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# JENDOUBA & KAIROUAN

*Promoting Responsible Tourism for Better Economic, Social and Cultural Integration of Migrants in Jendouba and Kairouan, Tunisia*

**Implementing Partner:** The National Union of Tunisian Women in Kairouan and the Association of Women, Youth and Children in Jendouba, in collaboration with the Tourism Sector

**Location:** Jendouba and Kairouan, Tunisia

**Duration:** December 2019 – November 2021

## **SUMMARY**

The projects in Jendouba and Kairouan enabled the city stakeholders to work together to receive, manage, and integrate labour migrants and, at the same time, promote responsible tourism in the city. In a partnership between local and regional authorities, civil society and the private sector, young labour migrants were trained and guided through tourism-related activities to help them improve their economic situations.

This experience, combined with an urban forum and dialogues at the regional and national levels, is informing citywide strategies to integrate labour migration into local policies and institutionalising the multi-stakeholder partnerships developed through the projects.



## THE CITIES ALLIANCE GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON CITIES AND MIGRATION

The Promoting Responsible Tourism for Better Economic, Social and Cultural Integration of Migrants in Jendouba and Kairouan projects are part of the Cities Alliance Global Programme on Cities and Migration, which focuses on migration management in secondary cities in low-income countries and is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The projects in Jendouba and Kairouan are part of a global portfolio of nine cities that includes Amatitlán and San Marcos, Guatemala; Arua and Jinja, Uganda; Adama and Jiggiga, Ethiopia; and Kakuma-Kalobeyi in Kenya.

## CONTEXT

Internal labour migration is a major phenomenon in Tunisia. It is directly linked to the socio-economic disparities between lagging regions of the interior and the dynamic, prosperous coastal regions. The interior regions are marked by high levels of unemployment and poverty (both stand at around 30%), with limited access to basic services and lower standards of living.

In contrast, the metropolitan areas of Tunisia's three biggest cities (Tunis, Sfax and Sousse) make up 92% of the country's industrial activity and 85% of its GDP. Many young labour migrants from secondary cities in Tunisia's interior – especially the highly skilled – are attracted to the large metropolitan areas in search of employment and opportunities for a better life.

Meanwhile, secondary cities such as Jendouba and Kairouan are receiving rural migrants for the same reasons. Local authorities are trying to find ways to integrate young labour migrants from rural areas economically, socially and culturally, while at the same time retaining residents who would otherwise migrate to the primary cities. However, local authorities have limited capacity to manage these dual migration flows (rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban).

At the national level, Tunisia is working to alleviate the regional disparities that are at the heart of its internal migration flows. The country has been undergoing a decentralisation process guided by its 2014 constitution and the Local Government Code adopted in 2018. In this context, it is critical to support Tunisia's interior cities as they assume new roles and responsibilities for fostering local development.

Labour migration is an important topic in Tunisia, and municipalities need to address inward and outward labour migration by making themselves more attractive to residents, creating employment opportunities, and promoting a sense of belonging among their large youthful populations.

## A customisable, replicable approach piloted in two cities

Cities Alliance piloted a similar approach in two partner cities, Jendouba and Kairouan, so that they could compare experiences and foster learning, exchange, and cooperation. Although Jendouba and Kairouan face similar challenges, there are some differences in terms of composition of assets, potential, and stakeholders, and the project was adapted to the specific needs of each city. It is a solidly replicable and scalable approach that stays adaptive to the context and potential of different types of secondary cities.

## RESULTS

The projects were based on three areas of interventions that work together to integrate labour migrants into the city: developing tourism products to provide livelihood opportunities for young migrants; developing strategies to promote these products and raise the profile of Jendouba's and Kairouan's assets; and building capacity among the local authorities to improve their approaches to integrating and managing labour migrants. In the process, the interventions built strong multi-stakeholder partnerships and an evidence base to support inclusive local policies.

### Result 1: Responsible Tourism Products to Provide Livelihood Opportunities for Youth

Kairouan and Jendouba have great potential for inclusive and sustainable development. Both cities and their surrounding areas are rich in cultural, artisanal and natural attractions that are largely untapped, and Kairouan is classified as a UNESCO world heritage site. As a result, both designed projects to test approaches from the tourism sector to increase their attractiveness as places to live, work and invest.

The projects analysed the economic and social potential associated with responsible tourism in the cities and their surroundings, including how to integrate youth into the labour market and social life. The cities then used this information to develop tourism products, including supporting youth to develop proposals for their own tourism agencies and educational tours.

#### *Youth-run tourist agencies*

118 youth (65% of them women) submitted proposals. The project provided onsite support to selected proposals, guiding the youth through creating their own tourism agency and learning how to manage it independently as a social enterprise. Youth entrepreneurs established a virtual network to share questions and best practices, providing an example for others to follow. The first educational tour (eductour) of the cities' attractions reached a wide audience, with several thousand people following the trip online.

In parallel, the entrepreneurs featured in promotional videos of the region produced by Tunisia's best-known travel blogger and influencer. The videos sparked great interest on social media in the regions as travel destinations and in the entrepreneurs, who received numerous requests and enquiries from potential clients. Complementary to other promotional activities, tourism stakeholders in the region reported a significant increase in the number of weekend visitors in autumn and winter 2021.

### Result 2: Strategy and Products to Promote Cultural and Natural Heritage in Both Cities

The project analysed the economic and social potential associated with responsible tourism for both Jendouba and Kairouan and their surroundings, with a focus on how rural-urban migrants can be better integrated into the economic and social life of the cities. The analysis highlighted several opportunities for valorising the region's cultural, architectural, and patrimonial heritage, as well as its agricultural and artisanal goods.

### Tourism circuits

The project identified four underexploited sites with high potential and mapped out eco-tourist circuits in close alignment with the Regional Office for Tourism in Kairouan (CRTK). Thanks to this collaboration, the Tunisian National Office for Tourism decided to fully develop the identified tourism circuits in the three communes of Ain Jeloula, Haffouz, and Oueslatia as part of a new programme worth TDN 20 million (ca. \$7.5 million) and expressed strong interest in cooperating with the project's young entrepreneurs. The central government also provided Oueslatia with \$107,000 to improve and construct roads and pathways to develop the circuit in its area.

### Artisanal markets

Kairouan built a women-run artisanal market to strengthen the local economy and protect its craft heritage. Five artisanal wooden market stalls were constructed that provide 25 local artisanal entrepreneurs space to market their art and products. The project's implementation partner, the National Union of Tunisian Women, envisions scaling-up the market with more stalls and promoting it across Tunisia for different regional festivities to provide a regular source of income for the artisans and showcase Kairouanese heritage and crafts around the country. Jendouba plans to build a similar market.

## Result 3: Local Authorities Develop Inclusive Approaches to Migration Governance and Management

Local and regional authorities play a key role in successful project implementation and ensuring a sustained impact in the long run. Diagnostics helped Jendouba and Kairouan identify their existing capacities and needs for strengthening their approaches to migration governance and management, as well as for integrating migrants economically, socially and culturally.

Both cities established steering committees that generated strong interest among city stakeholders. Considering Tunisia's efforts to promote decentralisation, platforms such as local steering committees can serve as micro-laboratories for city authorities to experience their new role as facilitators of local development in coordination and agreement with the various city, regional, and state actors.

The cities also established multi-stakeholder city forums to ensure an inclusive migration governance regime that builds upon effective partnerships and learning.

I'm excited to develop my business plan and commercialise local organic artisanal food products.

— Khadija, a young graduate and trainee in the project activities