

## HAF Proposals that Integrate Interfaith, Multiculturalism and Development

*By HAF Staff*

Here are six intercultural and interfaith projects in Morocco for which the High Atlas Foundation has full proposals. These projects will assist marginalized communities in meeting their livelihood needs, and embody the Moroccan government's approach for integrating multiculturalism and local development:

- 1. Restore four Jewish cemeteries** (two in Marrakech region, one in Beni Mellal-Khenifra region and one in Drâa-Tafilalet region) and build fruit tree nurseries on vacant lands adjacent to each (two million fruit trees total over three years) to enhance livelihoods of farming families in Morocco and ongoing interfaith partnership. Here is a [HAF brochure](#) and published [article](#) for more description about this initiative. **Budget: \$700,000**
- 2. Restore the Jewish cemetery in Demnat** (Azilal province, Beni Mellal-Khenifra region), including 491 tombstones and the mausoleum of the burial of Rabbi Saïed Aharon, and grow a fruit tree nursery (40,000 annually) on empty lands beside the cemetery for community engagement and maintenance of the entire site. Here is an [article](#) in Moroccan media about this proposed project. **Budget: \$400,000**
- 3. HAF aims to restore the core of the Christian Benedictine Monastery** of Toumliline (near Azrou), including the chapel, the Priory office, the cemetery where five monks are buried, two gardens surrounding the chapel, and a tree nursery, while encouraging the student community nearby Al Akhawayn University to learn, debate, and diffuse this unique patrimony in a majority Muslim country. The site has been chosen for its exceptional history, its preservation being a promise of the future. This built heritage stands as a symbol of the rich multicultural history of Morocco. Among the churches, cathedrals, and Christian religious sites established in Morocco and in North Africa, Toumliline, built in 1952, remains unique: from its opening, and apart from monastic life, the monks of Toumliline devoted themselves to local communities in Morocco and throughout Africa. Toumliline [remains an example](#) of a space that was not only reserved for Christians, but intended to bring the people of Morocco and the world together in a spirit of ideas-sharing toward interfaith harmony and interculturalism. **Budget: \$330,000**
- 4. This project at the Marrakesh Genizah** aims to set out an approach towards the proper conservation of Genizah material, and dissemination of knowledge gained, that can be replicated at a national and international level, for the benefit of academic researchers and a broad public, including as a component for educating Moroccan youth in part of their cultural history and cultural tourism. A Genizah is a storage area set aside for irreparably damaged (or otherwise unusable) Hebrew sacred texts and includes preservation of a wide variety of documentation relating to the Jewish community (including its interrelation with neighbouring / host communities). Written Jewish archival material remaining in Morocco lies dispersed and often sorely neglected, in dire need of proper conservation before its contents are analysed and findings disseminated for posterity and for the general good of Moroccan society. **Budget: \$200,000**
- 5. This project – called [House of Life](#)** – builds interreligious solidarity through a dynamic collaboration to advance livelihoods; it significantly helps to meet the agricultural and

food security needs of rural Moroccan people, while promoting the public understanding and active preservation of the Moroccan religious and cultural heritage locations. HAF secures land lent in-kind by the Moroccan Jewish Community adjacent to their historical-cultural sites in order to build fruit tree nurseries to benefit farming communities, cooperatives, and schools. To implement the seven nurseries in partnership with the Moroccan Jewish Community and local agricultural cooperatives, will represent an investment of USD 1,400,000, generate 3.1 million fruit trees in three years, benefit approximately 10,000 farming families and [700 schools](#) whose more than one hundred thousand students will learn about and preserve Morocco's identity of intercultural solidarity and diversity, and create a globally renowned inter-faith collaboration. **Budget: \$1,400,000**

6. **Plant 10 million trees with private-public partners, including the Moroccan Jewish community:** According to Morocco's Ministry of Agriculture, one billion fruit trees and billions of medicinal plants are needed as one of several essential contributions in order to overcome poverty in rural areas, which afflicts approximately 80 percent of rural people. The High Atlas Foundation (HAF) receives land lent in-kind for the nurseries of farming communities from government agencies, universities, and civil groups, including the High Commission of Waters and Forests, the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, the Ministry of Education and Professional Development, University Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah in Fes, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, the Moroccan Jewish community, and cooperatives. HAF is able to provide tree planting, monitoring, and the required data to secure CO2 offsets at the low cost of \$0.40 per tree due to these contributing factors: 1) We grow the saplings from seeds, which allows us to retain significant value, spending only 15-25 percent of the private sector price per tree, depending on the variety; and 2) the lending of free land by public and civil agencies further reduces costs and price-per-tree unit. **Budget: 10 million fruit trees at \$0.40 per tree = \$4 million**