



Sefrou Association for Multidisciplinary Arts  
جمعية صفرو للفنون متعددة المناهل  
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presents

### ***The Urban Fabric, Sefrou***

*A psychogeographical project by Liz Kueneke*

### **Impact Report**

March 2024. Sefrou, Morocco



## **1. Context**

In the setting of Sefrou, in the heart of Morocco, lies an ancient market town steeped in history. Once an important stop on the North African trading route, between the Sahara and the Mediterranean, Sefrou carries the cultural richness and yet, like many other small Moroccan towns, scrambles to keep up with ‘modernity’ and struggles to value the heritage of times gone by. The old city and its stories seem to fade along with the urban architecture and customs that once united a town.

### **SAMA Association - Mission**

SAMA aims to foster a vibrant arts and cultural ecosystem in Sefrou; empowering local communities to engage in cultural entrepreneurship and management we aim to create a public arts and cultural movement. Through collaborative programs and initiatives, SAMA seeks to preserve and promote Sefrou's multicultural heritage, while also addressing social, environmental, and economic challenges within the community.

Ultimately, SAMA strives to contribute to Sefrou as a hub for arts, culture, and community engagement, enriching the lives of its inhabitants and visitors' experiences.

**The Urban Fabric, Sefrou**

In March of 2024, SAMA spearheaded the project management and hosting of American-Spanish artist **Liz Kueneke** and her psychogeographical art project, *The Urban Fabric*. Kueneke meticulously embroidered a street map of Sefrou's old city onto a large cotton cloth before visiting the city. Alongside a series of ethnographic questions aimed at sparking dialogue and sharing stories about Sefrouian's relationships with their environment, Liz and SAMA's team conducted community outreach interventions in various venues and locations around Sefrou's old Medina. Adorned with locally crafted 'Lakaad' textile buttons to mark participants' responses, the map served as a canvas for community engagement and reflection.

See the link for the choice of questions posed to the community participants.  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qv0WBrXK2A4UjZLeloIAvRMSLUTLGcV6lqbyohelc5A/edit?usp=sharing>

**2. Quantitative**

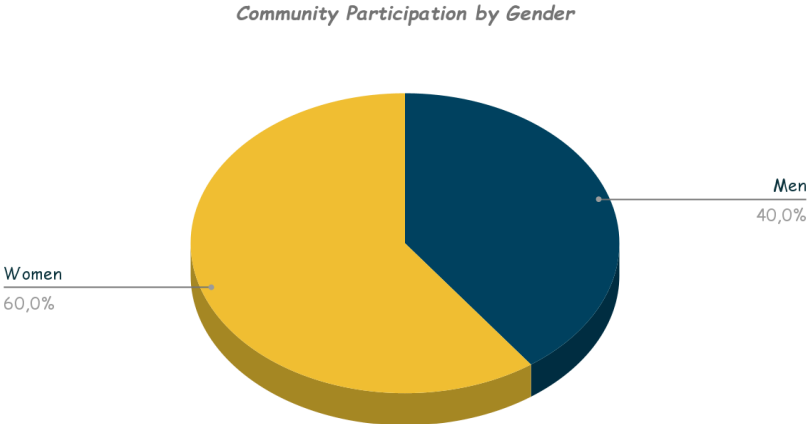
You will find attached the statistical diagrams of the "The Urban Fabric" project and its impact on the community of the city of Sefrou.

***a. The community's participation in the realization of the map.***

Community participation statistics based on geographical locations

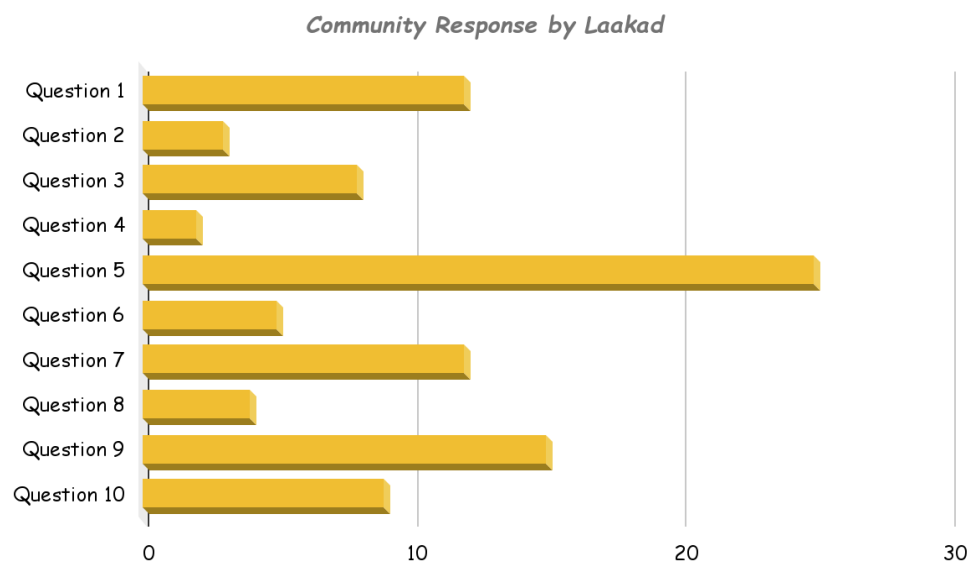
Gender-based community participation statistics.

- This diagram illustrates how the community in the city of Sefrou is involved in designing Laakad buttons based on gender: Male and Female.



Community engagement with Laakad.

- The following diagram illustrates the survey of the community using the Laakad buttons on their responses to questions related to the old town of Sefrou, according to a list of questions you can find attached in the document.



### 3. Qualitative outcomes

Some of the 25 stories recorded are -

"Najia," who recounts her perceptions of the origins of the craft of "elaaqad" in Sefrou. Her understanding traces back to a Jewish woman who taught another woman, Fatima bint Ma'atiya in the neighborhood of "Stee Masouda". Her neighbor, Zahra bint Al-Yusufi, accompanied her, and they became the first women to learn the art of "elaaqad" in Sefrou. Since then, they began teaching and developing it, and this industry spread, she claims.

"Khadija," exemplifies the coexistence between Muslims and Jews on Saturdays. The Muslims would help the Jews light fires on the Sabbath to celebrate the holiday of "chabat", and they would cook the dish of "raqqaqa" together, sharing experiences and celebrating their religious days together.

The story of "Hassan" provides a glimpse into the history of the "Qasbah" and "Taqasbt" neighborhoods, where the letter (ta) is always added to words of Amazigh origin for definition or feminization. "Taqasbt" refers to adding the letter (ta) from Amazigh origin.

Lastly, the story of "Fatima Zahra" reminds us of the reason behind naming the neighborhood "Arsat Adar." It is related to the houses in this neighborhood, which were large and shaped like gardens, ( Asart) with trees, courtyards, and a stream called Wadi Akay passing through the middle of the houses.

In response to the project, one participant, a local master embroiderer Faiza Alaoui commented 'it gave a renewed sense and interest to the city. Something like this is important to involve local residents and highlight the richness of our heritage and cultural diversity in the city.'

Enjoy listening to all the stories shared by our valued residents through the audio broadcast, at the following link: <https://app.box.com/s/ztc0lnm4grf9gz0h9sjlazetu1e9hkfr>

The Urban Fabric, Sefrou carries further significance as it acts as a connector for several projects within SAMA's portfolio. The map, generously donated by Liz, further propels the mission of an arts and cultural movement for, by, and about Sefrou, now finds its place in SAMA's micro museum, the Sefrou Museum of Multiculturalism (SMM), a grassroots entity that serves as a hub for community engagement. Here, along with other elements to Sefrou's story, it contributes to a sense of community building, belonging, and meaning for Sefrouians through SAMA's programming. With the support of Brigham Young University (BYU) in the US, SMM is spearheading the development of an Open-Air Museum, slated to be embedded in and around Sefrou's old city.



4. **Budget and Notes** - 12 444 MAD / 1140 € + artwork preparation and donation.  
[See accompanying documents](#)

5. **Legacy**

- A short film documenting the project and particularly the stories of the participants is in the post-production stage, yet to be released on the date of this report's creation.
- Audios were recorded by SAMA facilitators documenting the stories that are transcribed and archived. <https://app.box.com/s/ztc0lnm4grf9gz0h9sjlazetu1e9hkfr>

At the heart of The Urban Fabric project lies a deep appreciation for Sefrou's textile traditions, notably the intricate craft of Lakaad (textile button). Kueneke, renowned for her multidisciplinary



approach to art, is captivated by the profound culture of textile craftsmanship that saturates the streets of Sefrou. In collaboration with BYU and USMBA University in Fez, an ethnographic documentary around the Lakaad textile button is currently in creation, through which SAMA and the Sefrou community once again bring the thread-based crafts, local traditions, and voices of Sefrou into the limelight.

In a world where divisions seem to grow ever deeper, the Urban Fabric, Sefrou stands as a beacon of connectivity, weaving together communities, traditional local heritage, and creative innovation to build a movement of unity, inspiration, and belonging in the heart of Sefrou.

The artist, inspired by the association and its mission, generously donated the collectively created art map to the SAMA-run, Sefrou Museum of Multiculturalism ( SMM) so it may continue to spark stories and dialogue on the old city and be a tool for community and urban engagement.

## 6. **Potential**

- **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** This engagement can be further expanded through ongoing community involvement in similar initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents. Ie. Local Festivals.
- **Tourism and Economic Development;** The project's documentation of local stories and traditions can serve as a unique selling point for attracting visitors interested in authentic cultural experiences.
- **Education and Awareness:** The Urban Fabric, Sefrou offers valuable educational opportunities for both residents and visitors alike. It can be integrated into school curriculums, cultural exchange programs, and guided tours to raise awareness about Sefrou's history and heritage among different audiences.
- **Artistic and Creative Expression:** The Urban Fabric project highlights the intersection of art, culture, and community engagement. Furthermore, the stories collected can act as content for a multitude of artistic projects such as theater, murals, sound pieces, music, storytelling, and more; contributing to the local art scene and fostering creativity among residents.

## 7. **Conclusion**

Based on the colors of the buttons and their placement on the map in response to [the questions](#) posed to community members over the cloth map of the medina, and the process of assessment the following conclusions are made. This report is carried out by SAMA's team of local facilitators and project managers who participated in the execution of the project and live locally, therefore conclusions are two-fold

- From the quantitative outcomes
- From the teams' experiential reflections

We have taken each question individually and followed up with an overall conclusion.

1. Bab el Mkam holds a significant place in the hearts of many, revered as a hub of celebration. The hosting of events such as the Cherry Festival and the Festival of Ahajij, alongside daily activities like playing dominoes and tea gatherings, attests to a palace of community gatherings. Similarly, the yellow-marked fundok of El Ghazal signals its role as a venue for festivities, notably hosting the Sefrouin caftan fashion shows hosted by civic organizations. Conversely, while El Haddadine fosters craft interactions, its crowded nature may render it overlooked by some.

2. El Haddadine remains a vital space for the community, offering essential services such as artisan services, groceries and butchers shops at Bab el Mrebaa. The personal significance attached to these locales, as emphasized by respondents, underscores their importance beyond mere recognition of sole traders and their outlets.

3. Upon analyzing responses to the map question, it becomes evident that each location serves distinct functions within the community. Bab el Mkam emerges as a gathering spot for women, facilitating activities like button-making and child supervision. In El Haddadine, the fundok shops provide a space for women to engage in crafts, fostering community bonds. Habouna, with its communal garden, serves as a public space for gatherings. Additionally, Bnimedril is frequented by women for vegetable shopping.

4. Moreover, the inclusion of anecdotes and myths surrounding these places, particularly along the river after Abdrehman el Mjdob, further enriches their cultural significance and underscores their integral role in the urban fabric of Sefrou.

5. The pink button indicates the answer to What is the heart of the city? This was a popular choice of question to respond to and in fact, a diverse range of places and locations was selected. Predominantly public streets and squares and homes were chosen, some chose cafes and other shops. Home dwellings and workplaces as a popular choice for community participants to select indicate that the responses are nostalgic and personal rather than reflective of society in general.

6. Half of the answers to the question 'What is a positive place for the community' were placed over dwellings and half in public spheres, indicating that homes are both socially bonding and positive. The second significant number of responses indicated public squares, clearly places of community gathering and as indicated positive and the last answer marks a commercial street.

7. A maroon button on the map indicates the responses to 'What is a place that needs changes?' That is predominately marked as Mellah Square where knocked-down buildings have left a relatively large open urban area in a poor district. Another area is where the adhok vegetable souk is located and the third is the river. In other projects involving community voices

a similar pattern arose and we also conclude from personal experience that neglect and environmental disrespect for the environment is evident.



Part of the square in the Mellah ( photo by SAMA, 2021)



Medina Walls by Rueben Ross, 2019)

8. Mark a place of ( recent or ancient ) historical meaning. Who or what cultures are involved? The three places market for this question were Bab El Mrba3, ( an ad-hoc market area that has been since Sefrous history of photographic evidence of approx a century) a home dwelling in the neighborhood Asaad Dar, and once again the square of the Mellah. There were few buttons placed for this question, meaning participants didn't have an interest or response for historical and cultural reflections or other questions that dominated the table for their popularity.

9. 'Is there anywhere you consider to be specifically Amazigh' is a question that a SAMA facilitator also contributed to as an Amazigh youth. He reflects that the home is a place most Amazigh due to a language switch from Dariija in the public realm and Tamazight at home, certain habits he considered to be Amazigh such as methods of cooking, certain Amazigh dishes, celebrations and traditions. The presence of an Amazigh TV channel adds another strong cultural significance to the home.

Of the 5 answers, 3 indicated domestic spaces and 2 a commercial square. It was concluded that Amazigh relations and the claiming of Amazigh identity are strong either at home or in commercial settings.

10. 'Is there a palace in the medina where different cultures come together?' was poorly answered however we conclude that it may be similar to other questions. The fact it is the last choice of a list of 10 questions may also give it is sparsely considered. However, the places included in the handful of answers were AlHuddadine Square and a Fundik, (both centers for artisans workshops and commerce) and the clean public space outside of the town hall where public art, green spaces, benches and a fountain can be found.

## Overall Conclusion

The responses to the place most in need of change coincided with the popularity of the places of historical significance marking the paradoxical matching and significant sense of regret when the two coincide.

Small shops and artisan complexes or squares were often chosen as places for community and this indicated the strong sense of business as a key to relationship-building where connections are strong. The home plays an important role in nostalgia and connections.

Given the above factors, we conclude that participants, all of whom were local, responded more with very personal, intimate choices rather than societal ones. They have a strong connection with their medina environment and a sense of themselves in the fabric of both contemporary daily life and a connection to recent history.



Image by Reuben Ross



The Urban Fabric, Sefrou on International Women's Day. March 2022



## 7. Credits and Gratitude

This impact report is created by SAMA Associations' cultural-engineering capacity-building program. Creators: Ikram Charifi, Ziad ACHAHBOUNE, Naoufal Kouiss, Taha El Houmam, and Jess Stephens.



Artist Liz Keuneke and SAMAs team of facilitators

With thanks to Liz Keuneke, the team of facilitators and documentators, Culture Vultures, Fez/Sefrou, and Brigham Young University, Utah, USA for making this project possible. Last but importantly, to the Sefrou community for their continual curiosity and contribution.



<http://samasefrou.org>



The Urban Fabric, Sefrou  
at Sefrou Museum of Multiculturalism, March 2024.





1. دير علامة على البلاصة لي كاتو فيها المجامع و الإحتفالات ، شنو لي كيخلي هاد البلاصة مكتناساش ؟  
-Der 3alama 3la lblassa li kanu fiha lmajma3 w licti9alat, shno li kaykhalih had lblassa mktnasash?  
-Mark a place that has witnessed significant community events or celebrations. What makes these locations memorable?
2. فين كاينين البلاصة لي ما معروفاتش لي كتظن بلي انها مهمة لينا؟  
-Feen kayninen lblasset li ma3rufash li kat7anbli anaha mhmah lina?  
-Where are the lesser-known places within the medina that you believe are important to the community's identity?
3. واش يمكنك تدير علامة على الخريطة للبلايص لي كيتجمعو فيهم النساء؟ شنو لي كيخلي داك البلايص مهمة في انها كتقوي العلاقات؟  
-Wach ymknlik tdir 3alama 3la lkhartta ltblass li kitjma3u fiha nnesa? Shno li kaykhalii dak lblass mhmah fi anaha kat2awi l3alakat?  
-Can you mark on the map spaces of ( female social interaction)? What makes these spaces significant in fostering connections?
4. واش تقدر تعاود حكاية ولا خرافة لي معروفة عندها علاقة بشي بلاصة على الخريطة؟  
-Wach takdr t3awd 7ikaya wla khrafa li ma3rfata 3nha 3alaka bchi lblassa 3la lkharta?  
-Can you share a story or anecdote related to a specific place on the map that has been passed?
5. شنو هو قلب المدينة؟  
-Shno huwa qlbu lmdina?  
-What is the heart of the city?
6. شنو هي البلاصة الزوية للتجمع؟  
-Shno hiya lblassa zwiina llitjma3 ?  
-What is a positive place for the community?
7. شنو البلاصة اللي خصها التغيير؟  
-Shno lblassa lli khasaha ttghyr ?  
-What is a place that needs changes?
8. واش يمكن تدير علامة في الخريطة على بلايص لي عندهم تاريخي؟ شكون هم القبائل لي كاتو معروفين تماك؟  
-Wach ymkn lik tdir 3alama fi lkharta 3la lblass li 3ndha manaha tari5i? Chkon hum lqbayil li kanu ma3rfiin tmak?  
-Mark a place of (recent or ancient) historical meaning? Who or what cultures are involved in history?
9. واش كاين شي بلاصة معروفة غير بالأمازيغ؟  
-Wach kayn chi blassa ma3rfasha ghayr b l'amazigh?  
-Is there anywhere you consider specifically Amazigh?
10. واش كاين شي بلاصة في المدينة فين كاتو القبائل كايتمعو؟  
-Wach kayn chi blassa fi lmdina feen kanu lqbayil kaytjma3u?  
-Is there a place in the medina where different cultures come together?





Note :

The Urban Fabric project was sponsored by Culture Vultures and Brigham Young University, USA, and hosted in the old Medina of Sefrou. The artist paid for her transport from Spain as well as the preliminary requirements to create the initial embroidered map. The table above describes the expenses and the estimated value of everything included in the project.

### Budget Notes:

- For accommodation, the artist was housed in Culture Vultures artist's lodgings at a cost of 500 MAD per night, totaling 4000 MAD for 8 nights.
- Three facilitators, Ziyad, Naoufal, and Ikram, were involved in the project at 250 dh per session per facilitator.

### Artist Contributions to the Urban Fabric Project:

The map was donated to the Museum of Multiculturalism of Sefrou by the artist Liz Kueneke. The estimated worth of the map, as valued by the artist, is 5000 euros. When converted to MAD, this amounts to 54,674.68 MAD. Additionally, the artist invested 100 hours of work into the map. However, assigning a monetary value to this contribution is challenging, as it holds significant intrinsic value to the project.

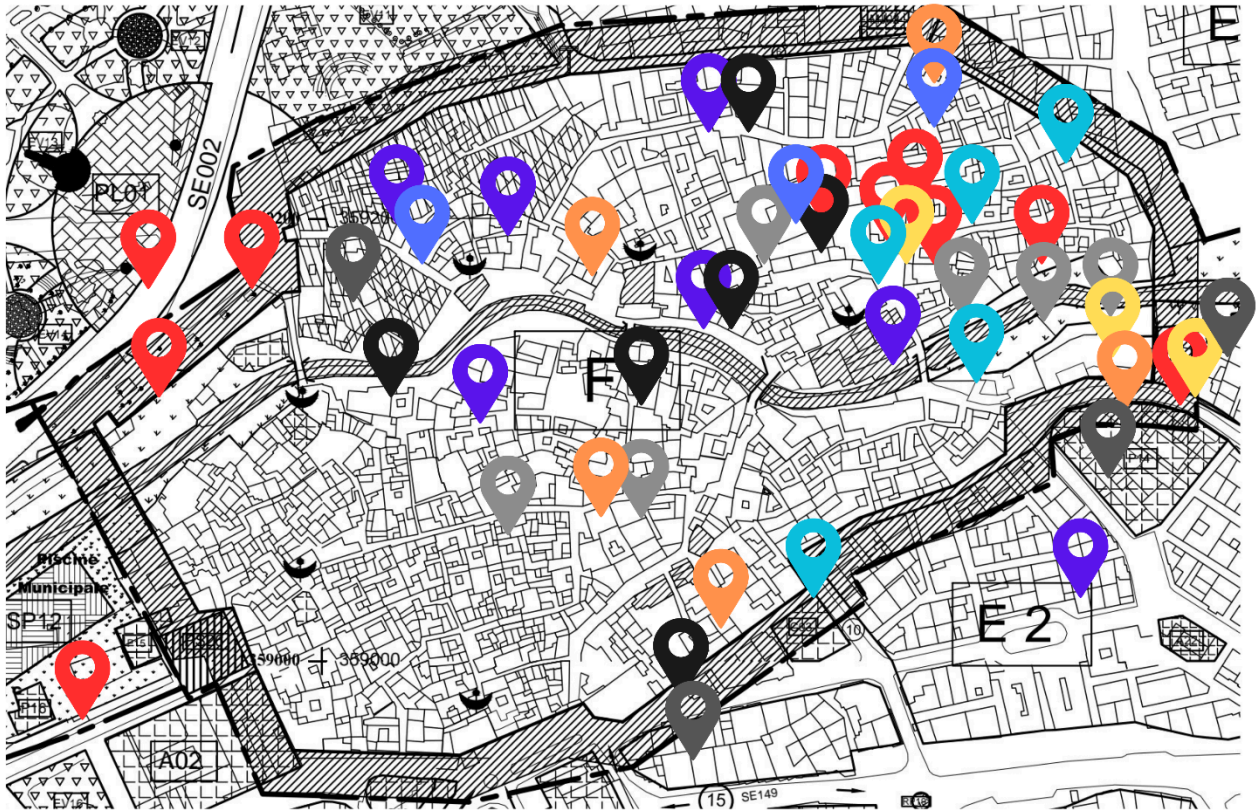
<b>Map Cost</b>	100 Hours	Sponsorship in kind	-
<b>Map Value (Estimated)</b>	54674.68 MAD	One-time Expenses	5000€
<b>Total of The Project</b>	<b>67118.28 MAD</b>	-	



<http://samasefrou.org>

This document is part of [The Urban Fabric. Sefrou Impact Report](#)

# The Urban Fabric Assessment of Responses



-Mark a place that has witnessed significant community events or celebrations. What makes these locations memorable?



-Where are the lesser-known places within the medina that you believe are important to the community's identity?



-Can you mark on the map spaces of ( female social interaction? What makes these spaces significant in fostering connections?



-Can you share a story or anecdote related to a specific place on the map that has been passed?



-What is the heart of the city?



-What is a positive place for the community?



-What is a place that needs changes?



-Mark a place of (recent or ancient) historical meaning? Who or what cultures are involved in history?



-Is there anywhere you consider specifically Amazigh?



-Is there a place in the medina where different cultures come together?

Responses by participants marked places on the cloth map by stitching a colored button relating to a colored question.

Buttons attached to the Urban Fabric Map of Sefrou medina in response to selected [Questions](#) by participants tell us the following information.

1. 12 people placed silk buttons as an indication of where gatherings and celebrations take place in the old city.
2. Only 3 people placed the buttons in this question, and the locations are as follows: Bab El Maqam, El Mellah, Bab El Mraber .
3. 8 people answered this question, and most of them were women.
4. This is the question that the fewest number of people answered, estimated at 2 people.
5. This question received the highest number of answers, estimated at 25 people.
6. 5 people answered this question, and the answers were scattered between locations inside and outside the old city.
7. 12 people answered this question, and there was a consensus on some places.
8. 4 people answered, and there were important historical stories and tales.
9. Through this question, we discovered that most of the participants were of Amazigh origin, estimated at 15 people.
10. 9 people answered this question, with scattered locations mentioned.

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Sefrou Association for Multidisciplinary Arts

جمعية صفرو للفنون متعددة المناهل

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