



# The Sustainability of Urban Heritage Preservation

The Case of Marrakesh

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The World Bank

**Inter-American  
Development Bank**

Institutional Capacity  
and Finance Sector

**DISCUSSION**

**PAPER**

No. IDB-DP-120

**August 2010**

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Inter-American Development Bank  
2010

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## Foreword\*

In June 2008 the World Bank issued the Policy Note “Development Strategy for Morocco’s Historic Towns” at the completion of the analytical and policy work carried out by at the request of the Ministry of Housing, Urban, and Regional Planning of the Kingdom of Morocco. The preparation of the policy note benefited from a grant of the Italian Culture and Sustainable Development Trust Fund established with the Bank. The team in charge of the study was directed by Anthony G. Bigio, Senior Urban Specialist, and comprised:

- Mokhtar Abdallaoui-Maan, Junior Professional Associate, World Bank
- Gianni Brizzi, Cultural heritage and tourism expert, World Bank consultant
- Mohamed Chaoui, Director of Research, École Nationale d’Architecture, Rabat
- Daniele Pini, Urban planning professor, University of Ferrara
- Mohammed Taamouti, Director of Statistics, Haut Commissariat au Plan\*\*
- June Taboroff, Cultural heritage expert, World Bank consultant

The study aimed to assist the government to: a) identify the optimal strategies for the development of the historic towns, or *medinas*, of Morocco; and b) define the modalities for coordination and implementation of the proposed interventions. The study has in particular concentrated on strategies that pursue the following objectives:

- (a) ***To ensure the preservation of the existing patrimony***, through policies and measures extended to monuments, key public and private buildings, physical, and intangible cultural assets of the historic towns, according to internationally recognized standards;
- (b) ***To develop the economic potential of the medinas*** to contribute to growth through the positive impacts of sustainable tourism, the promotion of handicrafts, cultural activities, and the hospitality industry;
- (c) ***To satisfy the basic needs of the residents***, through investment strategies that are centered on the improvement of housing conditions, access to basic infrastructure and public services, and job creation.

As part of the study, four case studies were conducted: two on medinas with an on-going economic revival (Marrakesh and Essaouira), and two on medinas with a strong unexploited potential (Salé and Tetouan). They served as background papers to the policy note. The Marrakech case study is presented in this paper.

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\* Based on fieldwork by June Taboroff and Mohamed Taamouti, World Bank consultants

\*\* M. Taamouti was named Director of Statistics after having committed to the study on an individual basis, and completed his assignment with the perspective of the Haut Commissariat au Plan.



## **Introduction**

Morocco, a middle-income country of about 30 million inhabitants, is endowed with a rich and diverse urban cultural heritage, including 31 Medinas, or ancient urban centers originating from the Arab Muslim traditions and history of the country, often dating back to medieval times, and many hundreds of historic minor rural settlements scattered across its rural landscape.<sup>1</sup> Until its independence over 50 years ago, these Medinas, ksours and villages constituted the only place of residence for the overwhelming majority of the Moroccan population (which was of 11.6 million in 1960), given that the “modern” urban settlements, created primarily as of the beginning of the twentieth century by the French Protectorate, were the prerogative of the Europeans residents.

In the past half century, the urban landscape of Morocco has changed enormously, responding to the combined pressures of demographic growth, urbanization, and the gradual modernization of the national economy. The once-colonial urban settlements have become the cores of expanding and sprawling modern towns, which have adopted European standards of land-use, urban planning, design of residential typologies, and service infrastructure. In parallel to this urban expansion, which has provided the wealthiest half of the urban population with

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “historic towns” and Medinas are used interchangeably throughout the report. The Medina has been defined by the High Commissioner for Planning (HCP) in 1999 as “a group of urban neighborhoods of Precolonial origin, and initially surrounded by ramparts.”

modern-day surroundings and accommodations, Morocco has also experienced the growth of informal settlements, slums, and substandard housing in the peri-urban areas of its towns, providing miserable living conditions to their residents.

Through all of this change, however, the most cherished sites of Moroccan cities and the most valuable religious and secular monuments of the past are still the ones located in the historic towns, or Medinas, which in many respects constitute the “soul” of Morocco and are just at the core of its national identity. Despite the fact that in 2004 they had only 740,000 residents, or 2.5 percent of the national population, Medinas are a source of pride and of collective belonging for the population at large, and exert great attraction for foreign visitors. They have been the source of cultural inspiration for numerous generations of artists, and their ambiance, colorful atmosphere, and rich architectural textures provide the visual backdrop for all the images of Moroccan vacations which bring foreigners to the country in increasing numbers.

While representing magnets for nationals and foreigners alike, Moroccan historic towns are generally plagued by a decaying housing stock, insufficient infrastructure and services, difficulties of access and integration within the broader urban centers they are part of, and high unemployment and urban poverty rates. They constitute some of the poorest jurisdictions of the country, where the flight of the middle class has left behind only the impoverished original residents, where rural migrants have traditionally found cheap albeit substandard accommodations, and where beauty and misery coexist side by side. Current signs of economic revival are however appearing strongly in some of these historic towns, mainly driven by their touristic appeal, as well as by increasing public and private investments. Such contradictions, needs, and potential make the preservation of Morocco’s Medinas a considerable challenge.

This case study of Marrakesh examines the characteristics of its urban dynamics, focusing on the changes brought about by investments made in the tourism and residential housing sectors in recent years. It evaluates the economic, social, and physical changes this has caused in the Medina. It also studies the changes in the makeup of economic activities and different segments of demand, and in the social composition of the Medina, as well as the ways of preserving, rehabilitating, and adaptively reusing the historic built environment. The case study then examines the sustainability of current economic development, as well as expected future trends and the possible risks associated with them. On the whole, the case study summarizes the balance between “winners and losers” in this urban transformation. It puts

forward certain suggestions regarding the possibility (or not) of using the rehabilitation of the Medina of Marrakesh and its surrounding area as a model for other historic towns in Morocco.

Information on the changes that have occurred in Marrakesh has been obtained from a wide variety of written sources and interviews. Given the complexity of the subject, the results of the study are necessarily conditioned by the availability of data and resources. The Marrakesh Urban Authority (*Agence Urbaine*) has carried out studies of various aspects of life in the Medina and these have underlined the intensity and speed of the changes going on in Marrakesh. Another important source of information has been interviews held during field missions with representatives of the main government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector.

### **1. Marrakesh: Strong Growth in the Imperial City of the Desert**

Marrakesh, one of Morocco's imperial cities, is a tourist phenomenon, both on a national and international level. It is a magnet for large numbers of international visitors and symbolizes the allure of Morocco in all ways. With the adoption of an open sky policy about 10 years ago, Marrakesh has become a popular destination for many European tourists, for whom the city is just a short flight from the main European capitals. The Medina of Marrakesh, the largest in Morocco, lies at the heart of the city and of the region. Its public spaces, whether the legendary Jemaa el-Fna Square or the narrow passageways of the souk, provide the stage for the city's commerce, social interaction and recreational activities. In contrast to other historic cities in which the original functions of public spaces have become obsolete or displaced, the Medina of Marrakesh retains its polar position in the life of the city. The Medina is therefore an excellent example of a humanized public space and, as such, it serves as a model for other cities in which the public space has become inhospitable and purposeless. In 2001, Jamaa El Fna was proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO (see Box 1).

Founded in 1070 by the Almoravids (1063–1147) as a desert outpost, the city quickly became a trading post and then the imperial capital. Various dynasties—the Almohads (1147–1269), Marinids (11269–1525), Saadis (1525–1659) and Alaouites (1666 to present)—each left their mark on civil construction, architecture, and gardens, bearing witness to their hold over the city. As the result of over eight centuries of architectural feats, the Medina is a vibrant urban space with its majestic and monumental doors, commercial and residential districts, civil and religious monuments, homes, historic gardens, and a water conveyance system that is unique in

the world: its *khattaras*. With its master craftsmen, traditional herbalists, and oral traditions, the Medina's cultural heritage is steeped in history.

Marrakesh is now going through an exceptional construction boom. This is having an impact on the preservation of dwellings in the Medina, helping somewhat to limit the deterioration of its historic buildings. Marrakesh has become the focal point of most European real estate investors in Morocco. Although some of the properties acquired by foreign investors are located outside the Medina—in residential areas and in the Palmeraie—it is the purchase of homes inside the Medina that is most outstanding. It must be said that overall the rehabilitation of these properties—a large number of which have been bought by foreigners and which are concentrated in certain districts of the Medina—has been positive for the preservation of the built heritage and has created jobs in the construction industry and in the crafts sector, mainly benefitting the local population. However, well-founded fears persist regarding the risk of lost authenticity and inappropriate changes. Of even greater concern are the parts of the Medina that have not benefitted from these improvements and where the working and living conditions are well below acceptable standards, as is the case, for example, of the copper and brass workshops.

The future of Marrakesh certainly looks bright, but the question is whether the city will be able to absorb the ever-growing pace of tourist arrivals and new investors without endangering the unique qualities that attract visitors from around the world. Residents of the Medina and of the city in general are deeply concerned about the rising cost of food, electricity, and rents, and in general, their diminished purchasing power. Wages have not kept up with increases in the cost of living. Some even say that long-time residents of the Medina have left because of the high costs of living there and the fact that better housing conditions can be found outside the Medina. While the social impacts of this “manna” raining on the local population have yet to be studied in depth, a number of negative factors are often linked to the gentrification of the Medina, with long-time residents forced to leave their familiar districts due to rising prices, destabilization, a fraying of the traditional social fabric, and the homogenization of commercial activity. For lack of an enforceable plan to safeguard the urban environment, some of the rehabilitation activities inside the Medina quickly end up breaking the traditional rules of its urban society. In some cases, entire blocks are rebuilt to be sold on the real estate market. Another growing concern is the very visible presence of foreigners in Medina. This has led to certain hostility on the part of the local population, since foreigners tend not be respectful of Moroccan standards of behavior, appropriating the urban space as if it were their right to do so

and putting traditional uses and customs unduly at risk. Although the number of foreign residents in the Medina does not support that perception, it is nonetheless gaining ground.

While built heritage is recognized by government institutions as a fundamental asset, conservation activities tend to be both incomplete and poorly coordinated. Heritage assets are not always entirely integrated into the Medina's and the city's strategic planning policies, even though their potential could not be clearer. The rehabilitation of the historic built environment, if correctly designed, could provide opportunities to meet the goals set by government agencies and civil society organizations for the provision of social services (facilities and developments for children, education, and health service centers, etc.) There is certainly great room to improve the presentation of the Medina's cultural heritage. For now, little information is available to help visitors understand and appreciate the quality of the urban environment and the built historic environment. The idea of creating pedestrian routes to facilitate visits to the Medina is a very promising initiative, but it must be complemented with better signposting, the production of brochures, and other communications tools.

#### **Box 1. Jamaa el-Fna Square, UNESCO Intangible Heritage Site**

Dating back to the fourteenth century, Jamaa el-Fna Square has become synonymous with Marrakesh. The square, a national cultural heritage site protected since 1922, is a highly representative example of Moroccan popular culture and traditions, with storytellers, traditional healers, various recreational activities, and money-making activities such as booksellers and food stalls. Restaurants, stalls, and public buildings surround this triangular square, one of the outstanding cultural spaces located inside the Medina. It is a high place of everyday commercial activity and different forms of musical and theatrical expression and a meeting place for the local population and visitors from around the world. Throughout the day and late into the night, a long list of activities is offered, such as traditional medicine, preaching and henna tattoos, water bearers, and sellers of dried fruits and other traditional foods. Other shows and recreational activities are also on the menu, such as storytellers, poets, snake charmers, Berber musicians (*mazighen*), dancers (*gnaoua*), and sentir players (*hajouj*). Oral stories are continuously repeated by bards (*imayazen*) in their travels across Berber territories. Although they are fewer in number today, they still continue to combine gestures and words to tell their stories, amusing and delighting their audiences. By adapting their art to contemporary contexts, they improvise on old storylines, giving a wider audience access to their tales.

### **Box 1. Jamaa el-Fna Square, UNESCO Intangible Heritage Site (continued)**

Jamaa el-Fna Square is the high place for culture exchanges and is one of the two best examples of world heritage recognized by UNESCO, as the *Moussem* of Tan Tan (an ethnic and religious gathering) was added to the list in 2005. However, the changes brought about by commerce and real estate speculation, as well as by the development of road infrastructure, threaten the survival of this cultural space. While Jamaa el-Fna Square continues to enjoy great popularity, it nevertheless risks seeing its traditional practices lose their intrinsic cultural significance, particularly in light of the growing number of tourists who regularly visit the square.

## **2. Marrakesh's Increasing Attractiveness: Past to Present**

Until the early 1990s, Marrakesh was a city with imperial origins whose income depended mainly on agriculture and commerce. It was a major destination for residents of the south and sub-Saharan countries and its reputation outside Morocco as an elite tourist destination developed little by little. Several factors led to spectacular growth starting in the mid-1990s, in particular an open-sky policy, an increase in tourism and second homes, the creation of a program for municipal investments and urban services, and the opening of a new university. These are the main milestones in the city's development, based on the ever-growing international allure of the Medina of Marrakesh:

- Creation of the "new town" (*ville nouvelle*), following Henri Prost's development plan (starting in 1913);
- Construction of the La Mamounia hotel by the National Railways Authority, opened in 1923;
- Between the two world wars, Marrakesh attracts writers, artists, and other personalities such as Alfred Hitchcock and Winston Churchill;
- Marrakesh is "discovered" by bohemians, celebrities, and trend-setters such as the Rolling Stones (1966), the Beatles, Yves St. Laurent, and the Gettys;
- Beginning of the rise in real estate values in the Palmeraie, starting in the 1960s;
- Inauguration of the Cadi Ayyad University, 1978;
- Medina development plan, 1981;

- The Medina of Marrakesh is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, 1985;
- Development of civil society organizations, with the creation of numerous associations, NGOs, and professional organizations, starting in the early 1990s;
- Master Plan for Urban Development (1994) serves as the reference point for subsequent actions;
- The Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO) is signed in Marrakesh in 1994;
- Construction of new hotels in Marrakesh (Méri dien, Royal Mirage, Sofitel, etc.);
- Open-sky policy liberalizes air transport, attracting low-cost airlines such as Easy Jet and Atlas Bleu, as well as international airlines including Royal Air Maroc and British Airways;
- Marrakesh Museum opens in 1997;
- Palais des Congrès, a 6,500-seat conference center, opens in 1998;
- “Capital”, a program on TV5 (France), presents the opportunities to invest in *riads* in Marrakesh and Essaouira (1998)
- Boutique hotels begin opening in the Medina, starting with *La Maison Arabe* in 1998;
- Launch of the Marrakesh International Film Festival ([www.festival-marrakech.com](http://www.festival-marrakech.com)) in 2000. The festival is held every December;
- “Medina Unit” created by the Urban Authority (*Agence Urbaine*) in 2000;
- *Medina of Marrakesh Development Plan*, 2001 (not yet approved by the Municipal Council);
- The Jamaa el-Fna Cultural Space is listed as Intangible Heritage by UNESCO in 2001;
- The Marrakesh Climate Conference (COP7) is held in 2001;
- Restoration of the area surrounding the Koutoubia mosque by the Association du Grand Atlas, using public and private financing (2002);
- Agenda 21 Local publishes reports on the city of Marrakesh in 2004;
- Urban Landscape Improvement Program, including Jnane El Harti, Arset Abdelsalam and roads (2004);
- Creation of Marrakesh Regional Tourism Council ([www.tourisme-marrakech.com](http://www.tourisme-marrakech.com));
- Launch of communication campaign promoting the city of Marrakesh in Great Britain and other countries in 2005;

- Rehabilitation of twenty *fondouks* as part of the National Human Development Initiative (2007);
- The Marrakesh Association of *Maisons d'Hôtes* (boutique hotels) ([www.amhms-maroc.com](http://www.amhms-maroc.com)), is created in 2006, with 119 members in 2008;
- Work is begun to enlarge the Marrakesh airport (to be completed by end 2008)

### **3. Changing Economic Activities**

Marrakesh is the regional and administrative center of southern Morocco and, as such, ensures the economic activities and services of its residents. Until the early 1990s, Marrakesh did not attract a large number of tourists; essentially, there was a high-end segment and a backpacker set. The economy depended mainly on agriculture, crafts, and the public sector.

With the rapid expansion of the tourist economy and both domestic and foreign investment in the residential sector starting in the mid-1990s, the economy has grown significantly and is now relatively diversified. The main activities in the four main sectors of the economy—crafts, tourism, agri-food and commerce—have made a significant contribution to economic expansion in the Medina of Marrakesh; in particular, crafts, tourism, services, and commerce:

- The crafts sector is dynamic and highly diversified, with segments as varied as copper work, jewelry, textiles, ceramic, leather, woodwork, furniture, and lamps and candles
- Tourism, with its approximately 700 *maisons d'hôtes* (boutique hotels, located mainly in the Medina), restaurants and other tourist services (guides, etc.)
- Construction of recreational or second homes, including homes and villa complexes in the Palmeraie and in the outskirts of Marrakesh
- Expansion of the transportation industry and tourist services
- The tertiary sector, including bank services and telecommunications, as well as the Palais des Congrès and the teaching sector associated with Cadi Ayyad University
- Agricultural production, consisting mainly of citrus, plant oils, and truck farming

### **Commercial Activities**

Commercial activities are well developed in Marrakesh. There are an estimated 30,000 licensed commercial units in the city and about 60,000 people working in the sector. An indication of the changes in the sector's distribution mechanisms is the decline in the Mellah, the original Jewish

neighborhood—located not far from Place Jamaa El Fna—once one of the most popular shopping areas for residents of Marrakesh. Today, the Mellah faces competition from well-developed and better-organized distribution centers that offer more economic benefits. Small merchants in the Medina face many logistic difficulties, including access to the Medina and limited parking space, strongly eroding their ability to compete.

The crafts sector has undergone profound and constant changes as the tourism sector has evolved, with increased production aimed at domestic, tourist, and international markets. Its key products include household goods such as lamps, copper and brass work, wooden chests and wood sculptures, ceramic, passementerie, textiles and garments, and accessories, such as jewelry, handbags, and slippers. There have been structural changes, such as the creation of professional training centers and the promotion of associations (39 cooperatives have been created). Also, field visits have found that women are now active in the crafts sector, including handcrafted goods and lamp making, trades which until recently were the domain of men. However, the sector is very poorly organized and often acts as a refuge for the unemployed and underemployed. Many artisans work in poor or dangerous conditions and their income is often poor, to say the least.

**Table 1. Number of Artisans Registered in the Crafts Association**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Number of registered artisans</b>
Textile	1,535
Wood	829
Leather	872
Metal	---
Plant derivatives	---
Construction	568
Ceramic	83
Other	1,960
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,847</b>

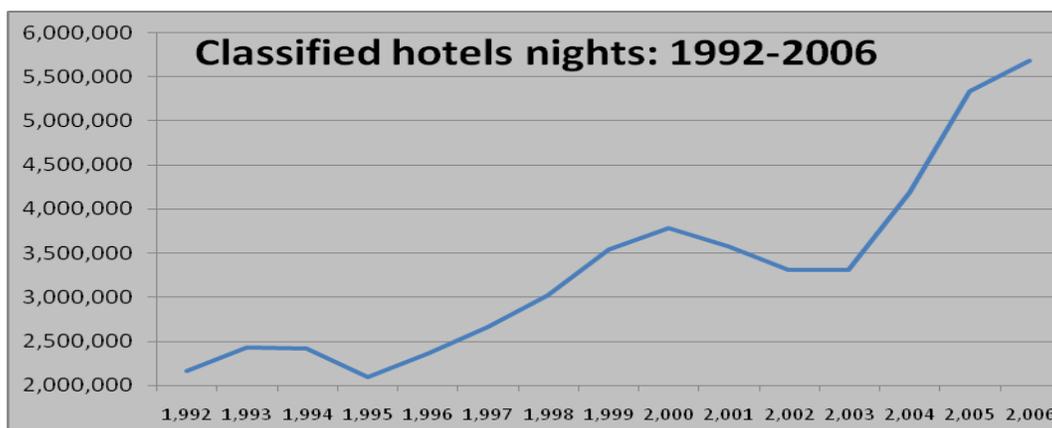
*Source:* Profil Environnemental Marrakesh, 2004

The public service, made up of the administration and education, also makes a major contribution to the economy. It is the city’s biggest employer, with about 13 percent of the active population in the Medina of Marrakesh and 25 percent in Menara-Gueliz. The creation of Cadi Ayyad University, with 25,000 enrolled students, has also helped breathe new life into the local economy, while adding to the number of skilled workers in Marrakesh. The university’s presence offers many opportunities. For example, it recently launched a Masters program in Cultural Heritage and Tourism Management with about 50 students who will add to the human resources operating in these sectors. The university is also a partner in projects financed by the European Commission, such as the TRAINMONHER project and Euromed Heritage III.

### **Tourism**

Tourism is a vital force in the economic development of the city of Marrakesh. It is a long-standing historical phenomenon linked to the pilgrimage route to the tombs of the Seven Saints of Marrakesh. The city has seen remarkable growth in its tourism revenues over the past decade, spread out through the year in a relatively stable cycle. A study of the annual changes in the number of nights spent in classified hotels since 1992 shows an upward trend starting in 1995, except for the period immediately following the 9/11 attacks of September 2001. Since 2003, the annual growth rate has accelerated sharply. Between 1992 and 1995, the number of hotel nights dropped by an annual average of 1 percent in Marrakesh and in Morocco as a whole. Since 1995, the average annual growth rate has been 5 percent for the country and 10 percent for Marrakesh. This means that Marrakesh’s share of hotel nights rose from 20 percent in 1992 to 35 percent in 2006. Figures 1 and 2 show that tourism has developed at a much quicker pace in Marrakesh than in Morocco as a whole.

**Figure 1. Classified Hotel Nights, 1992–2006**

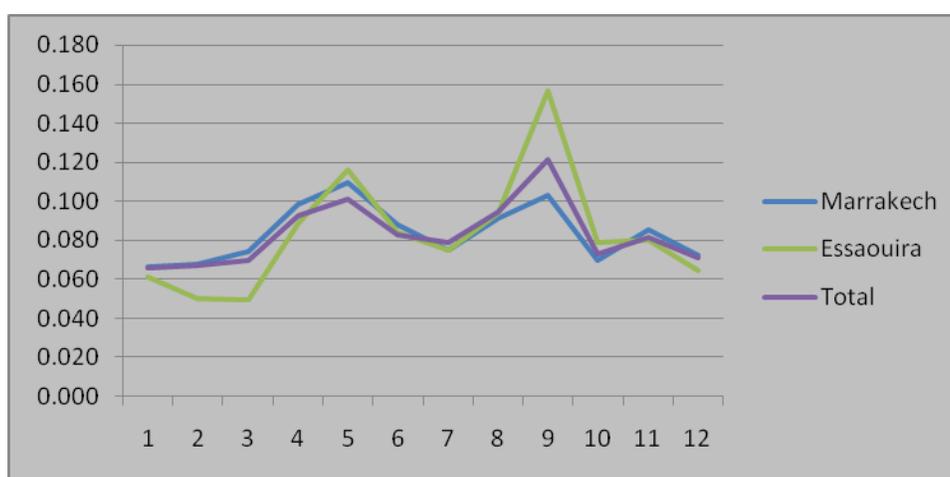


*Source:* Information compiled from the Annuaire du Maroc directory.

During the same period, growing demand was satisfied by a continually increasing supply. The number of classified hotels rose from 73 to 572 between 1992 and 2006. The number of beds more than doubled, from 16,277 to 35,068.

Marrakesh has another important factor in its favor in terms of drawing tourists: arrivals and hotel nights are well distributed throughout the year and there is low seasonality compared to other destinations in Morocco. This is a significant advantage for cultural tourism and one that the city of Marrakesh wants to exploit.

**Figure 2. Monthly Distribution of Arrivals**



*Source:* Information compiled from the Ministry of Tourism website for the period December 2006 – November 2007.

Between 1995 and 2006, the number of tourists arriving by airplane jumped from less than 700,000 per year to over 2,600,000. During the same period, the number of tourist beds rose considerably to 21,096, mainly in the 74 classified hotels (year 2000). Another 4,000 beds were added to this capacity between 2001 and 2002. In 2000, 4,242,622 hotel nights were registered, 90 percent of them in classified hotels. Current estimates suggest that about 20 percent of these were domestic tourists and that this figure has continued to rise since then. In recent decades, the number of visitors arriving in Marrakesh by plane has risen sharply.

**Table 2. Airline Passengers to Marrakesh**

	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	1995
Marrakesh – all passengers	2,648,742	2,195,899	1,667,267	1,368,281	1,349,363	1,393,015	675,548
Domestic passengers	272,495	305,030	273,339	246,858	286,145	308,201	157,697
International passengers	2,324,348	1,847,628	1,345,460	1,066,814	1,038,075	1,063,487	497,749

*Source:* National Airports Office.

As the table above shows, 2006 saw a net increase over 2005 in the number of arrivals by airplane (an increase of 452,843 passengers). The average annual increase for the period 2004–2006 was in the order of 25 percent. The one million arrivals mark was passed for the first time in 1998. Over 32 airlines now operate at the Marrakesh airport. Information from the Urban Authority (*Agence Urbaine*) shows a considerable increase in the demand for tourist establishments, indicating a strong need for additional tourist facilities.

**Table 3. Tourist Establishments in the Medina**

01/01/2003- 30/06/2003	30
01/01/2004-30/6/2004	24
01/01/2005-31/12/2005	42
01/01/2006- 31/12/2006	73
01/01/2007-30/6/2007	49

*Source:* Agence Urbaine de Marrakesh.

Information in the news media suggests that there will be a significant increase in tourist facilities in Marrakesh in the coming years. Prominent high-end hotel establishments include English investments of the Forte group and international investments of Mandarin Oriental, among others, that are opening new deluxe niche hotels in the outskirts of Marrakesh. Many other smaller-scale projects are also underway or in the design stage. There are many cases of investors adapting original establishments to new activities. Marrakesh has an unrivalled capacity for innovation and this is particularly evident in its production of crafted goods, which is among the most innovative and varied in the world. Influenced by the world of fashion and

interior decoration, the artisans of Marrakesh strive to create new types of products. The “Marrakesh” style is making itself known in the world of style and already has many followers.

Examples include an artisan working in a renovated fondouk who recycles and reworks brass ashtrays into decorative soap dishes, or a basket maker who creatively diversifies his product range. Wood sculptors and other artisans working in the building trades are also particularly involved in creative activities. These are just a few of the hundreds of examples of new products that have been created by Moroccan artisans in the past decade. At the top of this list of products are household articles, which are valued in both the domestic and export markets. The Expo Riad Art (see Box 2), now in its third edition, is an outstanding example of the vitality in this field. However, certain economic sectors appear to be having some difficulties at the moment. Another textbook case is that of traditional herbalists who increasingly are being replaced by herbalists who focus on the tourism sector. The *Global Diversity Foundation* gathers information on these changes and their impact on biodiversity.

### **Box 2. Riad Art Expo**

Created and chaired by the managing editor of *Couleurs Marrakesh* magazine, Riad Art Expo is Morocco’s first professional lifestyle trade show and is supported by many Moroccan institutions: the Ministry of Tourism and Crafts, Ministry of Culture, Wilaya (regional authority) of Marrakesh, City of Marrakesh, Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc (business association), National Tourism Federation, Crafts Federation, and association of *riads* and boutique hotels and crafts cooperatives.

In its fourth edition as a rendezvous for designers, decorators, professional artisans working in the Moroccan lifestyle sector, developers and investors in Morocco, Riad Art Expo has remained true to its goal: to promote the very rich and diverse range of Moroccan creative work. At Marrakesh’s Palais des Congrès, **Riad Art Expo** has presented the most recent 2008 creations in decoration, design, traditional architectural materials, and artisanal items, as well as accessories, jewelry, garments, and local specialty products. An important part of the Moroccan economy in terms of job creation and revenue, the Moroccan crafts sector is at the heart of the government strategy to encourage increased activity, higher productivity, and more exports of Moroccan crafts, based on goals set with a horizon of 2015.

**Box 2. Riad Art Expo** (continued)

The Expo brings together creators, decorators, designers, producers, and other professionals in the Moroccan lifestyle sector who have the opportunity to meet and share their know-how there. It also sets out to draw public attention to the manufacture of artisanal products by enabling the public to participate in different circuits “discovered” in the local manufacturing sector. Exhibitors and visitors at the Riad Art Expo include professionals in interior decoration and design, architects, national and international investors and developers, manufacturers, exporters and importers of decorative items and crafts, owners and managers of boutique hotels, hotel managers and owners, tourism professionals, and the general public.

[Source: www.riadart-expo.com](http://www.riadart-expo.com)

There is an intense interaction between intra muros economic activities and the activities of the urban agglomeration as a whole. It is undeniable that the economy of the Medina—particularly the western part of the Medina—is intimately dependent on the economy of Grand Marrakesh and on that of the region as a whole. Despite the immense scale of construction in and around Marrakesh, the Medina continues to be a reference point for economic activity. According to economic census data for 2001, the Medina is the home of 42 percent of economic establishments and 31 percent of their jobs. This is one of the highest ratios in the kingdom, bearing witness to the density of economic activity in the Medina.

**Table 4. Distribution of Economic Establishments in the Medina of Marrakesh**

	Medina		Agglomeration		Percent in the Medina	
	Number of businesses	Number of employees	Number of businesses	Number of employees	Number of businesses	Number of employees
Commerce	7,481	13,571	16,141	33,191	46 %	41 %
Services	2,155	6,252	7,078	26,698	30%	23 %
Industry	3,391	8,676	7,431	30,637	46 %	28 %
Public works	54	78	297	2,099	18 %	4 %
Total	13,081	28,577	30,947	92,625	42 %	31 %

*Source:* Economic census 2001, HCP.

The different programs launched by the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, and Craft Industries, and by local NGOs and other external agencies, have helped promote economic activities both in the urban agglomeration and in the Medina. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has made a significant contribution to raising awareness of the need to preserve the Medina, encouraging investment in conservation activities since the 1990s. One of the most innovative activities has been the rehabilitation of *fondouks*, undertaken under the National Human Development Initiative (NHDI). About 20 fondouks have been selected for physical rehabilitation and their occupants have benefitted from training and competencies acquired under an extended program aimed at tackling the scourge of social exclusion.

During the period preceding the NHDI, issues surrounding land titles had deterred rehabilitation work, but since the NHDI was launched, these issues have been addressed. Considering the fact that fondouk residents are among the most disadvantaged, this is a very laudable effort aimed at improving their living and working conditions. Green spaces inside the Medina, under pressure from new construction and social changes, are also receiving certain attention. The *Global Diversity Foundation* has launched an initiative “For More Green Spaces in the Medina,” for a study of underlying conditions aimed at conserving the Medina’s remaining trees, and for re-establishing vine trellises (*daliya*) in selected areas. The UNDP, the Frederick Neumann Foundation, and other local organizations—such as the Tensift Regional Development Center—are also active in Marrakech.

### **The Medina’s Customers**

Although no quantitative data currently exists, it is possible to identify and stylize the relative contribution that different groups of customers make to the four main areas of economic activity. This classification makes it possible to distinguish between activities and services that are sure to see greater growth due to the presence of a well-heeled international clientele that comes to Marrakesh for leisure and consumption, and activities and services aimed at local customers with much more limited spending power.

**Table 5: The Medina’s Customers and the Attractiveness of its Activities and Services**

Customers	Commercial activities		Productive activities		Tourism and hospitality sectors	Cultural and leisure services
	Basic necessities	Specialty products	Basic necessities	Specialty products		
Intramuros residents	strong	weak	strong	weak	weak	weak
Extramuros residents	strong	weak	weak	weak	weak	weak
Domestic tourists	Nil	strong	nil	strong	strong	weak
Foreign tourists	Nil	strong	nil	strong	strong	strong

**Definitions:**

- Commercial activities – Basic necessities = Basic food products, basic clothing, basic household products, etc.
- Commercial activities – Specialty products = Jewelry, expensive furniture, crafted articles, etc.
- Productive activities – Basic necessities = Household articles, furniture, construction materials, facilities, etc.
- Productive activities – Specialty products = Furniture, carpets, leather goods, crafted articles, etc.
- Tourism and hospitality services = Hotels, boutique hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars, etc.
- Cultural and leisure services = Social centers, theatres, museums, gaming halls, etc.

**4. Changes in the Social Makeup of the Medina**

The Medina of Marrakesh, which due to its demographic and economic importance has a central place in the urban agglomeration, has undergone a spectacular transformation over the past 10 years. According to the 2004 census, the population of the Medina (Mechouar Kasbah and the Marrakesh-Medina district) was 182,637, or about 22 percent of the population of the urban area. This population lives in 39,145 households, with an average size of 4.6 persons. In recent decades, the Medina's population has declined at an average annual rate of 1 percent, which nonetheless is slower than the 1.3 percent average rate for all medinas.

In 1994, its average density was 300 inhabitants per hectare, a figure that obscures the differences among the various districts. On the whole, the Medina has shown a trend toward de-densification and, as a result, its demographic weight in the city dropped from 51 percent in 1982 to 31.5 percent in 1994. This process may be attributed to the impacts of general urban sprawl, the deterioration of housing in the Medina, the shift from residential use to commercial use of the housing stock, and the boutique hotels phenomenon (see Box 3: *Maisons d’Hôtes*).

**Table 6. Selected Sociodemographic Indicators of the Medina**

District	N°	Subdistrict	Population	Number of households	Activity rate (%)	Illiteracy rate (%)			Poverty rate in district (%)
						Men	Women	Total	
Mechouar Kasbah	3	Kasbah	12,959	2,758	39.80	16.20	39.00	28.50	9.19
Marrakesh Medina district	4	Bab Dbagh	34,516	6,919	39.20	27.40	47.80	37.60	7.69
	5	Bahia	31,481	7,192	41.30	21.90	44.30	33.70	
	6	Bab Taghzoute	31,204	6,642	41.20	25.40	45.70	36.00	
	7	Bab Doukalla	25,435	5,600	42.80	20.10	42.60	32.10	
	8	Bab Ghmat	26,988	5,594	39.80	23.80	44.60	34.60	
	9	Jamaa Lafna	16,871	3,810	42.80	19.90	42.10	31.00	

Source: Social Action Department, Prefecture of Marrakesh.

### Box 3. Boutique Hotels: Rehabilitating Medinas or Altering Them?

A phenomenon that has been transforming many medinas for several years now is the appearance of new hotel establishments that try to combine the comfort of a modern hotel with the charm of a traditional Moroccan home. These establishments, known as *maisons d'hôtes* or boutique hotels, first appeared in the medians of Marrakesh and Essaouira in the mid-1990s. This phenomenon, which has brought activities to the medinas that previously had been found only in the new parts of the cities, has also brought significant cultural and socioeconomic interactions. The question, therefore, is what the consequences have been on the social, economic, and historic environment of the medinas. While the phenomenon will have to be quantified in order to assess it objectively, its detractors insist that it has had significant negative effects on the traditional urban environment. At this point there is little objective evidence to help understand the phenomenon, although the Marrakesh Urban Authority did recently complete a study on the subject. Regarding the scope of the phenomenon in Marrakesh, the study shows that in 2005 the Medina had 277 *maisons d'hôtes* with a capacity of 1,550 rooms.

### **Box 3. Boutique Hotels: Rehabilitating Medinas or Altering Them?** (continued)

According to the tourism office, this number had risen to over 700 by March 2007. Of these, 80.3 percent are classified either as category one (30.8 percent) or category two (40.5 percent) establishments, while 8.4 percent are pending classification. Compared to traditional hotel establishments, these boutique hotels are generally small in size, nearly 70 percent of them having fewer than 10 rooms. While most boutique hotels are concentrated in relatively well-preserved traditional environments and are located directly adjacent to commercial areas, the spike in real estate prices and the scarcity of available properties has forced certain *maisons d'hôtes* to set up in denser, poorly maintained neighborhoods. This is sometimes perceived as a violation of the most private residential spaces.

The presence of this kind of establishment in the heart of out-of-the-way residential neighborhoods brings with it a clientele with "strange" habits that are not easily accepted by conservative, traditionally-minded residents. According to the study by the Urban Authority, boutique hotels are the initiative of developers from different countries, led by the French (39 percent). However, this phenomenon has several direct and indirect positive effects. It contributes to the rehabilitation of the built environment, the restoration of heritage, the growth and modernization of the crafts sector thanks to a steady demand for high-quality products, and—above all—the creation of jobs and the preservation of certain traditional trades. According to the study by the urban authority, nearly half the establishments are made use of local artisans (42.7 percent) or businesses (9 percent). However, the impact on daily economic activity in the Medina remains small, because most goods are purchased from big stores and wholesalers (64 percent). The proliferation of unregistered boutique hotels operating as part of well-organized networks based on Internet marketing reduces the positive impact of these establishments on the national economy, since local spending represents only a small fraction of the price paid by tourists for their accommodation.

In conclusion, despite the potential negative social impacts, if properly monitored and regulated, these establishments have the potential to become a productive investment helping to create wealth and jobs and preserve architectural and cultural heritage and artisanal skills, while adding to Marrakesh's accommodation capacity and attracting a diversified visitor clientele, including youths and budget travelers on low-cost flights.

Information dating back to the 1994 census shows an illiteracy rate of 42.45 percent in the Medina—midway between the rate in Marrakesh Menara (33.56 percent) and in Sidi Youssef Ben Ali (S.Y.B.A.) (49.66 percent)—, while the national average was estimated at 39 percent. By 2004, the illiteracy rate had dropped in the Medina as a whole to an average of 33.3 percent, with the highest rate in Bab Dbagh (37.6 percent) and the lowest in Kasbah (28.5 percent). In the Bab Dbagh neighborhood, women registered the highest illiteracy rate, at 47.8 percent. Data from 1994 indicate that the school attendance rate in the Medina stood at 79.68 percent, compared to 85.39 percent in Marrakesh Menara and 75.35 percent in S.Y.B.A. There were 88 Koranic schools in the Medina in 1999 to 2000 (out of a total of 120), while there were 118 schools (out of a total of 612). The economic activity rate in the Medina in 1994 was 40.12 percent (59.6 percent for men and 22.1 percent for women), a higher rate than either Marrakesh-Ménara (37.78 percent) or S. Y. B. A. (35.97 percent). In 2004, the economic activity rate in the Medina remained nearly unchanged at 40.98 percent, while the highest levels were recorded in Bab Doukkala and Jamaa Lafna (42.8 percent) and the lowest in Bab Dbagh (39.2 percent). However, the unemployment rate in the Medina in 1994 was higher (19.61 percent) than in Marrakesh Menara (18.99 percent) and S.Y.B.A. (17.97 percent).

In the year 2000, an estimated 3,000 households were displaced and relocated outside the Medina. The most dilapidated areas are Hay Salam in the South, Arsat El Mellak and Kbour Chouhada in the North, and Bab Dbag and Tabhirt in the East. Meanwhile, the 2004 census showed 409 foreigners living in the Medina.

**Table 7: Origin of Residents of the Medina**

Year	Moroccans	Foreigners	Total
1994	217,233	215	217,448
2004	182,241	396	182,637

*Source: RGPH 2004, HCP.*

As a result, the preconceived notion that the Medina is being invaded by foreigners is hardly justifiable, given the fact that the number of foreigners living in the Medina grew by only 200 in 10 years, representing less than 0.2 percent of the population.

## 5. Physical Changes in the Medina

The Medina is rich in historic architecture, with a long list of finely made religious, commercial, and residential structures, many of which are decorated in sculpted wood and stucco work, with exterior surfaces covered in painted ceramic tiles. Its ramparts, doors, and urban spaces—brightened by fountains and gardens—are also important urban features. There are an estimated 21,000 constructions in the Medina, including 170 fondouks (84 percent privately owned and 16 percent belonging to *habous*<sup>2</sup>), mainly concentrated in Bab Doukkala and the north.

Compared with other medinas, the Medina of Marrakesh has one of the highest proportions (77.4 percent) of households established in traditional Moroccan houses (typical medina constructions). About 13 percent of residents live in modern Moroccan houses, while the penetration of apartment buildings remains very weak (1.9 percent), bearing witness to the relative preservation of the original built environment. For many years, however, the registration and classification of historic heritage buildings failed to protect them. Of these buildings, 5,400 are considered to be in poor condition, while 239 are ruins.

In 1994, 48.55 percent of households that owned their own homes in the Medina, 37.23 percent were renting, and 14.22 percent were registered as “others.” These figures are relatively similar for Marrakesh Menara, with 47.97 percent of households owning their own homes and 29.58 percent renting. The highest home ownership rate is found in S.Y.B.A. (56.47 percent). In 2004, the home ownership rate in the Medina stood at 51.4 percent, while the rental rate was 37.0 percent, indicating a slight upward trend in home ownership. In the Kasbah, 64.2 percent of homes were owned by their occupants, compared to the 49.8 percent in the Medina district; tenants in Kasbah, meanwhile, accounted for only 25.5 percent of households, compared to 38.4 percent in the Medina district. The home ownership situation in the Medina is therefore quite uneven. The western section is well integrated in the new, modern city and attracts a larger number of tourists and visitors; the east, meanwhile, is dilapidated and under-equipped, and is home to a poor population and a large amount of unhealthy housing.

Poor housing developments are concentrated mainly in the Medina and in the old section of S.Y.B.A. Data from 2004 suggest a significant improvement in general living conditions: 96.1 percent of homes were equipped with flush toilets, 92.0 percent with running water, and 94.9 percent with electricity. About 67 percent of homes are more than 50 years old and will

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<sup>2</sup> Non-profit religious institutions that manage individual donations of real estate.

eventually need upgraded services. The foundouks and riads also suffer from a lack of services and crowding. A study was done of 41 fondouks containing a total of 862 households (an average of 21 households per fondouk) living in below average conditions, 45 that serve as craft production centers and 59 with mixed residential/commercial use. Of greater concern, according to Ministry of Housing figures, the number of households living in unhealthy conditions rose from 16,500 in 1992 to 18,300 in 2000. About 45 percent of households, mainly in the Medina and S.Y.B.A., occupy one- or two-room dwellings. In some areas of the Medina, subleasing, cohabitation and crowding have become common conditions.

**Table 8. Statistics on Housing Conditions in the Medina**

		<b>MU Mechouar Kasba</b>	<b>Marrakesh- Medina district</b>	<b>Total Medina</b>
<b>Ownership status</b>	Owner	64.2	49.8	51.4
	Tenant	25.5	38.4	37.0
	Other	10.3	11.8	11.6
<b>Age of dwelling</b>	Less than 10 years	5.6	3.6	3.8
	10-19 years	8.4	5.3	5.6
	20-49 years	28.7	22.9	23.6
	50 years and over	57.3	68.2	67.0
<b>Basic equipment/services in dwelling</b>	Kitchen	85.0	75.0	76.1
	Flush toilet	97.2	96.0	96.1
	Bathroom	24.9	18.1	18.9
	Potable water	95.0	91.6	92.0
	Electricity	96.2	94.7	94.9
<b>Wastewater disposal method</b>	Public system	91.0	91.5	91.4
	Septic tank	1.7	1.2	1.3
	Other	2.4	3.3	3.2
<b>Other equipment/services</b>	Television	92.4	88.8	89.2
	Parabolic antenna	32.7	27.0	27.6
	Landline telephone	29.0	20.4	21.4
	Mobile/cellular telephone	67.0	61.9	62.5

*Source: RGPH (2004).*

In the case of Marrakesh, the information that the Urban Authority obtains through construction permits is important in the analysis and understanding of the changes going on in the Medina. The trend is toward a growing number of applications for construction permits. There is no exhaustive data on the number of dwellings that have been rehabilitated or the

number residential units that have changed owner. Moreover, no information exists on the conditions of sale of these dwellings. Figures show that 187 applications for permits to build in the Medina were approved in the year 2000. The urban authority launched an action plan for the rehabilitation of at-risk dwellings, based on a selection of dwellings showing the highest rate of risk. Since 2005, about 120 have been demolished and about 400 households have been relocated. The urban authority plans to stabilize another 700 buildings (other figures indicate 460 households relocated to safe dwellings and the consolidation of 955 housing units).

Marrakesh has long been the focal point of most European real estate investment in Morocco, and properties in the Medina are at the top of the list. No information is available on the number dwellings now held by new residents or by nonresidents (including foreign residents), though 396 foreign residents were recorded in the 2004 census. While the number of units that have been turned into boutique hotels, restaurants, bars, and cultural or recreational centers is not known, it is clear that the number of boutique hotels is growing quickly, with over 700 units to date.

The 1990s saw increased investments in the conservation and rehabilitation of the historic built environment and improvements in municipal infrastructure. A large number of projects to safeguard the built heritage have been implemented or are underway in the Medina. These projects involve, for example, the restoration and rehabilitation of the Bahia Palace and the Saadian Tombs and the creation of a museum at the Badia Palace, all undertaken by the Inspection des Monuments et Sites Historiques (since 1999); the restoration of Medersa Ben Youssef and Qoubba Almoravide, jointly with the Omar Benjelloun Foundation and the World Heritage Center; and the restoration of the Shrob Ou Shouf fountain in partnership with the ARCH Foundation. Also, a certain number of scientific studies have been completed, including some in collaboration with the Historic Monuments and Sites Inspection service of Cadi Ayyad University. The city has also made considerable efforts to beautify public spaces by keeping public streets clean, launching a program to develop green spaces in most streets and parks, and improving street lighting, among a range of other measures aimed at making the city more livable and creating a positive brand image for the city of Marrakesh.

A number of environmental and infrastructure projects have also been carried out in Marrakesh, including some aimed at improving ecological conditions in the Dar Dbagh tanneries, which pose a health risk because of the liquid waste and bad smells they emit (project initiated by the NHDI). The supply of clean drinking water and disposal of wastes are the

problems of the day in the city of Marrakesh. A small-scale but nevertheless important initiative aimed at enhancing green spaces is now underway at the Ibn Abi Sofra school in the Medina.

#### **Box 4. Urban Garden Project of the Ibn Abi Sofra School**

The *Global Diversity Foundation* (GDF), in collaboration with Maghrebio and the Natural History Museum of Marrakesh, plan to restore orchards and vegetable gardens over a one-hectare area in collaboration with teachers at the Ibn Abi Sofra primary school. The school is located in the old, abandoned Agdal Bahmed garden, a 19-hectare area behind the Bahia Palace in the Medina. This initiative is supported by a long-standing institution: Ibn Abi Sofra was one of the first agricultural institutes in Morocco, created to teach traditional agricultural know-how and new growing techniques to young students, many of them from families that arrived in the city as part of a large rural exodus through the second half of the twentieth century.

### **6. Sustainability of the Urban Growth Model Focused on the Medina**

An assessment of the sustainability of the current state of the economy, planned future developments, and potential risks suggests that achieving the ambitious goals set for the growth of tourism may not be free of environmental and social damage. Rapid changes in the social and economic makeup of the residents of the Medina threaten to disrupt the “extended family” feeling in the *derb*, which has traditionally provided the infrastructure for social cohesion and integration in the Medina. The *derb* is the most intimate of urban spaces—the quiet alley where children play or where women share their lives together—a space that in some cases seems to have been taken over by new owners who acquire several dwellings in the same *derb*. The infrastructure for social cohesion refers to the functional center of each neighborhood, consisting of a mosque, a *madrassa*, a *zawiya*, a *hammam*, a public oven, and stalls.<sup>3</sup> At the level of the Medina, infrastructure for integration refers to the Grand Mosque, the souk and specific production areas. Within this context of social complication, it is nevertheless quite possible to see the positive aspects of the economic growth of Marrakesh, with the Medina as a driving force for the city as a whole:

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<sup>3</sup> Respectively: Koranic school, place of worship and Moorish bath.

- An expanding, diversified and highly innovative economy, based on the double force of tourism and artisanal activities, supported by a solid tertiary sector that adapts quickly to demand.
- An expanding market in second homes acquired by domestic and foreign investors, supporting real estate values inside the Medina.
- The development of an economy based on services to support tourism and other economic sectors, such as banking, financial services, and telecommunications.
- The creation of a brand image for Morocco, built mainly around the image of Marrakesh and its Medina as a well-known and recognized quality destination.
- The prestige associated with the Palais des Congrès, raising Marrakesh's profile in diplomatic and international business circles through the organization of world-class events.
- Strong tourist demand throughout the year (enhanced by the promise of 300 sunny days a year), satisfied by the existence of transportation and hospitality infrastructure offered by traditional and boutique hotels.
- A diversified tourism market. The greatest number of arrivals comes from France and Great Britain, with the United States, Spain, and other European countries as secondary markets.
- The development of rural tourism, largely led by the Regional Tourism Council, focusing on the natural environment, culture, winter sports, hiking, horseback riding, and cycling in Oukaimeden, Toubkal National Park, the Zat Valley, and the Ourika Valley, among others.

However, certain related concerns are raised by the negative consequences of economic growth and urban development:

- Considerations relating to environmental quality, in particular the pressure put on water resources and air quality.
- Traffic congestion and inadequate public transport, along with intense competition among the users of roadways inside the Medina (cars, trucks, motorcycles, carts pulled by animals, cyclists, pedestrians).
- A waste collection and disposal system that is being quickly overloaded by increased tourism, crafts production, and commercial activities.

- An apparent rise in violent crime (sexual aggression, theft, etc.) in Marrakesh—a city known until now for its high level of public safety.

## **7. The Winners and Losers in the Rehabilitation of the Medina**

The balance between “winners and losers” in the urban changes underway in Marrakesh and its Medina involves residents inside the Medina, residents in the rest of the city, and the local business community. Marrakesh presents a somewhat contradictory picture, with some clear winners, as well as some losers who are suffering, in particular, from social exclusion. Here is the breakdown:

### **The Winners**

- The residents of the Medina in general, who have benefitted from improved infrastructure and social services, including drinking water, electricity, and modern communications systems;
- Residents of the Medina whose housing conditions have improved as their incomes have risen, enabling them to maintain and rehabilitate their dwellings;
- Owners of residences in the Medina who have benefitted from a substantial increase in the value of their properties, including some who have already profited by selling them;
- Artisans with a high potential for creating high-value-added articles for the emerging tourist market, and large and small merchants who have greatly increased their business volume thanks to increased demand;
- Artisans working in fondouks that have been rehabilitated under the NHDI programs, who now have better working conditions and whose products are now more visible;
- Entrepreneurs and the local business community in general, who have been able to greatly expand their economic activities due to the constant increase in the number of visitors and owners of second homes;
- The labor market, where wages—especially in the construction, accommodation, and tourist service sectors—have risen considerably, in line with the city’s economic growth.
- Residents of the greater urban area of Marrakesh as a whole, who now have access to enhanced cultural offerings and international opportunities without precedent in the history of the city.

## **The Losers**

- Residents of the Medina who continue to live in dwellings that are in poor condition or threatening collapse, and who have not benefitted from rehabilitation for lack of economic means (in 2007, three persons died following the collapse of their homes);
- Tenants—37 percent of the Medina’s residents—who, due to the rising value of real estate, often face rising rents or the threat of eviction after the sale of a building;
- Residents of the Medina whose immediate neighborhood has evolved from purely residential use to commercial and tourist use, thereby losing the benefits of the traditional social space so characteristic of the Medina;
- Residents of the Medina who see their traditional local commercial activities erode little by little as new stores open for tourists, and who are forced to go farther afield to buy basic necessities;
- Owners of traditional businesses who lose their market share or who feel obliged to relocate elsewhere due to the growing demand for stores selling products aimed at customers from outside.

## **8. Action Needed to Provide Greater Sustainability to the Medina**

Despite its remarkable economic performance, Marrakesh faces major challenges if it is to achieve continued and more equitable growth that remains focused on the Medina. To build a better future for the pool of human potential with which Marrakesh and its Medina are brimming, and to improve the lot of its most disadvantaged resident, these challenges will have to be overcome through:

- Public rehabilitation programs in the most dilapidated neighborhoods, where most of the poor population of the Medina is concentrated, beginning with structures threatening collapse and the housing stock in the Habbous district;
- Implementation of an economic and tax incentives system for tenants, aimed at facilitating home ownership in the Medina based on access to real estate loans and appropriate public assistance;

- Sustainable water resource management, providing the city with access to reliable water without compromising the future of nearby green areas, beginning with the Palmeraie;
- Defense of urban environmental quality with regard to waste disposal and treatment, ambient air quality, and noise levels inside the Medina, etcetera.
- Implementation of a plan to safeguard and rehabilitate the Medina, taking into account the development of the intra muros built environment, while creating opportunities to implement programs to preserve historic buildings;
- Progressive improvement of workplace safety and health conditions for workers inside the Medina, who are often subject to harmful artisanal production techniques;
- Promotion of the authenticity of the Medina and the preservation of its unique architectural, social, and cultural features, in response to profound urban changes that are bound to intensify;
- Development of traffic management systems and public transport systems as a substitute for individual transport, while reducing vehicle congestion and emissions in the Medina.

## **9. What Lessons Can Other Moroccan Cities Learn from Marrakesh's Experience?**

Although Marrakesh has a unique set of attractions and advantages, including its sunny climate, its easy access by airplane, its urban heritage, and its pleasant living environment—all of which make it an incomparable destination—, certain elements of the strategy that have made it a national and international success story may be useful to other historic cities in Morocco that are looking for ways to make the most of their heritage. Marrakesh's renewal strategy has involved more clearly identifying the city's potential around its main drawing card—the attractiveness of its Medina—while mobilizing its citizens' interest in their city's future by opening up the local economy more to international markets and through good collaboration among civil society groups, local and national public authorities, and the private sector. The creation of a university certainly has helped fertilize this process and its intellectual contribution has been a factor in success. As this case study shows, profound urban changes are underway, significantly affecting the Medina, which has adopted the growth model and is also being transformed. The economic benefits of Marrakesh's success are not evenly distributed and require strong public intervention to ensure better social distribution. At the same time, environmental quality in and around the

Medina is threatened by the success of the development model, and action will be required to protect it in order to ensure greater sustainability in the future.

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