

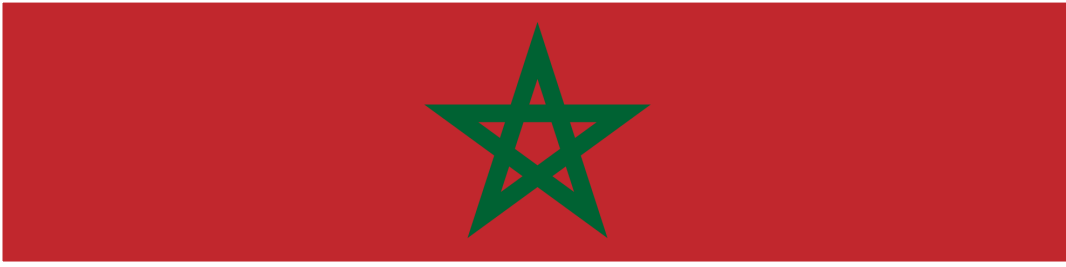
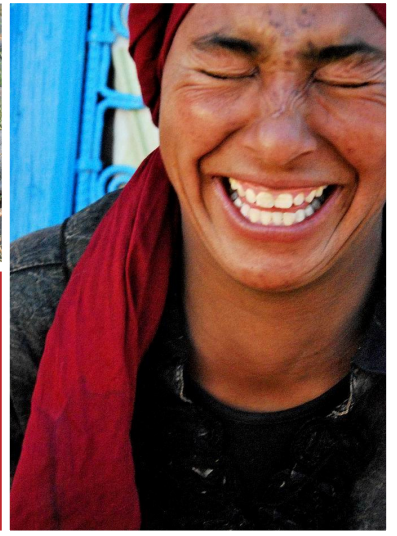


HOUSE OF LIFE

Intercultural Organic Tree Nursery Initiative

Led by
the High Atlas Foundation





MOROCCO, AL HAOUZ PROVINCE A FIRST OF ITS KIND

Monday, February 9th, 2015 saw the nationwide launch of an intercultural organic agriculture initiative as the honorable Governor of Al Haouz, Mr. Younès Al Bathaoui, presided over a very special fruit tree distribution and planting ceremony at a Jewish sacred site.

Around 150 guests - members of the local Muslim farming community and representatives of the Jewish community residing in Marrakesh – attended the event.

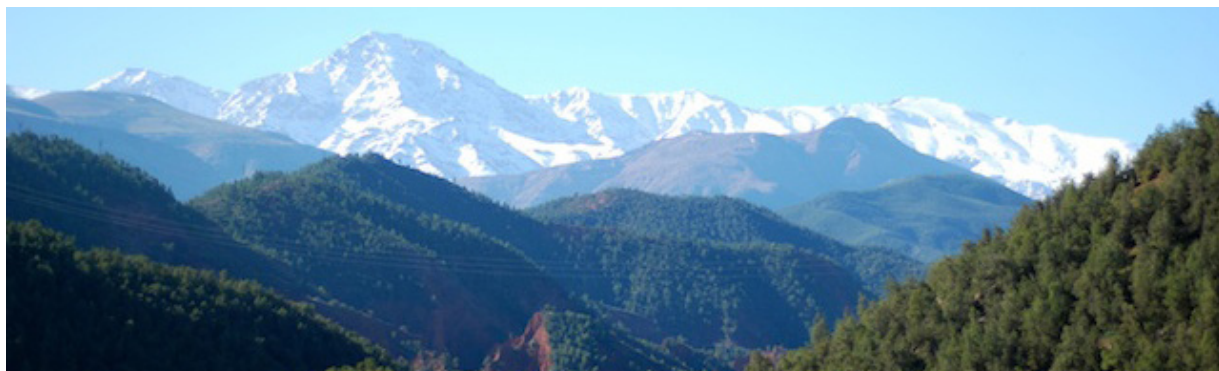
As part of the High Atlas Foundation's One Billion Tree Campaign, 30,000 seeds and saplings were planted and a further 30,000 two-year-old trees – olive, fig, pomegranate and lemon – are set to be distributed to local farmers.

The trees distributed at the ceremony on February 9th have been raised at Akrich, just south of Marrakesh, at the locally-managed nursery established by the foundation on land lent by the Jewish community of Marrakesh-Essaouira.

The nursery is adjacent to the tomb of Rabbi Raphael HaCohen, one of several hundred Jewish sacred sites located throughout Morocco.



THE HIGH ATLAS FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY IN MOROCCO



The High Atlas Foundation is a Moroccan-US non-governmental organization founded fifteen years ago by former Peace Corps volunteers, including its president, Dr. Yossef Ben-Meir.

In 2014 the foundation launched its One Billion Tree Campaign – a continuation, at an accelerated pace, of its successful project involving the planting of one million trees, with the aim of establishing one billion new fruit trees and medicinal plants throughout the Kingdom. Species planted are indigenous to Morocco; nurseries are managed entirely on organic lines by local communities.

The trees are part of a larger value chain that includes organic certification, cooperative building and processing and delivery of the product to markets.



The broader goal is to cease subsistence agricultural practices that trap communities in a cycle of rural poverty and to develop the local and national economy through a variety of business initiatives, overseen initially by the foundation. Additionally, the land management strategies put into place mitigate erosion and desertification.

A UNIQUE NATIONAL APPROACH TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The system adopted in Morocco aims to embrace sustainable human development in conjunction with cultural preservation and celebration. This innovative project, linking Morocco's Muslim farming families and Jewish communities, ably embodies both goals.



In this spirit the High Atlas Foundation welcomes your participation and collaboration to develop these essential goals further, for the benefit of Moroccan farming families and for the whole nation, to help enhance its rich cultural heritage in the future.

High Atlas Foundation President Dr. Yossef Ben-Meir notes: "Historical sacred sites that may be as much as a thousand years old can help deliver human development today. This nursery exemplifies Morocco's approach to cultural preservation. Further, it serves as a gateway to future projects benefiting many groups, particularly women and youth".



LENDING LAND TO HELP COMMUNITIES

The High Atlas Foundation is extremely grateful for the land made available for its One Billion Tree Campaign by a diverse variety of interested parties - private individuals, national government bodies, municipalities, educational establishments, cooperatives, women's associations and cultural bodies.

In 2012 the Jewish community of Marrakesh-Essaouira entered into partnership with the High Atlas Foundation in this context. With the successful establishment of the pilot nursery at Akrich, it was envisaged that more of these cultural sites, with their adjoining arable land, would begin to be utilized in the same way. Indeed, the Moroccan Jewish community designated additional parcels of terrain in several provinces for this purpose.



ENHANCING LIFE TOGETHER ACROSS MOROCCO

In fact, on February 9th, 2015 the proposed extension of this scheme across the entire Kingdom was announced, paving the way for locally-managed organic fruit tree nurseries to be developed at several hundred Jewish cultural sites for the benefit of disadvantaged Muslim farming communities.

The Governor of Al Haouz, Mr. Younès Al Bathaoui recalled the true communal life that existed – and continues to exist - between different cultures in Morocco. Noting a traditional name for a Jewish cemetery – House of Life – he commented “this initiative will give more life to these regions and will reinforce the hopes and perspectives of their inhabitants”.



Now we invite you to join with us in this enterprise by contributing funding for seeds, water infrastructure and training for local farmers in order to enable the vision to become a reality.



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High Atlas Foundation

FOR SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY IN MOROCCO



ONE BILLION
TREE CAMPAIGN

For additional information please contact
Mouhssine Tadlaoui-Cherki mouhssine@highatlasfoundation.org
+212 (0) 662 84 06 66

www.highatlasfoundation.org