

A photograph of a person wearing a hat and dark clothing, crouching in a field of green plants. In the background, there is a large, reddish-brown brick building with a doorway. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The text 'AKRICH' is overlaid in large white letters, and 'MOROCCO' is overlaid in smaller white letters below it. A horizontal line is positioned below 'MOROCCO'.

# AKRICH

MOROCCO

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*Community. Jewish cemetery & sacred tomb. Tree nursery.*

2023

The High Atlas Foundation (HAF) would like to thank:

The Council of Jewish Communities of Morocco and the Jewish Community of Marrakech for sponsoring the Akrich Interfaith Tree Nursery Project.

The Akrich and Achbarou communities for their commitment to sustainable development and intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

# ABOUT AKRICH



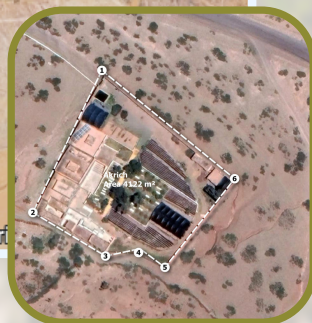
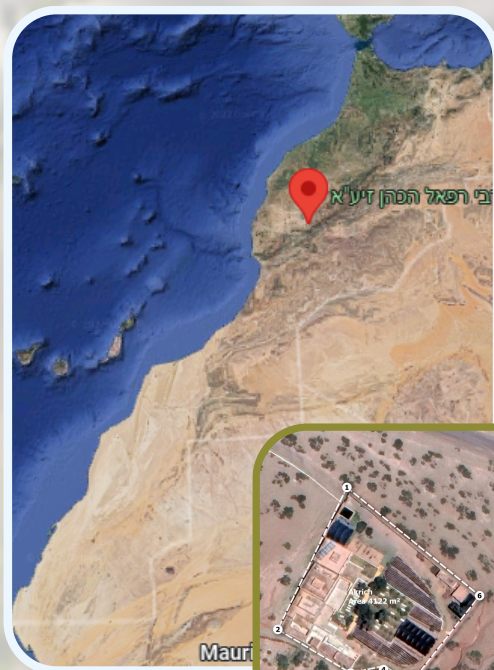
Douar Akrich is located in Al Haouz province, 20 km south of Marrakech.



As of the 2004 Official Population and Housing Census, the Akrich population was estimated to be about 465 inhabitants.



The village is home to the burial site of Rabbi Raphael HaCohen and a 700-year-old Jewish cemetery.



בית מדרש  
תכל שהוא  
א להשתתף  
מי מרומים  
א אחיו של  
בניא הכהן  
גרול בן של  
מחוז מרדכי  
ב לפני כשבע  
מי הנולד בארץ  
ינו ומעתידי  
ב אשר הם שם  
זה תבוא אבי

קבורת

מצבת

הרב המלומד  
בנאים  
רבי רפאל הכהן  
זיעא



# DEVELOPING A SELF-SUSTAINING FUTURE FOR MOROCCO

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In 2012, the High Atlas Foundation (HAF) launched the House of Life project, an initiative that links human development with cultural preservation and celebration through the establishment of community fruit tree nurseries on land adjacent to Moroccan Jewish cemeteries.

These nurseries champion the notion that Morocco's multicultural past and present, and the preservation of it, should necessarily advance the sustainable development of the country by providing a tangible and vital pathway for the social and economic benefit of generations of Moroccans to come.

In addition, HAF is committed to engaging local women in the process toward Morocco's sustainable development through offering personal growth trainings, technical capacity assistance, and cooperative development guidance.



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“My grandfather lived here, then my father, then me. The Moroccan Jewish community would often come here to celebrate. They also cherish their religious traditions and rituals here. An added value that the High Atlas Foundation has brought is to consolidate relationships by bringing together the Moroccan Jewish community and the local and neighboring communities. A special relation and conviviality is shared between the Moroccan Jewish community and the Moroccan Muslim one. Thanks to God.”

— ” —

**ABDERRAHIM BEDDAH**  
AKRICH NURSERY CARETAKER



# AKRICH NURSERY

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The community-managed interfaith tree nursery in Akrich is built on land lent in-kind by the Moroccan Jewish community. It is adjacent to the seven-hundred-year-old tomb of Rabbi Raphael Hacoen and a Jewish cemetery.

The nursery began as a pilot program in 2014.

A wide variety of seeds – almond, fig, pomegranate, lemon, carob – are planted, and saplings, once matured, are distributed to small scale farmers around the country. With the support of FENELEC, the Akrich nursery is also equipped with a solar pumping system.

Upon arrival to the site, visitors are welcomed warmly by Abderrahim, the caretaker of the nursery, whose family has voluntarily taken care of the cemetery for three generations.







“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.”

**DR. YOSSEF BEN-MEIR**


PRESIDENT  
HIGH ATLAS FOUNDATION

"This very sacred site is a powerful place for many reasons, including the sacred burial site of a saint. Akrich holds an atmosphere that all can feel when they visit. It's a feeling of peace and of welcoming, it is a feeling of safety."

**MR. JACKY KADOCH**

PRESIDENT  
JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE  
MARRAKECH-SAFI REGION





"Akrich represents a special place because of the Muslim and Jewish heritage that is historically and presently represented here. Coming together like this today is symbolic for many reasons, but what I think is one of the most important is that throughout history here, Muslims are honoring the Jewish history."

**- DR. FATIMAZOHRA IFLAHEN**

VICE PRESIDENT OF CADI AYYAD  
UNIVERSITY IN MARRAKECH



# A COMMUNITY MEETING SPACE

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The Akrich nursery stands as a model of how heritage preservation and meeting human development needs are intrinsically intertwined. Over the years, the nursery and the cemetery have welcomed visitors and pilgrims from different parts of the world and of various religious backgrounds, thus becoming a beacon of hope for religious solidarity and togetherness while offering a working space for community development.

The presence of the interfaith nursery exhibits the importance of community participation for heritage regeneration and improved livelihoods, as the initiative is not only contributing to the sustainable development of the community, but also consolidating the age-old solidarity between Muslim and Jewish people.



# ACHBAROU COOPERATIVE

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The Achbarou women's cooperative is located near the Akrich nursery in the neighboring village of Achbarou. Carpet-weaving is the traditional craft this region is known for. The cooperative was established following a series of personal development workshops facilitated by the High Atlas Foundation, including sessions on self-empowerment and cooperative development.



With strong determination, these women have turned their passion for carpet-weaving into an income-generating activity to help support their families and cover household expenses.

Handmade products include traditional carpets of various fabrics and crocheted items as well as some herbs. The women are fully responsible for the carpet-making process from start to finish.

Wool and yarn are handmade and dyed with local, organic plant-based dyes. The woven patterns are distinctive and unique for the Achbarou women, as each piece reflects a story.



"Before we started this cooperative, we used to just stay at home. We followed the same daily routine, and our sole objective was to take care of our children and our household. Then, we had the opportunity to start this cooperative.

This job is more of a passion for us and we're grateful for being able to do a job we love. This makes us feel relieved. The impact this job has had on our mental health is more important than the compensation."

### **SAMIRA**

MEMBER OF THE ACHBAROU  
COOPERATIVE









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