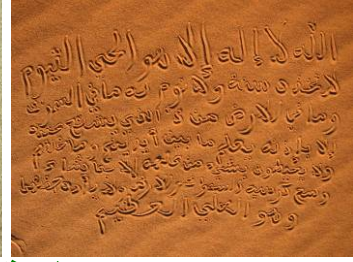


Zaïla Association

www.zaila.ch



المحافظة على البنية الطبيعية و الثقافية للصحراء

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العمل من اجل تطور دائم حقيقي

Protecting the desert environment

&

The struggle for truly sustainable development

Like other natural areas and reserves such as mountains, glaciers and especially oceans, today the desert is suffering damage caused by pollution generated by the consumer society, notably through the increasing prevalence of waste plastics which destroy both the natural beauty of the desert, and possibly even worse, the health of the environment.



The Zaïla Association organizes an unusual and innovative project at M'hamid to deal with this damage. It results in ridding the desert of plastic and other polluting waste, and motivating the local population to act and react so that the desert is not condemned to becoming the consumer society rubbish bin instead of playing its noble role to purify the lungs of the earth.

Your help is invaluable to continue this project that leads to truly sustainable development!

Zaïla: re-establishing the respect and protection of a forgotten environment

M'hamid is in southern Morocco, at the edge of the Drâa valley, and a good hundred km from Zagora. When you follow the Drâa Wadi, and you travel the valley that it has cut, you enter the desert gently. The sun becomes increasingly harsh and then the scenery changes; the horizon becomes wider and flattens and little by little the rocky ground becomes sand.

M'hamid is the last palm grove before the Sahara; the great caravans of hundreds of camels left from M'hamid to cross the desert and reach Timbuktu after more than two months walk. But there are few camels today in M'hamid; the modern world and desert business have taken their place and are replacing and displacing the traditional life and ways of the people of M'hamid palm grove.

The desert is a fragile milieu, an ecosystem with limited resources. Without protection, the desert will never manage to rid itself of the tons of rubbish deposited by the consumer society.

The desert: Fragile milieu and ancestral lifestyle

- **One mission:**
Protect the natural environment and ensure the harmony with its inhabitants
- **One sustainable approach:**
Alternative Solutions
- **How?**
 - **To use what the nature offers to you**
 - **To develop judicious & practical solutions**
 - **To ensure continuous harmony between human activity and natural environment**

Zaila initiated an original project, “Alternatives Solutions”, involving inhabitants of M’hamid, as response to polluting waste like plastics, canned food and other rubbish of consumption society. More important, this project is creating real sustainable economy respecting natural environment and the cultural life of people as well.

- **Alternative Solutions at glance :**

Cleaning is not a solution, producing natural items is sustainable one

Since 5 years that inhabitants of M’hamid organize, yearly, a wide operation of «Cleaning: Nettoyage» of their palm grove and adjacent area of the desert, however, this is not enough to overcome plastics transported by wind everywhere. In June 2008, during the association Zaila Assembly in M’hamid, the project “Alternative Solutions”, is launched with a long-term mission: produce natural items to replace plastic items and other unnecessary industrial products. The project team was constituted around Mr. Lahbous AbdelAli, from Oulad M’haya, who presented several models made from palm leaf, animal hair, pottery, etc. More than 10 families were involved in 2008 and more than 50 families are expected to join the project this year, since the environmental conscious is increasing in this area. More ever, the Alternative Solutions project is combined with planting trees around the palm grove. 187 trees were planted by Sahara.roots, the Holland foundation, and Zaila last year.

This project will also include 5 wells to dig around the palm grove in order to provide water to the young trees.

At M'hamid, the desert wind blows more than sand; it blows about thousands of black plastic bags, plastic bottles and other waste unknown by the traditional nomad society until now. The people of M'hamid decided to react by founding an association, Zaïla, which is acting intensively by developing an "Alternative Solutions" project based on the nomad knowledge and their respect of the nature.

Alternative Solutions Project: How to shift from plastic to natural items

From



Plastic: short-time use and durable pollution

To

- **Biodegradable Items:**

Hssairs (Palme-carpet), Gouffas (Palme-bags), Sellas (bags for vegetables), Ghrairs (Camels bags), other items practical and useful (plate made by wood, Bedouin tents, etc.).

The main success of Zaila projects is to re-activate all these clean items in current life of people.



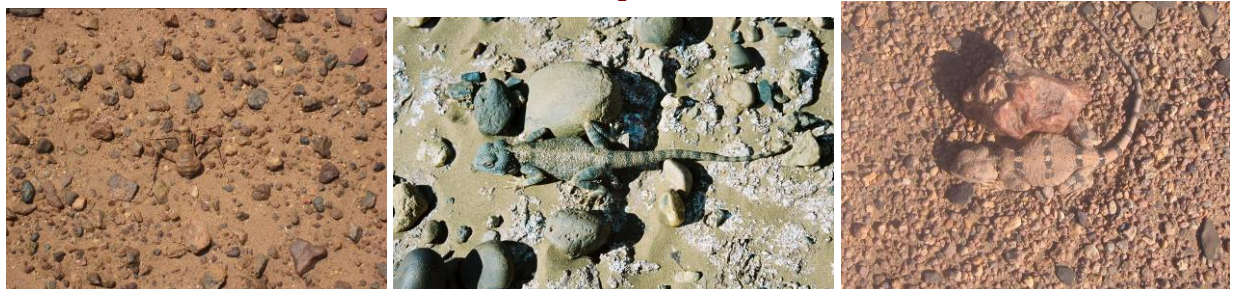
Clean items: long-term use and sustainable, social and economical activities

**Alternatives solutions to the plastic: Made by Zaïla
The real sustainable development**

Our responsibility is to protect plants as well as animals, essentials to preserve the biodiversity



Flora to preserve



& Fauna to protect

This project honors all species living in the desert: the fauna, the flora and nomad people, cohabiting in perfect harmony since centuries and even more.



Another look to the desert environment!

Thus, the beauty as well as the magic of this milieu, where the man has rid from the futile and discovered the essential, could be preserved by your help.

مشاريع جمعية الزايلة



The harmony between culture, economical activity and environment is of real meaning for Zaila projects



The respect of plants



Don't crush the plant, unlike animals and human beings, it can not escape!

Trees are top fighters in the frontline of the drought. Sahara-roots and Zaila association developed a planting trees project around M'hamid, near Sidi Khalil site. More than 180 trees were planted by AbdelAli Lahbous and his team in 2008. Sahara-Roots Foundation led by Wanda Hebly also made an original book dedicated to children's and environmental education, "Me and my Sahara". The book was presented to schools in M'hamid in June 2008, during the operation of "Nettoyage", with a great success and emotion. The theme "Plastic pollution, Water & Trees" was discussed in the assembly closing the operation. The presence and involvement of girls from M'hamid schools, in discussion and awards distribution, was one of the exciting and striking moments! Bedouin girls demonstrate, during this event, their sensibility, their enthusiasm and their intelligence regarding environmental issues. It was a strong sign of hope!



Trees planted by Sahara-roots & Zaïla, near Sidi Khalil, March 2008

See: www.zaila.ch & www.sahara-roots.org

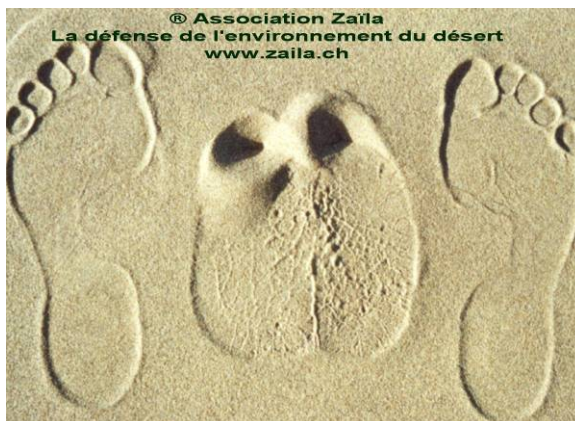


Wanda..., price distribution by Mr. Goumnacef, the Ministry of Education Delegate (a bike won by a girl for her good narration of Wanda booklet story) and final presentation to students (the majority are girls, of course!)



Alternative Solutions presented to students the journey program

The letter sent to Lalla Hasna Princesse requesting her support to Zaila projects



إلى صاحبة السمو الملكي الأميرة للا حسناء
رئيسة مؤسسة محمد السادس لحماية البيئة

**Son Altesse Royale Lalla Hasna
Présidente de la Fondation Mohamed VI
pour la Protection de l'Environnement
Rabat**

Genève, le 9 mai 2008

Votre Altesse,

A l'occasion de la journée mondiale de l'environnement (le 5 juin), l'association Zaila et les habitants de M'hamid organisent une opération de nettoyage des déchets plastiques (la 4^{ème} édition depuis 2005), les 6, 7 et 8 juin 2008

Nous sommes heureux de présenter à votre Altesse le programme de cette opération déjà discuté avec la Fondation (Monsieur Tijani et Mesdames Lahlali et Benyaich). Ces discussions ont souligné, si besoin est, que le Maroc a mis l'Excellence Environnementale dans les priorités nationales.

La nouveauté de cette édition est la présentation de deux projets pérennes, par ailleurs liés :

- Un projet des solutions alternatives au plastique : la fabrication des produits naturels et biodégradables
- Un projet éducatif avec les écoles et collèges de M'hamid : « Quand les élèves éduquent leurs parents ! »

Le premier projet comporte plusieurs solutions judicieuses assurant à la fois un développement économique local et une protection de l'environnement. Le deuxième nous engage sur l'avenir en impliquant les écoles dans l'approche environnementale. L'opération 2006 a été illustrée par un film court-métrage (une copie se trouve à la fondation) bien accueilli dans des festivals en Europe. On souhaite vivement sa diffusion au Maroc et en Afrique pour nourrir le débat:

"Sacs plastiques: Usage éphémère et Pollution durable".

Nous sollicitons de Votre Altesse le parrainage de cette opération et le suivi de ces projets.

Nos respectueuses salutations

Ali Sbai, coordinateur Association Zaila Europe-Maroc

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www.zaila.ch ou le respect de l'environnement fragile du désert