

WHV – Improving the Role of Youth Participation for Lalibela World Heritage Site Protection and Conservation

Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela, Ethiopia

PROJECT DATES

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (1978)

01 May - 15 December 2024

THE SITE - In a mountainous region in the heart of Ethiopia, some 645 km from Addis Ababa, eleven medieval monolithic churches were carved out of rock. Their building is attributed to King Lalibela who set out to construct in the 12th century a 'New Jerusalem', after Muslim conquests halted Christian pilgrimages to the holy Land. Lalibela flourished after the decline of the Aksum Empire. All the eleven churches represent a unique artistic achievement, in their execution, size and the variety and boldness of their form. The King of Lalibela set out to build a symbol of the holy land, when pilgrimages to it were rendered impossible by the historical situation. In the Church of Biet Golgotha, are replicas of the tomb of Christ, and of Adam, and the crib of the Nativity. The holy city of Lalibela became a substitute for the holy places of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and as such has had considerable influence on Ethiopian Christianity. The whole of Lalibela offers an exceptional testimony to the medieval and post-medieval civilization of Ethiopia, including, next to the eleven churches, the extensive remains of traditional, two storey circular village houses with interior staircases and thatched roofs.

OBJECTIVES - The Association of St. Lalibela and Surrounding Heritage Conservation and Preservation will implement for the first time a project at the Rock-Hewn Churches, with the objective of raising awareness about the need to protect the site from natural disasters.

ACTIVITIES - Volunteers will act as core facilitators to train and create a core group of knowledgeable and active stakeholders among the youth from the local communities around Lalibela.

PARTNERS - Lalibela Culture Centre; Lalibela Culture Tourism Office.

**Association of St. Lalibela and Surrounding Heritage
Conservation and Preservation**
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