

WHV – Cultural Landscape of Maymand

Cultural Landscape of Maymand, Islamic Republic of Iran

◆ Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List since 2015

24/08/2016 – 06/09/2016



Maymand is a self-contained, semi-arid area at the end of a valley at the southern extremity of Iran's central mountains. The villagers are semi-nomadic agro-pastoralists. They raise their animals on mountain pastures, living in temporary settlements in spring and autumn. During the winter months they live lower down the valley in cave dwellings carved out of the



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soft rock (*kamar*), an unusual form of housing in a dry, desert environment. This cultural landscape is an example of a system that appears to have been more widespread in the past and involves the movement of people rather than animals. In the exceptionally arid climate, traditionally every drop of water needed to be collected from a variety of sources such as rivers, springs and subterranean pools and collected in reservoirs or channelled through underground qanats to be used for animals, orchards and small vegetable plots. The community has a strong bond with the natural environment that is expressed in social practices, cultural ceremonies and religious beliefs.

Project objectives: The project, the first World Heritage Volunteers camp to take place in the Islamic Republic of Iran, aims at introducing an educational framework to involve the local community and increase the sensibility of local stakeholders on the safeguarding of Maymand. Through the participation in the traditional farming activities, the project aims sensitizing the volunteers and the local families alike on the importance of the site's sustainable agricultural heritage, while also contributing to the preservation of its natural environment. It also aims at giving better visibility to the site at the national and international level, and at creating cross cultural dialogue opportunities for local youth and international volunteers.

Project activities: After the introductory lectures and presentations given by heritage experts to present the peculiarities of Maymand cultural landscape and living conditions, the volunteers will work with the local community for the agricultural seasonal production, from almond and nuts picking to preparing grape syrup, learning about the necessary farming skills to preserve the cultural landscape threatened by inappropriate techniques and overproduction. They will also participate in making Namad handcraft, gaining a better understanding of the intangible heritage of the site as well as of income generating activities important for the local community. Several heritage education and awareness raising activities will also take place with the local youth, aiming at valorizing their heritage and traditions and encouraging them to stay or return in the village to take an active role in preserving the site.

Partners: Site management of the Cultural Landscape of Maymand and Payam e Sabz Organization.