



Swiss Embassy Offsets Carbon Footprint by Planting Trees

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Press Release: [High Atlas Foundation](#)

Swiss Embassy Offsets Carbon Footprint by Planting Trees, Supporting Local Education And Economies in Rural Morocco

MARRAKESH – The Swiss Embassy in Rabat is offsetting its carbon emissions by supporting Sami’s Project, an initiative from the High Atlas Foundation that is dedicated to increasing the quality of education in rural Morocco. The Embassy’s donation of 46,800 MAD implemented through the High Atlas Foundation and part of a greater effort by the Embassy to counter its employees CO2 transportation emissions, allows 44 primary and secondary schools in rural Morocco, to plant 10,280 fruit trees and herbal and medicinal plants including among others olive, walnut, almond, pomegranate, fig, citrus and argon trees and herbal and medicinal plants such as rosemary, thyme, and oregano.

The plants and trees will support environmental education efforts with the over 8,620 students (3,661 girls and 4,959 boys), as well as generate revenue for the students and their farming families from the harvest. This project also increases green education in schools by supporting the environmental education efforts at the Pedagogical Center of Environmental Education in Smimou.

Speaking about tree nurseries at schools, High Atlas Foundation Program Manager Abderrahim Ouarghidi pointed to the importance of environmental education to student enrichment.

“That nursery is going to be not only for generating income for rural families, but it’s going to be a fun and interesting opportunity for the kids to learn stuff about how they can build a nursery, and how they can organically maintain trees that greatly enhance their lives,” said Ouarghidi.

Ultimately, the project will encourage sustainable partnerships between schools and farming families to promote synthesis of new agricultural development projects in Essaouira and throughout Morocco.

“We’re seeking to be close to the community,” said Ouarghidi. “We’re seeking to be participatory, because (local counterparts) know that they can participate. They know that we’re giving them the chance and a place to express themselves, to make their own decisions, then realize their projects.”

Project partners include the High Atlas Foundation, local associations, Provincial Direction of Agriculture, Provincial Delegation of the Minister of National Education, the Agency of Forestry, directions and teachers of schools, involved municipalities and parents’ associations.

The Embassy’s support is part of a greater effort by the Swiss Embassy’s Direction of Development and Cooperation to cut CO2 emissions released by employees’ transportation.

The High Atlas Foundation, established in 2000, is a Moroccan-US non-governmental organization committed to assisting local Moroccan communities in the identification and implementation of development projects through participatory planning. Founded by former Peace Corps Volunteers, the High Atlas Foundation currently facilitates projects including organic farming, clean drinking water, irrigation, women’s cooperatives, youth and education development, participatory training, and political empowerment.

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