25 YEARS

OF COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT IN MOROCCO

High Atlas Foundation
مؤسسة الأطلس الكبير
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25 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP. 25 YEARS OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP. 25 YEARS OF IMPACT.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM HAF FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT 03

25 YEARS AT A GLANCE 04

ABOUT HAF 05

OUR APPROACH 06

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE 07

EARTHQUAKE RELIEF & REBUILDING 09

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT 15

YOUTH & STUDENTS 19

CULTURAL PRESERVATION 26

THE WAY FORWARD 28

PUBLICATIONS 29

DONOR & PARTNER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 30

A MESSAGE FROM HAF FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

For so many people, Morocco embodies the highest possibilities and among the most realistic challenges we can face. It does this year, and it did the year I arrived in 1993 as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

In 2025, we achieved unprecedented scale. Working alongside our local and global partners, HAF has now reached farming households in all of Morocco's 12 regions and nearly 40 percent of its rural municipalities. Together, we've planted millions of organic trees, the varieties communities themselves have chosen for their land and their futures.

HAF's participatory empowerment experience is our best assurance to create development that endures across time. The data confirms it. The communities demonstrate it daily.

Our operational capacity has never been stronger. We have never done more water infrastructure projects with communities.

We are welcoming people from all around the world, now more than ever, as they seek to witness empowered people managing projects that integrate sustainable agriculture, thriving women's cooperatives, cultural preservation, and public health.

Today, self-sustaining community development is propelling increased scale to enhance the lives of more and more people

This is happening while the financial landscape and securing of partnerships to achieve sustainability continue to experience major shifts and compel strategic decisions. However, the inspired individual and the determined group remain drivers of transformational change.

Morocco seeks people-powered growth, women envisioning and achieving their ideas for the future, youth grasping their goals, and community control of their development.
HAF's approach is Moroccan, sustainable, prosperous, immediate, long-term, and available to you—one and all—here and afar.
Whether you're discovering HAF for the first time or have walked this path with us for years, there is a place for you in this work.

We hope that this annual report brings you closer to our mission of community-managed development to achieve local projects that scale and endure, and to Morocco's beautiful intent that all are part.

Join us. Stay with us.

YOSSEF BEN-MEIR

President

High Atlas Foundation

25 YEARS AT A GLANCE

12 regions
Reached

Nearly 40%
of rural municipalities reached

6,000,000+
Trees planted

4,646,232
Trees monitored

17,308
Farming families supported

1,701
Farmer contracts

4,275
Farmers monitored

372
Legal Cases Opened Across 3 University Legal Clinics

8
Community Nurseries

3.2 million
fruit trees: Annual nursery capacity

2.1+ million
tons Carbon abated, 2021–2024

15,000
Earthquake-impacted families reached

690+ tons
Emergency assistance

183
Intermediate shelters

307
Agricultural terraces rebuilt

~17 ha
Agricultural land restored

4,643
Psychosocial empowerment participants

7,747+
IMAGINE reach since 2016

26
Provinces reached through IMAGINE

853
International university students

ABOUT HAF

WHO WE ARE?

The High Atlas Foundation was founded in 2000 by former U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Morocco and were inspired by the potential of Moroccan communities to lead their own development.

As a Moroccan-led nonprofit organization, HAF works in partnership with local communities across Morocco's 12 regions. We believe that people are best placed to identify their own priorities and develop solutions that reflect their realities. Meaningful community participation in decision-making is therefore central to creating lasting impact.

HAF puts this principle into practice by working directly with farming families, women's cooperatives, local associations, public institutions, and development partners. Its projects begin by listening to communities and understanding their needs, then developing and implementing solutions together. This approach strengthens local ownership and helps communities sustain their initiatives beyond the period of direct support.

This integrated approach contributes to several Sustainable Development Goals. HAF's projects support food security and livelihoods, expand access to water and sanitation, strengthen women's participation in the economy, create opportunities for green jobs among young people, and protect ecosystems. HAF also works to help local communities benefit from opportunities in the voluntary carbon market in ways that respect their priorities and rights.

Our Programs

Our work spans sustainable agriculture and tree planting, water access and related infrastructure, women's economic empowerment, education and employment opportunities for young people, and cultural heritage preservation. The organization places particular emphasis on rural areas and communities that face barriers to accessing resources and services. Through its long-term commitment, HAF accompanies locally led initiatives and connects communities with the expertise and resources they need to grow and endure.

Drawing on its field experience in Morocco, HAF also contributes to international dialogue. The organization holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has been granted observer status with the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), applicable to all sessions of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies. These roles enable HAF to bring the experiences and perspectives of local communities into international discussions and contribute to knowledge-sharing on sustainable development, land restoration, and combating desertification.

OUR APPROACH

An Integrated Circular Model for Sustainable Development

Six mutually reinforcing stages form a continuous cycle, placing communities at the center as planners, implementers, and beneficiaries. Beginning with participatory community planning, the model builds local capacity through women's empowerment and youth training, establishes community-run nurseries, and scales into agroforestry, clean water, and energy systems. Verified carbon sequestration then generates credits whose profits flow directly back into community priorities — funding the next cycle and keeping the whole system self-sustaining.

1. Sustainable Agriculture

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Restoring Land. Sustaining Livelihoods. Building Climate Resilience.

Tree planting is a cornerstone of the High Atlas Foundation's sustainable development strategy, contributing to improved rural livelihoods, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation.

Since 2016, HAF has produced, distributed, and planted more than **6,019,848 fruit trees** and medicinal and aromatic plants across Morocco, in partnership with public institutions, farming families, cooperatives, community associations, educational institutions, and local authorities.

This cumulative achievement reflects HAF's commitment to community-led sustainable agriculture, placing rural communities at the center of environmental restoration and economic development.

Community Nurseries and Sustainable Agriculture

HAF operates Eight community nurseries, managed in partnership with local communities, cooperatives, women, and youth. These nurseries support the production of locally adapted fruit and forest tree species while creating employment opportunities, strengthening local capacities, and stimulating rural economies.

Species selection is guided by local climatic conditions, water availability, ecological suitability, and farmers' priorities. HAF prioritizes drought-resilient and locally adapted species, including almonds, olives, pomegranates, figs, walnuts, and carobs, alongside argan trees, recognized for their ecological, economic, and cultural significance.

Beyond tree distribution, HAF works closely with smallholder farmers to strengthen their knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices, improve tree survival, and support the long-term productivity of their land.

Carbon Mitigation and Sustainable Financing

HAF is also advancing an innovative approach to carbon finance, linking land restoration with long-term economic opportunities for farming communities.

Through the development of carbon projects, HAF aims to enable participating farmers and communities to benefit from the carbon sequestration generated by their trees. The model seeks to reinvest carbon revenues in farmer support, community development, and nursery operations, creating a circular financing mechanism that can sustain and expand restoration efforts over time.

By combining sustainable agriculture, community empowerment, and climate finance, HAF is building a long-term model in which environmental restoration contributes directly to economic resilience, stronger rural livelihoods, and sustainable development across Morocco.

2. Earthquake Relief & Rebuilding

EARTHQUAKE RELIEF & REBUILDING

Two years on — recovery, resilience, and renewal.

On September 8, 2023, a devastating earthquake struck the provinces of Al Haouz, Azilal, Chichaoua, Marrakech, Ouarzazate, and Taroudant, claiming more than 2,900 lives and injuring over 5,500 people. The tremors caused catastrophic damage to homes and critical infrastructure—particularly in remote mountain communities where roads became impassable and entire villages were destroyed.

September 8, 2025 marks two years since that tragedy. HAF and its global partners have maintained an uninterrupted presence in affected communities throughout that period, transitioning from immediate emergency response to sustained, long-term recovery across five interconnected domains: emergency relief, agricultural restoration, water infrastructure, psychosocial support, and literacy and skills development.

From the outset, HAF's approach was grounded in the relationships that define its work—with community members and local organizations, with government agencies, and with individual and institutional donors at home and abroad. Real-time needs assessments conducted during initial distribution work shaped every subsequent phase of the program, ensuring that aid responded directly to what communities most needed.

In the months that followed the earthquake, HAF developed a comprehensive disaster relief program in close collaboration with communities and global partners.

This multi-year strategy builds on HAF's long-term partnerships across Morocco, extending existing water, agricultural, and literacy programs into the earthquake-affected region while introducing new psychosocial and shelter interventions.

The results to date represent thousands of individual acts of generosity, solidarity, and determination. They reflect the courage of communities rebuilding under extraordinary circumstances—and the commitment of HAF and its partners to walk alongside them for as long as it takes.

690+ TONS
Aid Distributed

15,000
Families reached

307
Terraces Rebuilt
(~17 ha)

183
Shelter Structures Built

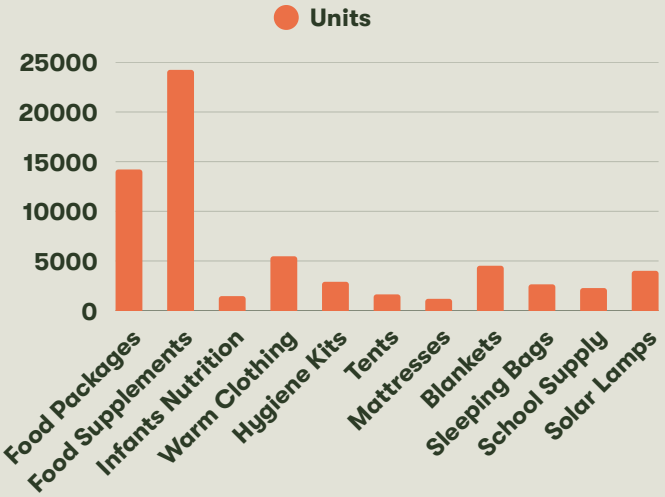
Immediate Response & Relief

In the immediate aftermath of the September 8, 2023 earthquake, HAF and its partners mobilized rapidly to deliver emergency assistance to communities cut off by damaged roads and collapsed infrastructure. Nearly 15,000 families across hundreds of villages in affected provinces received emergency aid—with particular priority given to the most remote and hardest-to-access mountain communities.

HAF distributed over 690 tons of essential supplies, including food packages, hygiene kits, blankets, and other urgent necessities. The distribution process also served as a critical opportunity for real-time needs assessment: HAF teams gathered extensive data directly with community members, which informed the design and targeting of all subsequent program phases.

Recognizing that tent housing was insufficient for Morocco's harsh mountain winters, HAF also constructed 183 intermediate shelter structures for families and cooperatives. Built with durable materials, these shelters provide safety and stability during the longer-term reconstruction phase—bridging the gap between emergency tenting and permanent housing.

These early interventions established the foundation of trust and presence that has enabled HAF's ongoing work in the region. The relief program continues today, with HAF maintaining active partnerships with local organizations, cooperatives, and government bodies to ensure that aid reaches the people who need it most.



> After we received the shelters we felt safe and happy... we finally have a place that protects us from the harsh winter. Now we know how it feels to live in a house again. It's not like the one we had before the earthquake but at least we are able to lock our door and have a place that we can call home...
>
> *-Mohammed, Beneficiary*

Psychosocial Support

Psychosocial Support Programming

Physical reconstruction alone is not enough to recover from a disaster of this magnitude. HAF's human-centred programming addresses two deeply connected dimensions of community recovery: the psychological healing needed to process trauma and rebuild social bonds, and the literacy and skills development that unlock long-term economic independence and community leadership—particularly for women.

HAF has conducted psychosocial empowerment workshops reaching 2,647 women, 1,849 children, and 147 men in affected communities—a total of 4,643 participants. The workshops address not only earthquake trauma but also broader challenges related to poverty, social pressures, and family dynamics, recognizing that disaster recovery intersects with pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Assessment data from the program shows that 99% of participants report reduced feelings of isolation following workshops, citing both strengthened community bonds and a meaningful sense of acknowledgement from external support organizations. Gender-specific and age-appropriate programming has proven particularly effective: women report increased capacity for leadership and community engagement, while children show observable improvement in emotional well-being and daily functioning.

> My husband died a month before the earthquake. I still struggle to accept that. Then the earthquake came and disrupted what remained constant in my life. Although the earthquake was a disaster that affected everyone, the combined loss of my husband and the earthquake made me feel isolated and that my suffering was different from the rest. With no husband, no children, and no home, I began to distance myself from others, believing they would not understand what I have endured and continue to endure, but the Psychosocial Empowerment Workshop changed my perspective on life.
>
> ***-A participant from Talilit village***

Access to Drinking Water & Rebuilding Irrigation Systems

Damage to water systems was among the most critical and far-reaching consequences of the earthquake, affecting both household access to safe drinking water and the agricultural irrigation networks that underpin food security in the region. Without clean water, risks of waterborne illness, poor hygiene, and sanitation failures increase dramatically. Without irrigation, agricultural production collapses—driving food insecurity, rural poverty, and urban migration.

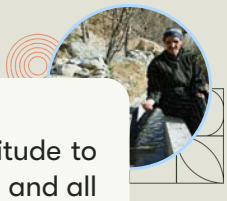
HAF's water infrastructure program has addressed both dimensions of this challenge through a comprehensive set of investments in potable water supply, irrigation systems, and sustainable energy solutions.

The scale of this work represents one of the largest components of HAF's earthquake recovery effort.

These investments address immediate water security needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable agricultural production and community health outcomes over the long term. The integration of solar energy into water systems reduces dependence on fuel and grid electricity, increasing resilience and reducing operating costs for communities managing their own infrastructure.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION

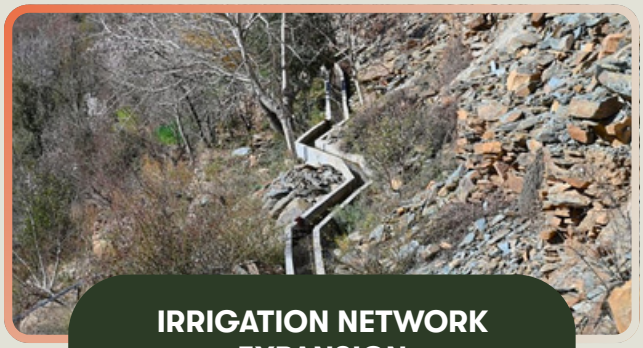
included building 8 potable water tanks and 16 irrigation basins, laying 62.3 km of potable water pipes, and installing 6,000 meters of agricultural piping.



I extend my deepest gratitude to the High Atlas Foundation and all its members for their hard work after the earthquake. Their support in our clean drinking water projects, by supplying water pipes and constructing water tanks, has been invaluable.

They have lifted us from hardships that seemed insurmountable, transforming our lives and the way we manage water resources."

- Si Larbi , Community Leader
Aghbar Municipality



IRRIGATION NETWORK EXPANSION

saw 12.06 km of new canals constructed and a further 23.9 km of existing canals rehabilitated.

SOLAR-POWERED WATER SYSTEMS

were established across 12 water wells using 467 panels, with 11 solar pumps installed to support sustainable water access.

Agricultural Recovery

Agricultural terraces are the lifeblood of mountain farming communities in Morocco's High Atlas region. Carefully constructed over generations to capture water and create arable land on steep slopes, these terraces represent both an economic resource and a cultural heritage. The 2023 earthquake caused extensive damage to terrace systems across the affected provinces, threatening the livelihoods of thousands of farming families.

This work directly supports the reestablishment of farming practices and income generation that are essential to long-term community resilience. HAF's multi-year strategy commits to continued support for farmers and rural cooperatives as they rebuild their livelihoods, integrating agricultural recovery with broader efforts around water access, market linkages, and cooperative development.

HAF's agricultural recovery program has focused on the reconstruction and expansion of damaged terraces, working directly with farming families and cooperatives to restore productive land and re-establish agricultural income. To date, HAF has facilitated the reconstruction and expansion of 307 terraces—covering approximately 17 hectares—benefiting more than 4,000 people.

307
Terraces Rebuilt
Reconstructed & expanded

17 HA
Agricultural Land
Restored to production

4,000+
Beneficiaries: Farming families & community members

3. Women's Empowerment

IMAGINE Workshops

HAF's initial efforts, in collaboration with the Middle East Partnership Initiative, focused on building participatory planning capacities among elected women in municipal councils in the Rhamna province.

These workshops have since evolved into a rights-based approach, incorporating three complementary activities aimed at transforming university students and rural women into agents of social change. HAF's empowerment program is designed to break down barriers, solidifying women's roles as pillars of society.

HAF has conducted women's empowerment workshops, supported by various partners, including the Empowerment Institute, Earth Day Network, European Union, FRE Skincare, GlobalGiving, National Endowment for Democracy, Middle East Partnership Initiative, United Nations Development Program, University College London, USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Program, local associations, and cooperatives.

7 key areas

The training is divided into four one-day modules. The format is flexible and, if necessary, it can be adapted to different situations to better suit participants' needs. Each day has 4 modules which are divided into 7 key areas:

- EMOTIONS
- RELATIONSHIPS
- SEXUALITY
- SPIRITUALITY
- MONEY
- BODY
- WORK

Since 2016, 225 four-day empowerment workshops have been conducted across 26 provinces, directly benefiting more than 7,747 participants nationwide. In Al Haouz Province alone, more than 4,747 women, men, and children have received psychosocial and community support through this initiative.

In 2025 alone, an additional 188 participants benefited from the workshops, demonstrating the program's continued reach and impact.

> Self-empowerment is free to anyone who chooses to use it. It comes from within and nowhere else. You cannot buy it, borrow it, steal it or sell it. It is always available to you and never wears out. The only choice you have to make is whether or not you will use it. All you need is to believe in yourself."
>
> *-IMAGINE Workshop Participant*

7,747
Total participants reached since 2016

225
Workshops delivered across Morocco

26
Provinces reached

Literacy Classes

Funded by the European Union, HAF's Family Literacy Program ran from 2021 to 2023 in the Marrakech-Safi and Béni Mellal-Khénifra regions, supporting rural women in turning their aspirations for education and economic independence into tangible opportunities. Developed through participatory meetings across 40 rural communities, the program responded to priorities identified by women themselves, 83% of whom expressed a need for literacy classes.

More than 800 women aged 14 and above participated in literacy classes and skills-building activities. The program began with 41 IMAGINE women's empowerment workshops, held over 80 days, where participants identified shared challenges, explored their aspirations, and helped shape the activities they wanted to pursue. Literacy classes were subsequently delivered by 38 female instructors from local villages, trained through the National Agency for the Fight Against Illiteracy.

The program connected literacy with practical pathways to economic independence. Through 68 technical training courses covering areas such as cooperative development, marketing, and entrepreneurship, women gained skills to develop local products, strengthen their businesses, and pursue income-generating activities. This support contributed to the establishment of three women-led cooperatives, creating opportunities for collective enterprise and additional household income.

Literacy Classes

The experience of the Merdhal Amane Cooperative illustrates this progression. In Khenifra, 30 women joined the program in 2023, participating in literacy classes, empowerment workshops, and technical training before establishing their cooperative.

With additional mentorship and support from regional administrations, the group expanded its production from couscous and traditional cereal products to include carob- and oak-based products. Similarly, 22 women established the Zrbiat Achbarou Cooperative, building on traditional carpet-making skills to produce and market carpets made with natural materials and dyes.

The program also extended learning into the home. 268 participants applied their newly acquired skills to educational activities with their children, including reading aloud to children aged five and under, practicing letter formation, and introducing basic numeracy. These activities helped women become more actively involved in their children's early learning and reinforced the role of education within the family.

By combining literacy education with empowerment, technical training, and cooperative development, HAF's Family Literacy Program addressed more than the ability to read and write. It supported women in building confidence, strengthening their economic prospects, and sharing learning with their children. The results demonstrate the value of community-led initiatives that respond to women's priorities and connect education with opportunities for lasting change.

> I left school at an early age to care for my physically disabled father. So Im incredibly grateful for the literacy classes. I'm living my childhood dream now.
>
> *-Fatiha, a beneficiary of literacy classes in the village of Ait Bouguemez, Azilal province.*

800
Total participants reached

40
Rural communities reached

38
Locally based female literacy instructors

4. Youth & Students

Legal Clinic Program- Fez

The High Atlas Foundation (HAF), in partnership with the Faculty of Legal, Economic, and Social Sciences in Fez at Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, and with funding from the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), supported the Legal Clinic, an academic and community-based initiative connecting legal education with practical service to the public. Over three years, the initiative trained students in applying legal knowledge to real-life situations while expanding access to free legal guidance for Moroccan citizens and foreign nationals. Through in-person consultations, remote support, and mobile legal clinics across the Fez-Meknes region, the program promoted civic engagement, volunteerism, and greater awareness of legal rights and procedures.

Student Training and Practical Learning

231 trainees participated in the Legal Clinic, including 96 male students, 96 female students, 12 master's students, and 27 doctoral students. Through theoretical and practical training led by faculty members and specialists, students developed their legal knowledge and consultation skills while learning professional ethics, confidentiality, and community service.

Free Legal Assistance

85 legal case files were opened over three years, addressing entrepreneurship, migration and asylum, family mediation, psychological support, human trafficking, employment, property, and rental issues. The clinic provided free legal guidance and referred beneficiaries to relevant administrative services and partner organizations when additional support was needed.

Community Outreach and Mobile Clinics

103 case files were initiated through mobile legal clinics, bringing consultations closer to communities across the Fez-Meknes region. A further 30 files originated at the clinic's university premises, while 52 were handled remotely through telephone, social media, and email.

Inclusive Access to Justice

The clinic served Moroccan and foreign nationals, addressing legal questions related to entrepreneurship, residency procedures, family disputes, and other everyday legal challenges. Its approach combined accessible legal information with referrals to relevant services, including organizations providing psychological support to women and other beneficiaries.

Community Impact Through University Engagement

By connecting university learning with community needs, the Legal Clinic helped students translate legal theory into practice while strengthening a culture of volunteerism and civic responsibility. With HAF's support, the partnership contributed to making legal information and guidance more accessible beyond the university campus.

Legal Clinic Program- Marrakech

The High Atlas Foundation (HAF), in partnership with Cadi Ayyad University's Faculty of Legal, Economic, and Social Sciences in Marrakech, implemented the Promoting Civil Society-University Engagement project, funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Building on HAF's experience supporting legal clinics in Moroccan public universities, the initiative connects academic learning with community service, strengthens civil society participation, and expands access to legal guidance. Through student training, free legal consultations, mobile clinics, and civic engagement programs, the initiative supports vulnerable populations across the Marrakech-Safi region while equipping students and civil society actors with practical skills to contribute to their communities.

Student Training and Capacity Building

67 students were trained over two years, including 27 women and 40 men. Of these, 62 graduated, seven secured positions in the public legal sector, and more than 21 engaged in volunteer activities with HAF and civil society organizations. Students developed research and professional skills while gaining practical experience in legal case analysis and community service.

Civil Society Strengthening

83 applications were received from civil society associations, with 38 representatives selected for capacity-building activities. Through the Training of Trainers program, participants strengthened their skills in organizational assessment, strategic planning, administrative and financial management, advocacy, and public policy participation, supporting more active engagement in local governance.

Community Empowerment and Gender Equality

Through HAF's IMAGINE program, 117 participants, including 92 women and 25 men, took part in workshops promoting emotional intelligence, social stability, acceptance of diversity, and creative thinking. These sessions provided a supportive space for participants to exchange ideas and develop approaches to positive community change.

Access to Justice

In partnership with Cadi Ayyad University, the legal clinic assisted 204 beneficiaries, with particular attention to women, people with disabilities, and rural communities. Through mobile legal clinics, information sessions, and electronic consultations, the initiative addressed legal needs ranging from family law to human trafficking. The program reported 78 ongoing legal consultations and received 29 requests through its online consultation form.

Civic Engagement and Digital Learning

Through the MOUWATANA101 – Citizenship 101 initiative, HAF supported participatory learning through community meetings and online training. The program received 153 participation requests, including 102 from women and 51 from men, and delivered five sessions on civic participation, digital citizenship, development projects, public policy evaluation, and women's participation in civil society.

Legal Clinic Program- Oujda

The High Atlas Foundation (HAF), in partnership with Mohammed Premier University (UMP) and the Faculty of Legal, Economic, and Social Sciences in Oujda, has implemented the Promoting Civil Society with University Engagement-Oriental project, funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The initiative builds on HAF's extensive experience in managing legal clinic programs across Moroccan public universities to strengthen the link between academia, civil society, and local communities. The project aims to foster civic engagement, participatory development, and human rights education through collaboration between students, professors, and civil society organizations (CSOs). It promotes community service learning and enhances access to justice for vulnerable populations through legal clinics, mobile outreach, and digital platforms.

University Engagement

75 law students were selected and trained through 8 specialized workshops on migration, human rights law, refugee protection, family mediation, and ethics in legal practice. Students applied theory to real cases, developed soft skills, and conducted community mapping.

Civil Society Strengthening:

20 CSOs were trained through 12 capacity-building sessions on entrepreneurship, governance, fundraising, and civic participation. The program enhanced their advocacy and facilitation skills for greater democratic participation.

Community Empowerment:

24 workshops were conducted for the university students and 20 representatives of the CSOs from 8 provinces in the Oriental region, and 3 IMAGINE women's empowerment workshops were held across Oujda, Berkane, and Nador, promoting gender equality, leadership, and social inclusion for 54 women.

Access to Justice:

The online legal consultation platform received 16 requests, handled by 10 law students dedicating 78 hours to tailored guidance. In total, 81 beneficiaries (34 women, 9 men) received free legal aid, with 43 cases opened covering family law, violence against women, and migration through mobile clinics

6 mobile clinics in Oujda, Jerrada, Berkane, and Nador where the university students provided free legal consultations to the communities in different areas.

Outreach and Awareness:

Through 12 community legal information sessions and weekly radio broadcasts on SNRT Oujda, the project significantly expanded public awareness of legal rights and justice procedures. HAF further amplified outreach through an active communications campaign, publishing over 30 social media articles and updates, alongside blogs and press releases highlighting legal aid services, training activities, university partnerships, and women's empowerment initiatives.

> The legal clinic was an experience that revealed to me the living meaning of law, where legal texts move beyond abstraction to become an ethical commitment toward human beings.
>
> ***Student***

Rising Roots Morocco: Growing the Next Generation of Green Leaders

Implemented in partnership with The Big Heart Foundation (UAE), Rising Roots Morocco empowers rural and peri-urban youth through a residential model that combines sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship, leadership development, and community service. In 2025, 24 young people were selected from 166 applicants across six regions of Morocco to participate in an immersive learning journey rooted in environmental stewardship and civic engagement.

Throughout the program, participants strengthened technical agricultural skills, launched environmental initiatives, engaged in humanitarian response efforts, and developed professional competencies through exchanges, workshops, and field-based learning.

By year's end, the cohort had evolved into a network of emerging social entrepreneurs equipped with the skills, confidence, and community-driven vision needed to advance sustainable development across Morocco. The program achieved 100% participant retention and consistently high satisfaction ratings, laying a strong foundation for future leadership and advocacy initiatives.

> Rising Roots is not a place that grants us confidence; it is a place that made us discover that confidence is seized, not given.
>
> *Hamza Ait Said, RRM Participant*

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Reforestation, nursery management, and climate-resilient agriculture.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Humanitarian action, civic participation, and local leadership.

ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Entrepreneurship training, employment readiness, and professional development.

University Partnerships

From 2023 to 2026, 1,504 students from educational institutions around the world participated in High Atlas Foundation visits, programs, and community activities in Morocco. In 2025 alone, the Foundation welcomed 607 international university students through partnerships with universities and educational institutions from across the world.

Master's and doctoral students conducted research and field studies in areas including anthropology, gender, culture, and the environmental and social sciences. Experiences ranged from one-day community visits to multi-week academic field programs, giving students opportunities to learn directly from local communities and contribute to HAF's development initiatives, including business planning, participatory development processes, tree planting, and carbon reduction efforts.

At the same time, HAF benefits from the research and perspectives brought by students and volunteers, helping strengthen its programs and expand their impact. These partnerships extend beyond academics, creating opportunities for cultural exchange as international students and volunteers experience Moroccan culture, daily life, and the spirit of collaboration firsthand.

When participants return home, they carry these experiences with them and share them within their own communities, helping foster a deeper understanding of Morocco, its culture, and its community-led initiatives, while creating lasting connections between Moroccan youth and their peers around the world.

HAF's University partners in Morocco:

Ibn Zohr–Agadir | Ibn Zohr–Dakhla | Cadi Ayyad–Marrakech | Chouaib Doukkali–El Eljadida | Mohammed I–Oujda | Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah–Fes | Sultan Moulay Slimane–Beni Mellal

Al Akhawayn University (MA) | American Academy (MA) | Austria Service Abroad (AUT)
Blackpool Sixth Form College (UK) | Cardiff University (UK) | Carrington University (UK)
Duke University (US) | George Mason University (US) | International University of Catalonia (ES)
Kent State University (US) | Kingston University London (UK) | Montclair State University (US)
Northeastern University (US) | Pepperdine University (US) | Princeton University (US) | Rising Roots (UAE)
Rockhurst University (US) | Robert Bosch College (GER) | Stanford University (US) | St. Mark's School (US)
Tsinghua University (CHN)| University at Albany (US) | University of Baltimore (US)

University of Central Florida | University College London (UK)University of Chicago (US)
University of Cologne (GER) | University of Denver (US) | University of Florida (US) | Yeshiva University (US)
University of Georgia (US) | University of Groningen (NL) | University of Minnesota (US)
University of North Carolina (US) | University of Pennsylvania (US) | University of South Carolina (US)
University of Texas–Austin (US) | University of Texas–Arlington (US) | University of Toronto (CA)
University of Virginia (US) | Utrecht University (NL) | Villanova University (US) | Youth Conservation Corps (US)

> The collaboration between the High Atlas Foundation and American Academy Casablanca has been a transformative experience for our IB students. The workshop at the Akrich Nursery not only educated our students about the foundation's impactful work but also provided them with a hands-on opportunity to contribute alongside dedicated volunteers. We look forward to continuing this meaningful collaboration.
>
> *Ms. Hannah, IB CAS Coordinator*

UVA in Morocco: Participatory Development in Practice

By 2018, HAF had developed seven university partnerships and trained 430 students and 200 civil society members in needs assessment, community action planning, organizational development, project management, and advocacy. HAF welcomed 810 international and national university student interns and volunteers.

Since 2019, the University of Virginia (UVA) has partnered with the High Atlas Foundation (HAF) in Marrakech to deliver UVA in Morocco: Participatory Development in Practice, jointly directed by UVA's Ingrid Hakala and HAF's Yossef Ben-Meir. Over the course of eight summer editions, the program has combined academic coursework on global development theory with hands-on internships in HAF's community-based development projects. The program was delivered in person in 2019, transitioned to an online format in 2020 and 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and returned to in-person programming from 2022 onward. Across its years, the program has provided students with an opportunity to connect academic learning with practical experience in participatory development in Morocco.

University Engagement

Since its launch, the program has engaged 98 students, with annual cohorts generally ranging from 12 to 14 participants. Students have represented a wide range of academic disciplines and interests, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of development work. The program has also welcomed students from outside UVA, including a student from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2023. Through their internships, field visits, research, and engagement with local communities, students have gained practical exposure to issues including agriculture, environmental sustainability, women's economic empowerment, youth employment, rural development, and community-based development.

Research, Writing, and External Publications.

A distinctive component of the program is its emphasis on translating academic research into accessible public-facing writing. Each student conducts research on a Moroccan development issue and develops an article intended for publication beyond the university setting.

Since 2019, UVA students have produced more than 70 externally published articles, reaching audiences across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Topics have covered a broad range of development priorities, including agriculture, youth employment, women's cooperatives, climate change, public policy, tourism, and digital infrastructure. Publication activity has remained strong in recent years, with 12 articles published in 2024, 11 in 2025, and nine in 2026.

Long-Term Impact and Knowledge Sharing

Over the years, the partnership has created a sustained platform for students to engage directly with Morocco's development landscape while contributing research and perspectives to public discussions on development. The program's combination of classroom learning, field-based experience, community engagement, and external publication has allowed students not only to study development in Morocco but also to share their findings with audiences well beyond the program itself. Together, the program's 98 participants, 70+ external publications, and eight years of programming demonstrate the breadth and continuity of the UVA-HAF partnership.

5. Cultural Preservation

Cultural Preservation

The USAID-funded Dakira program, implemented by the High Atlas Foundation (HAF) and its partners, made significant strides in fostering inter-religious and inter-ethnic solidarity while preserving Morocco's multicultural heritage. Launched in July 2021, the program aimed to empower communities through capacity-building and experiential learning, contributing to the preservation of both tangible and intangible multicultural heritage in Morocco, while fostering social cohesion.

Key achievements include the identification, evaluation, and mapping of 259 religious and multicultural heritage sites across Morocco, in collaboration with the American Society for Overseas Research (ASOR). Over 50 educational and outreach tools have been created for facilitators and participants in interfaith dialogue initiatives, reaching a broad spectrum of individuals, including students, community members, and civil society organizations (CSOs). The program engaged over 150 schools and 4,437 youth in heritage learning activities and supported 2,808 community members in intercultural, interreligious, and intergenerational dialogues.

The program has also pioneered the integration of Moroccan Jewish heritage and Hebrew language learning, benefiting over 300 tour guides, youth, and Master's-level students. Additionally, more than 220 community members from six regions of Morocco have participated in heritage preservation capacity-building sessions. One of the most impactful initiatives was the digitization of the archives of the Catholic Diocese of Rabat, comprising 70,000 personal files, 80,000 registry records, 10,000 pages of historical documents, and over 5,000 administrative papers, ensuring long-term access to these valuable resources.

In addition to digital preservation efforts, Dakira has played a key role in the tangible preservation of cultural heritage through initiatives like the restoration of the historic synagogue of Gourrama and the installation of spiritual signage around the Benedictine Monastery of Toumliline. These efforts contribute to the understanding and commemoration of Morocco's pluralistic history, making it accessible to both local and international audiences.

Through this program, Dakira has not only preserved tangible and intangible cultural heritage but also strengthened community bonds, promoted intergenerational transmission of interfaith heritage, and created a sustainable framework for Morocco's diverse cultural history to be celebrated and passed onto future generations.

262	200+	4,437	1,195+	353	149
Community Dialogues	Heritage Sites Mapped	Youth Engaged	Community Members	Certified Tour Guides	Press Features

THE WAY FORWARD

Our Moroccan Way Forward

The goals of the High Atlas Foundation for 2026 are focused, specific, and designed to usher in the maximum sustainable human development benefits with the resources that we have available and the potential growth of existing and new partnerships that we seek from inside Morocco and around the world.

Fruit tree agriculture integrated with water infrastructure for **irrigation and drinking**, alongside the strengthening and growth of cooperatives, is the development of choice of the rural communities in Morocco. With our existing capacities and resources, we will plant again with approximately 10,000 farming families located in 37% of all the rural municipalities that are in the Kingdom. This includes planting nine varieties of fruit trees, and a range of endemic subspecies, within all four biozones that compose the country.

As it is indelible to our organizational identity, we remain riveted on **women-driven development** in all regards and seek to help advance empowerment in all locations where we are invited to assist in fruit tree planting and monitoring activities.

Furthermore, HAF's positive masculinity methodology, engaging men of all ages, will continue to unfold and grow as we are dedicated to facilitating these Moroccan transformational experiences, coinciding with the women's empowerment workshops that we conduct.

Our communication is becoming more dynamic, more interactive, and we will soon be launching a podcast that draws upon the incredible vitalism of Marrakech and the people of Morocco and its visitors.

Here, we will share important perspectives on the people's development, in a matter that is relevant to wherever we are located in the world.

The High Atlas Foundation staff are completely dedicated, each and all, and we feel a sense of vastness of opportunity, renewal with the seasons, and entire appreciation of our Moroccan society that wants local communities to analyze and create the change that they seek most of all in their lives. Morocco champions the advancement of **multiculturalism** integrated with human development, empowerment of all people, especially those who experience the most difficult challenges in life, and the unity that comes with participatory development that appreciates the dynamism, diversity, and interconnectivity of everyone.

It has been 26 years of human service to this nation we love which is the privilege of our lifetimes spawning the growth of all of us involved as we commit to assisting communities in their identification and implementation of their heartfelt dreams, which is the chosen Moroccan way.

Here's to a healthy, happy, successful year and years to come.

PUBLICATIONS

Since its founding, the High Atlas Foundation (HAF) has shared its work, ideas, and community stories through media outlets, publications, and interviews in Morocco and around the world. Spanning more than two decades, this collection reflects the evolution of HAF's work across sustainable agriculture, women's empowerment, education, cultural preservation, community-led development, and climate action.

Featuring more than 500 publications across 23 countries and four languages, the archive documents the issues HAF has championed, the partnerships it has built, and the experiences of the communities at the heart of its work. From early reflections on participatory development to recent coverage of climate resilience and community-led recovery, these publications offer a record of HAF's evolving contribution to sustainable development in Morocco and beyond.

Donor & Partner Acknowledgments

HAF's impact in 2025 was made possible through the generosity of its donors and the commitment of its institutional partners. We extend our gratitude to all those who supported our work.

SCAN ME

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