

THE "MEDITERRANEAN DIET" PROJECT



TRADITION CONSERVATION ECONOMY
ATTRACTIVENESS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
GOVERNANCE PROMOTION LOCALDEVELOPMENT
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

1. Context

The city of Chefchauen was founded in 1471 in the province of the same name and is located in northern Morocco in the Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region (formerly the Tanger-Tetouan region until 2015). The area is characterised by its unique natural heritage as well as its lively cultural heritage full of knowledge and traditions. The territory has a strong rural community, with only 10% of the population living in urban areas.

Built at an altitude of 600m, the walled city is home to about 43,000 people. It covers 1040.5 hectares and encompasses the old city, the new city, and the boroughs of *Ain Haouzi*, *Al Ayoun* et *Adrar* in addition to the surrounding rural zones. Chefchauen is a large hub for a number of tourists in search of relaxation while also getting to discover the local culture and natural surroundings.



In 2010, the Mediterranean diet was recognised by UNESCO as vital part of the area's Intangible Cultural Heritage. Its inscription onto this list was followed by its recognition by 4 emblematic communities: Chefchauen (Morocco), Soria (Spain), Koroni (Greece), and Cilento (Italy). In 2014, Croatia, Portugal, and Cyprus also joined.

Chefchauen was chosen as a **Representative Community of the Mediterranean diet** because of the traditions and symbols passed down through generations, including food practices, social sharing, and celebration which are still vital aspects of the food culture here. As a result, **local actors must keep this heritage alive**, enable local development, and make it possible for the local population to live in harmony with their cultural identity.

In maintaining continuity with the new community charter approved in 2009, development activities have been supported in Chefchauen. The charter improves competencies for municipalities, strategic planning, and dialogue with civil society, as well as local government intervention in local economic development.

THE GOAL IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT BY HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CULINARY ARTS, IN ORDER TO HELP RESIDENTS COME TO TERMS WITH THEIR IDENTITY.

2. Chefchauen and Culture

Chefchauen's vision is centred upon the territory, authenticity, Mediterranean culture (nature, architecture, and arts), quality of life, and the history of local wealth (natural, human, texts, and architecture).

Culture therefore holds an important place in this initiative for the identity of the city and the region. The Mediterranean diet project incorporates this perspective while solidifying the central role of cultural policy by addressing the strategic policies of the Municipal Development Plan (UNDP ART GOLD Programme). This plan is the result of a participative process involving civil society, as well as public, private, and administration entities. It drafts short-, medium-, and long-term policies around the following pillars:



- The emphasis, preservation, and redevelopment of architectural heritage, cultural heritage, as well as the identity of the city and region.
- The protection of the environmental equilibrium, green spaces, combating pollution, and preserving natural heritage and resources.
- Strengthening urban quality and integration by increasing the amount of social and cultural facilities and infrastructure.
- Redefining and developing sectors by bolstering quality tourism.
- Transversality: training programme for technicians and administration for eco-tourism and local governance.

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET INCORPORATES THIS VISION FOR CHEFCHAUEN WHILE SOLIDIFYING THE CENTRAL ROLE OF CULTURAL POLICY BY ADDRESSING THE STRATEGIC POLICIES OF THE MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

The project developed is directly linked to Agenda 21 for culture.

- **Rights, Equity, and Social Inclusion:** ensuring women's cooperatives that make products are grown, structured, and professionalised, while also establishing networks to create a critical mass and further competitiveness.
- **Urban Planning and Public Space:** incorporating a policy dedicated to the formal and visual aspects of the landscape (exhibitions, expressions of talent, festivals, markets).
- **Information, Knowledge, Diversity, and Creativity:** traditions, reinvigorated ways of life, rural or urban ancestral rites and rituals connected with the culinary arts, centred upon ancestral knowledge and wisdom, are updated and disseminated with technological tools. Youth who strengthen talents developed around project-related events: Photography, painting, as well as information and communication technologies.
- **Governance of Culture:** The goal of the current project is to establish a culture for valuing culture.
- **Education:** Skill strengthening and human resources training at all levels: basic training, educator training, networking, management, equitable and organic production processes.



- **Economy:** local and regional resources, as well as their effective production and structuring for fair trade based on culture.
- **Environment:** modernisation and structuring of resource management, along with intelligent management and preservation of revenue streams, territorial balance, and natural beauty.

3. Objectives and Project Implementation

1.1. Primary Objectives

As an intermediate city, Chefchauen is at a crossroads where it is in danger of losing its human resources to larger cities or metropolises. Furthermore, it stands to lose the cultural life of its surrounding rural communities, which would thus bury the territory's authentic culture. **The goal is to contribute to the city's development by highlighting the importance of the culinary arts, in order to help residents come to terms with their identity.** These specific objectives are geared towards Chefchauen through local Indigenous products, and heritage conservation.

1.2. Initial Stages

This project is part of a multilateral cooperation among academics, municipalities, and local actors. It includes the University of Granada through a signed agreement on collaboration and research, in addition to 6 important communities, the Ministry of Culture, as well as the Ministries of Arts and Crafts, Tourism, Agriculture, and Water and Forestry. Furthermore, cooperatives were established with involved cultural associations, hospitality associations, and restaurants.

- It is a political approach within a multi-stakeholder environment that focuses on dialogue and cooperation at different levels of governance. **International cooperation:** The project involves a network of cities that are part of a global initiative established by UNESCO.
- **Vertical Cooperation:** The aim is to establish cooperation among the Province of Chefchauen, the Ministry of Culture, other ministries or representative bodies, and the Ministry of the Interior of Morocco.
- **Horizontal cooperation:** The project is framed by a dialogue among surrounding rural communities, civil society, and institutional structures acting within the territory.

The populations that benefitted from this project were **rural and farming populations that interacted with urban residents** affiliated with the project. The latter included artisans, merchants,



restaurant and hotel owners, and those restoring and preserving important architecture. In addition to these were youth and women who benefitted from training, networking, and the good reputation of the region. Residents from throughout the territory who have seen their culture and identity reborn, as well as both national and international visitors are seen to benefit indirectly.

IT IS A POLITICAL APPROACH WITHIN A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENVIRONMENT THAT FOCUSES ON DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE.

4. Impacts

1.1. Direct Impacts

Impact on the Local Government

The local government has positioned itself **to establish a unifying dynamic for "nurturing culture"** as a part of creating revenue and as part of a dialogue. This project created **social cohesion**, in which people can recognise and identify themselves while participating in a closer relationship with government, councillors, and the mayor. This has enabled **identification and visibility for the city** in international networks, as well as facilitated communication and territorial marketing, which includes responsible tourism, environmental policies, and fair trade. The mayor was elected President of the Association Marocaine des Eco-Villes (AMEV) [*Moroccan Association of Eco-Cities*].

Impact on Culture and on the Local Cultural Actors of the City/Territory

This will strengthen recognition of creativity and expression structured within civil society, in order to attract artist and investments. It will establish culture as a vital element in creating cultural life and sustainability. Furthermore, the project will revitalise local craft-making and performance art. Culture shall become a development channel in the city and region by serving the citizens and their own development.



Impacts on the Territory and Population

The project helps to rejuvenate the city's cultural life and reduce the impact of urban migration in a number of ways. It includes the city in an international network connected to organic and fair trade, responsible tourism, even changing ideologies in a regional environment focused on cannabis culture, or adapting rural tourism to international standards.

1.2. Crosscutting Impact

It will build rural-urban cohesion by recognising other cultures, accepting the revitalisation of rural culture in an urban setting, and, conversely, accepting both urban culture and new creative pursuits in the rural sphere. It fosters economic complementarity. Another result is a culture of respect for creativity, diversity, and other people, which helps to reinforce social cohesion. It also rejuvenates a recognised, ancestral Mediterranean culture inherited from Al-Andalus roots, and creates links with other cities.

1.3. Evaluation

Three factors make it possible to measure the impacts of this project on the city of Chefchauen:

- The wealth of civil society and the growth in the number of cultural associations, as well as in the quality of issues developed upon.
- The Museum on the Mediterranean Diet supported by local and financial actors.
- The involvement and appeal generated by this project within networks and other cities in cooperation with Chefchauen.

1.4. Continuity

The sheer scope of the project warrants the creation of an International Forum on the Mediterranean diet. During the latter half of 2016, a platform for citizens' exchange was established between cities involved in the program, experts, and civil society stakeholders.

5. Further Information

The City of Chefchauen was a candidate for the second "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (January - May of 2016). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2016, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

Text approved in December, 2016.

Good practice text published in January, 2017.

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