

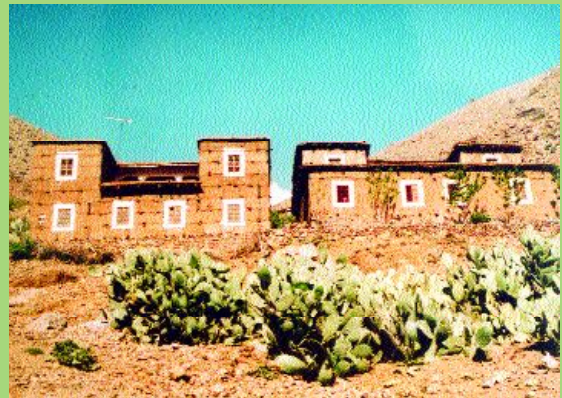


## 6.1 Atlas Voyages: Supporting Research for Health and Hygiene in Morocco

### Description of Good Practice

As part of a company re-organisation plan, Atlas Voyages, a Morocco-based inbound tour operator, has committed to supporting rural development and child welfare. As a first step toward fulfilling this commitment, the company partnered with the Moroccan Association of Research Action for Health and Hygiene (AMRASH), which has a global, integrated vision of sustainability that is supported by a programme of activities geared towards environmental conservation, providing clean water supplies and social development.

AMRASH, which was founded by a pediatrician, with the help of a group of doctors, sociologists, business people and bankers, focuses on several major fields of action, including solidarity, mutual aid, village development, education, water, electricity and health. The Association's approach is based on an in-depth study of the project site and on getting villagers and local authorities involved.



AGUERSIOUAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

### Implementation

Atlas Voyages will raise awareness of AMRASH's activities by distributing an informative flyer to its clients and partners and use its networking and lobbying activities to encourage other partners to support AMRASH. In addition, in March 2003, the company made a symbolic donation of 2,000 Euros (US\$2,389) from its corporate budget for the first year of the relationship. This

money will be used to complete the Aguersioual rural guest house in the Imlil Valley, which will help in generating employment and income for local people. The guest house will also help fund the activities of a local community centre, including health care, education and cultural programmes (see Box 1).

#### BOX 1: AMRASH's Project in Aguersioual

The remote village of Aguersioual, in the Imlil Valley, has benefited greatly from an AMRASH-funded community centre that was built by villagers in 1997. The centre, which was built in a traditional design, includes classrooms, a small handicraft museum, a library, a sewing workshop and other facilities that can be used as a rural hostel, since the region is visited by tourists and hikers. The centre is also equipped with solar energy and irrigation systems. In addition, the villagers have worked with AMRASH to complete a water supply and sanitation project and establish a production co-operative. Lessons in Arabic and French for young illiterate adults, mainly girls and mothers as well as children too old to go to school, have increased the pride and independence of the young women of the village, whilst the sewing and knitting room has turned into a centre for income-generating activities by the women.

### Comments

Atlas Voyages selected AMRASH as a partner because it is the perfect example of synergy between villagers, local authorities and a collection of countless little networks that share and exchange knowledge and skills at local, regional, national and international levels. By helping local people find the tools for change, AMRASH contributes to crucial and basic needs such as energy saving, illiteracy, mother and child care, and rural depopulation.

Atlas is currently developing a strategy to identify other activities with local communities and major international clients to raise funds for AMRASH.