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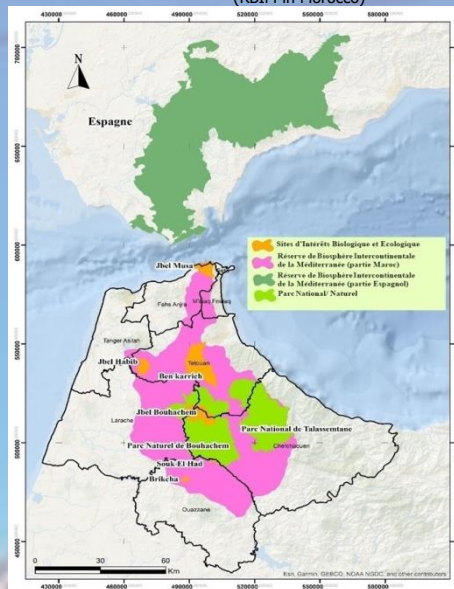
## The ROLE OF WOMEN IN PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

### The Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean in Morocco (RBIM in Morocco)

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The Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean in Morocco  
(RBIM in Morocco)



- The RBIM is unique in the world, as it connects two continents and covers part of the international waters on its territory. It covers an area of almost one million hectares, divided roughly between Morocco and Andalusia and includes the protected areas of the Moroccan and Spanish coasts.
- The Moroccan part located in the heart of the Tingitane peninsula partly covers the provinces of Chefchaouen, Tetouan, Larache, Ouezzane, Fahs-Anjra, M'diq-Fnideq and Tangier-Assilah. It contains many natural ecosystems (forest, coastal and oceanic) with important ecological value. Through the study of protected areas conducted between 1993 and 1995, certain species of biological and ecological interest (SIBE )were identified in this region of Morocco: 1995: the site of the Talassemtane National Park, JbelBouhachem, Jbel Moussa, Smir Lagoon, the Oued Tahaddart..

The objective of the RBIM is to improve environmental conditions and work for sustainable development while trying to create and consolidate channels of communication and participation of local communities and develop cooperation between the two shores. The Moroccan part of the RBIM is supposed to be a framework of environmental balance for a region currently in economic expansion

Rural women are a permanent or temporary family workforce and play an essential role in agricultural work. Some work is under the responsibility of women: breeding and maintenance of vegetable crops. The rural woman is also responsible for the food security of her family in that she is responsible for the majority of food processing and storage activities the supply of water, the collection of aromatic and medicinal plants, acorns, etc. She has a direct relationship with her environment and has an impact on natural resources.

**Women are the most active part of the region's population by doing household chores and many other things:**

Wood collection

Education of children

Animal care

Water supply

Grazing

Fruit and vegetable  
picking

Collection of aromatic and  
medicinal plants.

Access to drinking water and sanitation seems essential to lead a life in full dignity and is also a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights

Access to water in the outskirts of the town is unfortunately hampered by so-called geographical, economic and cultural factors with a strong inequality between women and men.

As is recognized the mission of water supply is provided by the women and girls of douar, with their heavy containers cross thousands of kilometers in order to collect water.





The collection of wood is carried out especially by the woman, is used for heating in cold periods, for baking bread and meals, etc.



Although difficult, the forest retains positive connotations to women's eyes, allowing them to satisfy their needs and evoking a sentimental attachment in terms of experience, history and cultural heritage.

It cuts without uprooting trees, keeps in memory the same areas of collection transmitted from generation to generation, it adapts an approach of rotations from 5 to 6 years whose goal is to preserve the wood-energy resource.

Moreover, women have a specific ecological knowledge and a great knowledge of their environment, they are very aware of changes in their ecosystem (loss of biodiversity, erosion,) and the role she plays in these processes (clearing, occasional impact of wood collection...).



In rural areas and especially on the outskirts of Chefchaouen, the appearance of the woman is usual with her disguise Chefchaounia and her herd. The life of the rural woman does not take place at the home where she takes care of domestic tasks and the education of children, but an active role in the whole cycle of production and animal processing.

Indeed, the shepherdess is responsible for collecting fodder to supplement the feeding of the animals that remain near them. She watches over pregnant females and then their calves, kids and lambs, and takes care of sick animals that cannot follow the herd.

Olive picking: a woman's business par excellence. This know-how will one day be passed on to this little girl



## The role of women in the preservation of natural resources in the RBIM

« "After receiving seeds, women begin to check and select mature and immature seeds, according to her the mature seeds will be destined immediately to be reels in order to obtain the fine semolina, while the immature seeds are reused as beauty recipes to nourish the hair and skin or keep them so that they can be used later or a food for chickens " ».

Source: Belgruch W Interview with women., November 2020



Photo Belgruch W., November 2020

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Source: Interview de Belgruch W with Women., november 2020

The harvest of olives seems an arduous step that must be well mastered in order not to alter the quality of olives, this mission is ensured by women either in the north or in the rest of Morocco for a simple reason that women remain skilled and gifted, they use their own hands.



RIF women project, Maroc programme plant for the planet november 2016

To reduce time, men use saplings as a Alternative.

Certainly, the latter reduces the time and cost of harvesting that manual picking yet contributes to damage the branches of the tree which generates poor productivity.

## The effectiveness of techniques adopted by women

• The method of women in picking is more effective than that of men

Valorization and transformation of by-products into new products

Women are rational, methodical and managerial in relation to natural resources



The woman is more productive and intelligent than the man since she consumes but her nature always intervenes to invent ecological gestures par excellence which shows her possession a unique know-how, and according to the results obtained from the field testify to a great commitment on the part of this warrior to value the natural resources unlike the man. Indeed, the revaluation of the place of women in rural society makes it possible to achieve real sustainable rural development. Thus, thanks to the participation of women in cooperatives that contribute to the preservation and valorization of local products, which leads to an improvement in the attractiveness of the territory. These women have considerable expertise in resource management that should be encouraged and developed.