

WHV – Preservation of the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi

The Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi, Kenya

PROJECT DATES

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (2024)

01 August – 12 August 2025

THE SITE - Surrounded by a remnant coastal forest, away from the coastline, the abandoned city of Gedi was one of the most important Swahili cities on the East African coast from the 10th to 17th centuries. During this period, it was part of a complex and international network of trade and cultural exchanges that crossed the Indian Ocean, linking African coastal centres with Persia and other areas.

OBJECTIVES - The project aims to preserve and restore the historic ruins of Gedi, an ancient Swahili settlement, by addressing structural degradation and increasing awareness of its cultural value. It also seeks to engage local communities and international volunteers in conservation efforts, sustainable tourism, and cultural education to ensure long-term protection and appreciation of the site.

ACTIVITIES - The project combines awareness-raising and hands-on activities. Volunteers will lead community heritage workshops, educational sessions in schools, cultural festivals, and social media campaigns to promote the historical significance of Gedi. Practical efforts include restoring coral-stone ruins using traditional methods, documenting and storing vulnerable artifacts, conducting environmental clean-up drives, and providing training on sustainable tourism. These activities will involve close collaboration with local artisans, schools, conservation experts, and residents to ensure cultural accuracy, technical quality, and lasting community impact.

PARTNERS – UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa; National Museums of Kenya; Kenya Wildlife Service; Local Communities.

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