



Cultural heritage, a national affair



National Steering Committee and national partners' visit to the My el Bashir zouia © MDG-F JP Morocco

This strategy is already contributing to changing the attitudes of policymakers and managers, leading them to consider cultural heritage as a dynamic source of economic growth.

BACKGROUND

Cultural heritage and other components of Morocco's culture sector constitute a source of potential richness for the country. However, the sector has traditionally suffered from institutional fragmentation and a lack of internal coordination, thereby impeding its growth.

Each institution working in the field of culture had its own initiatives and processes. Lack of communication and consultation among them meant that some projects were duplicated and valuable lessons learned weren't shared or taken into consideration. Moreover, owing to the absence of a clear definition of each institution's role, the overall process of managing heritage was incomplete and arbitrary.

PROCESS

To improve coordination among stakeholders involved in cultural heritage management, and to increase decision-makers' awareness of the economic and social potential of cultural and natural heritage, consultation workshops were organized to promote dialogue between various state institutions and civil society. The exchange of ideas, perspectives and guidelines led to a serious reflection on the need to harmonize processes and the development of a national strategy whose main aim was to promote, preserve and capitalize on cultural heritage by pooling efforts and resources.

Joint implementation of activities involved a participatory process based on consultations with institutional partners and social associations. The Ministry of Culture, being the national

coordinator of the JP, adopted the consultative approach internally before replicating it with other organs. Regional offices and national institutions were also involved in implementing activities in an effort to ensure greater ownership of the process among industry professionals.

All JP activities were implemented according to a gender-sensitive approach.

Outcomes

Thanks to the joint management of the JP and close cooperation between all participating Ministerial departments, the various heritage policies that prevailed among development actors were harmonized. Morocco developed a national strategy and a national charter for the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage which is uniform for all relevant departments and divisions. This strategy is already contributing to changing the attitudes of policymakers and managers, leading them to consider cultural heritage as a dynamic source of economic growth.

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.



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

Cultural policies were more frequently included in local planning strategies.

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.

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.



Women from the oasis areas and the 2009 district

elections (in the regions of Guelmim, Assa and Tata)



Basketry Cooperative, Guelmim © MDG-F JP Morocco

The increased political participation of oasian women has promoted democracy and modernization, enabling them to effectively exercise their citizenship.

BACKGROUND

In the oasis zone of Morocco, women play a major role in preserving and transmitting local cultural heritage. However, they were only marginally involved in local social, political and economic decisions, and suffered from discrimination due to a pervasive patriarchal decision-making model. It has been shown that women actively involved in politics, who cooperate with national Ministries and organized civil society, are better able to call attention to issues related to gender equality and development, and to advance poverty reduction strategies. The JP thus strove to strengthen the capacity of women as actors in the political arena. Women in the region were overwhelmingly in favor of developing their capacity for local management and governance, and improving their knowledge of their national and international rights.

In 2009, the Moroccan government committed to increasing local political representation of women to 12%.

PROCESS

During the electoral process, and through various awareness-raising workshops organized under the JP, women were informed of international human rights conventions ratified by Morocco and of national policies adopted in favor of women's rights and gender equality.

Political parties and civil society organizations, supported by the JP, conducted information campaigns, educational training and awareness-raising activities to increase women's understanding of their right to political representation. In a spiraling effect, women were further encouraged to increase their political participation by the visibly growing number of females running for local office and the development of a more effective public service which began to take gender issues into account for the first time.

In the local elections of 12 June 2009, women ran for office in 5 of the JP's targeted municipalities. 14 were ultimately elected, putting an end to a historic lack of female political representation in those areas. The elected women received numerous training courses on gender equality, and gender concerns were quickly incorporated into the legislative process.

The increased political participation of women in the Oasis zone has promoted democracy and modernization, enabling them to effectively exercise their citizenship. To promote institutional collaboration in the new political structure, new systems were put in place to establish and identify the roles and responsibilities of each actor.

The JP has also contributed to capacity building of other women in the 3 regions. One newly-elected woman created an Association for exchange and dialogue on problems female leaders face in exercising their duties. These types of actions are expected to strengthen women's leadership in the local community and further develop good governance practices at the local level.

Outcomes