stages of planning. Women actively participated in the workshops, constituted an important part of local development efforts, particularly in the fields of local cultural industries, and were the main promoters of the project.



Weaving of sahwawi tents in Astir, Guelmim © MDG-F JP Morocco

Outcomes

As a result, cultural policies were more frequently included in local planning strategies. In addition, the various practical workshops on cultural heritage greatly contributed to a change in perception of cultural heritage among local actors, particularly among elected officials and civil society, while simultaneously building the capacities of targeted local municipalities.

Locals, particularly unions and partner associations for pilot projects in the field, were sensitized to the importance of safeguarding, transmitting and developing cultural heritage. Cultural projects that have created jobs provide tangible evidence of the importance of heritage as a vehicle for development. The participatory process adopted throughout the project has ensured greater visibility of JP activities for the achievement of the MDGs.

This pilot project is already being replicated in other localities.

