



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Visit Tunisia Activity Newsletter | February 2023

VISIT TUNISIA



Dear valued partners and friends,

Warmest greetings to you all on behalf of USAID Visit Tunisia!

February marks a special month for our project, as one year ago, we publicly launched our project at the Sbeitla archeological site in Kasserine, Tunisia. As we reflect on the one year, 12 months, and 365 days since the launch, we are thrilled with all the project has accomplished. To learn more about all our project activities and highlights, I encourage you to read through the impact stories on our website.

In this newsletter, you will find updates on our work to promote sustainable tourism in local schools, deliver quality training for hospitality professionals, and strengthen Tunisia's tourism associations.

I hope that you find this newsletter informative and inspiring and that it provides a glimpse into the progress that we are making toward a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable tourism industry. We hope to welcome you soon.

Sincerely,

Leila Calnan

Chief of Party, USAID Visit Tunisia Activity

NEW CALL FOR FUNDS

Get up to 40 thousand in loans & up to 1,250 TND in grant!

Calling all small businesses operating in the Tunisian tourism sector! Submit your applications to access micro-finance grant and loan support to accelerate local economic recovery and growth.

APPLY NOW!

USAID VISIT TUNISIA ACTIVITY ENGAGES 300 CHILDREN IN KAIROUAN'S SCHOOLS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



USAID Visit Tunisia Activity successfully engaged 300 children in Kairouan to raise awareness about the importance and potential of sustainable tourism in Tunisia both at a national level and locally. This unique educational initiative was the first time ever schoolchildren have engaged in the intersection between tourism and the local environment. The feedback from the event was positive, with Tunisian youth learning firsthand that protecting the planet can also be fun.

These sessions ran from January 23 to January 26 and involved 300 children from ages 10-12 from eight different schools in tree planting activities. The initiative generated positive radio coverage on [Al Hayet FM](#), [Sabra FM](#) and [Facebook](#), and Monastir FM.



USAID Visit Tunisia Public Awareness Campaigns - Starting with Kairouan

As one of USAID Visit Tunisia's six target regions, the project selected Kairouan as the pilot region to launch the first series of public awareness campaigns. The region has a high level of cultural and historically significant sites that are currently under-visited and unknown on both a global and a domestic level. However, the tourism potential is vast, and USAID Visit Tunisia is committed to supporting sustainable destination development to ensure the well-being of Kairouan's sites and communities for future generations.

These school sessions continue an ongoing public awareness campaign in Kairouan, following the great success of [the clean-up and cultural treasure hunt activities](#) held in the city medina, which brought together over 450 children and persons with disabilities.



The Importance of Engaging the Public

To build a successful collective future for sustainable tourism efforts that have buy-in from host communities, local people have to be engaged from the onset. By choosing to engage children and youth through community-based activities, the project is investing in the future generation's passion for preserving their communities.

USAID Visit Tunisia Activity wants to raise public awareness about the importance of adopting an environmentally conscious approach to tourism. Tree planting is also a vital ecological activity in the fight against climate change, as trees help to protect against heat waves and floods in urban areas.

This decision to focus on tree planting as the core activity of this campaign ensures the sustainability of this intervention.



USAID Visit Tunisia's Future Activities in Kairouan

In late April, Earth Day, USAID Visit Tunisia Activity will take tree planting initiatives to the next level. Involving significant local stakeholders, a larger-scale tree-planting activity will be implemented to beautify Kairouan's significant tourism sites and create more environmentally friendly spaces in the city. Stay tuned for our update!

USAID Visit Tunisia Activity will engage the community - in the public, private, and civil sectors of society - in order to undertake this tree planting program, beautifying significant tourism sites and making them more livable and enjoyable for centuries to come.

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Thanks to the support of our partners for making this educational initiative possible: **Jeunes Chambres International (JCI) Kairouan**, **Commissariat Régional au Tourisme de Kairouan**, **The Scouts Kairouan**, **Association for the Protection of Nature and Environment of Kairouan (APNEK)**, the **Commissariat Regional du l'éducation de Kairouan (Regional Education Office)**, and **Office National du Tourisme Tunisien (ONTT)**.



76 PROFESSIONALS TRAINED, ACCELERATING TOURISM ASSOCIATION COMPETITIVENESS IN TUNIS AND TUNISIA'S SOUTHERN AND WESTERN REGIONS



USAID Visit Tunisia Activity brought together 76 professionals from 41 local tourism associations in 11 governorates to participate in participatory approach-based strengthening workshops to accelerate their associations' competitiveness in the Tunisian market. Held in Tozeur in January and Tabarka in February, these workshops successfully engaged 39 women – over half of the participants.

The TLC “Creating Tourism Experiences” workshops took place January 3 to 13, in Gabes, Kairouan, Tozeur and Tabarka, engaging over 280 tradition bearers — artisans, cooks, musicians, and more who keep Tunisia's cultural practices alive from one generation to the next — to create touristic experiences around gastronomy, craft, music, dance, and storytelling.



“The challenge we’ve been facing for 10 years is how to motivate our teams and boost the retention of our communities with whom we share our core values that drive our work.”

**— Selly Rayes, Consultant,
La Ruche de Tozeur**

After success of the first phase of the UPSKILL program that successfully **trained 27 professionals from eight of the largest tourism federations and associations in Tunis in November 2022**, USAID Visit Tunisia began the implementation of phase two in the Tabarka and Tozeur regions. These capacity-strengthening workshops were carefully designed to address pain points in the industry and strengthen the programming and project implementation capacities. These sessions held in early 2023 successfully engaged 41 regional associations, undoubtedly increasing the competitiveness of Tunisia’s sustainable tourism industry. By the end of March 2023, fourteen associations from this larger pool will be selected (through a soon-to-be-released EOI) for customized mentorship and technical assistance programs, in addition to grant support.

“This training will allow us to shape, define, and professionalize our skills and knowledge. Currently, we are prioritizing fundraising and grants. For instance, how to write grant proposals in Tunisia in a more structured way.”

**—Ahmed Chriqui, Member,
Toujane Sauvegarde et Protection**



Top 5 Insights from the Workshops

- 1.** The participatory approach sparked attendee interest and increased their information retention;
- 2.** More than half of the participants were women;
- 3.** Each association succeeded in developing a vision, mission, and strategic plan;
- 4.** In addition to delivering technical training, the workshops raised awareness of the potential areas for improvement, previously overlooked by the associations in Tunisia’s southern and western regions;
- 5.** 92% of the associations were satisfied with the quality of the workshops.



To build their capacity, the associations addressed their most pressing challenges and acquired knowledge and tools to respond to them. Examples of discussion topics were:

- Improving management structures and governance;
- Tailoring work plans with time-bound objectives and financial budget;
- Strengthening database systems and management;
- Improving communications and media relations;
- Establishing or improving member services;
- Increasing promotion of their services;
- Mobilizing quality resources.



“The workshops brought awareness of areas of improvements. We became more aware of the dysfunctions and the challenges we are failing to overcome in our association such as governance, communications, and fundraising. We realized we have a lot to rethink, fix and improve.”

Arjound, Member, Association Tunisienne des Enseignants de Français (ATEF).

Strengthening the Capacity of 34 Tourism Associations from the Southern regions (Tozeur Workshop)

On January 13 and 14, professionals and active members in tourism associations from Kebili, Tozeur, Gabès, Tataouine, and Medenine participated in capacity-strengthening workshops in Tozeur. 19 total associations were represented by 34 people (17 of whom were women).

[Enjoy the full photo album of the Tozeur Workshop here.](#)



Certification ceremony in Tozeur on January 14th, 2023

Strengthening the Capacity of 34 Tourism Associations from the Southern regions (Tozeur Workshop)

After completing the aforementioned Tozeur training, the training traveled to Tabarka to meet with the associations from Tunisia's Western regions. From February 1st and 2nd, USAID Visit Tunisia trained 42 participants from 22 local tourism associations from Kairouan, Tabarka/ Aïn Draham, Gabès, Béja, Jendouba, and Tunis. 22 women (more than half of the attendees) engaged in these workshops.

[Explore more photos from the Tabarka Workshop](#)

What's Next for these Federations: Mentorship, Targeted Assistance and Grant Support

The participants of these workshops were given two weeks to prepare their concept notes on potential projects to continue development, take part in coaching sessions to refine them, and then submit them for evaluation. By the end of March 2023, 14 projects will be selected for more technical assistance, mentorship and grant support up to \$5000. Six projects from the Tunis workshops in the first phase of UPSKILL will also be selected.



Certification ceremony in Tabarka on February 2nd, 2023

UPSKILL is the Tunisian tourism sector's first program of its kind, providing targeted capacity building training to federations and associations. Its unique learning structure combines in-person and online learning, including customized mentorship to leverage international best practices and resources that has been developed and implemented by the USAID Visit Tunisia Activity. UPSKILL will accelerate the competitiveness of Tunisian sustainable tourism across a diverse range of regions and backgrounds. Photo/video ©Montassar Lassoued/USAID