Social Transformations and Sociology of Development

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Newsletter

EDITED BY
Augusto Gamuzza
Peng Wu

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CONTACTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

https://rc09socialtransformations.org
rc09_isa
isa-rc09@isa-sociology.org
https://facebook.com/rc09isa
https://www.linkedin.com/company/rc09-social-transformations-and-sociology-of-development-isa/

MESSAGE FROM RC09 PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present this December 2025 newsletter of RC09, which summarises the main achievements of our members during the second half of 2025. I believe this period has brought you immense satisfaction in your work. I am grateful to all those who shared their results for inclusion in this newsletter.

Over the past six months, RC09 has demonstrated a positive dynamic, with a primary focus on publications and on developing new ideas for scientific meetings. Our team also worked on a proposal for the *ISA Grant for Research Committees' Activities during the period 2023-2027* and submitted it to the ISA. As our commitment to early-career researchers was clearly expressed during the Rabat Business Meeting in July 2025 and remains a prominent focus of RC 09, we proposed organising an *Academic Writing and Publishing Workshop for PhD Scholars* at the *All India Sociological Conference.* It will be hosted by the *Indian Sociological Society* in December 2026. We hope the proposal will be successful, in which case the workshop will create synergies with *RC 01 (Theory and Method in Sociology)* of the ISA and with *Ad Hoc RC 1 (Teaching, Learning and Pedagogy)* of the Indian Sociological Society. It will also provide financial support for several PhD scholars to attend the workshop. I extend my deepest gratitude to the members of the RC 09 Board who were actively involved in preparing this proposal, in particular Rukmini Sen and Brian Dill. They did an excellent job!

Over the past year, the RC09 family has also grown. As of December 2025, we had 144 members, which is a remarkable achievement for our community. A warm welcome to the new members, and a big thank you to all, new and older members, for your commitment to our research group. I hope your collaborations within RC 09 will bring you all professional satisfaction, fruitful partnerships and great success in exploring contemporary social transformations.

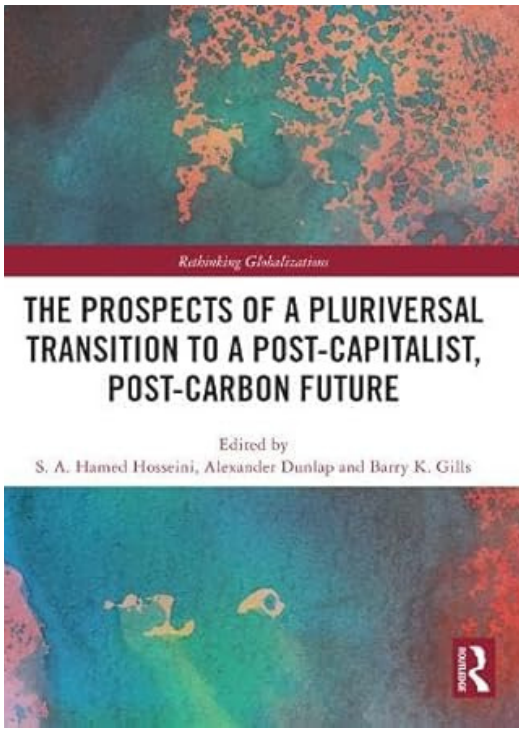
This newsletter was prepared by our two Communication Managers, Augusto Gamuzza and Peng Wu, whom I sincerely thank for their efforts. I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Finally, I take this opportunity to wish you all a prosperous and fulfilling New Year 2026, both professionally and personally!

Kind regards,
Dorina Rosca
RC09 President

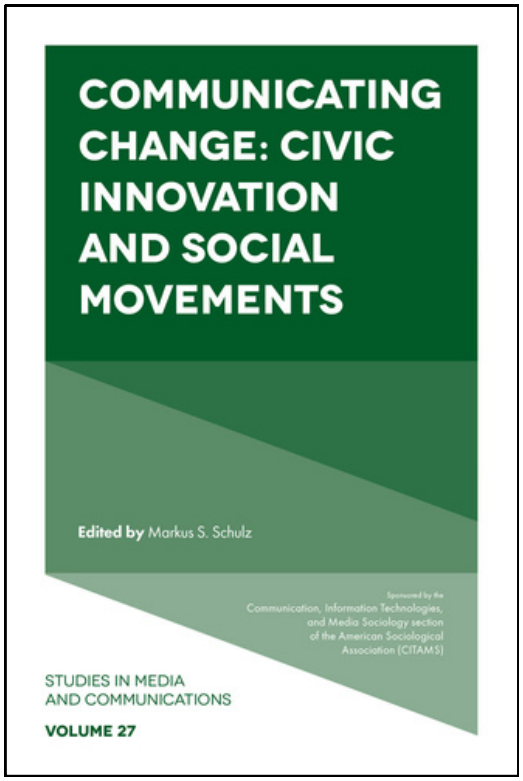
NEW PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

Hosseini, S. A. Hamed, Dunlap, A., & Gills, B. K. (Eds.). (2026). The Prospects of a Pluriversal Transition to a Post-Capitalist, Post-Carbon Future: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Incorporated



Abstract: This book critically engages with a central dilemma facing counter-hegemonic movements as global crises intensify: how to foster systemic change while maintaining the plurality of their struggles. The Prospects of a Pluriversal Transition to a Post-Capitalist, Post-Carbon Future explores the tensions between fragmentation and convergence, autonomy and solidarity, and the risks of compartmentalization in pluriversal politics. Through rigorous analysis and compelling case studies, it interrogates the possibilities and limitations of building transformative synergies across decolonial, post-developmentalist, post-ecomodernist, and post-capitalist struggles. The volume examines movements resisting extractivism, food sovereignty initiatives, feminist and care-based ethics, commons-based governance, and radical pluriversalist networks that challenge dominant power structures. By blending theoretical inquiry with grounded research, this collection offers a vital resource for those reimagining and realizing alternative futures beyond capitalism, carbon modernity, and coloniality. It invites readers to critically reflect on the complexities of systemic transformation, highlighting pathways for co-creating relational, diverse, and interconnected forms of resistance and transformation.

Schulz, M. S. (Ed.). (2025). Communicating change: Civic innovation and social movements. Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80592-329-9



Abstract: How do social actors from civil society communicate in response to crisis? How do they use existing means of communication and invent new ones? How do they form social movements that connect activists and publics and foster inclusive deliberation? How do they overcome obstacles rooted in different cultural, economic, juridical, political, and social contexts? How do they articulate alternatives to retrotopian politics, authoritarian leadership, patriarchalism, and neoliberal subjectivities? How do they generate democratic agency, strategies, visions, and the solidarities that nourish these? How do they communicate change?

This volume brings together scholars of communication, political science, sociology, and studies of culture, media, feminism, and gender to examine these questions through a series of pertinent case studies. The authors present insights from empirical fieldwork in Australia, France, Iceland, Italy, Mexico, South Korea, and the distinct worlds of cyberspace. Helping to better understand the complexity of communicating change and what kind of civic innovations it takes to build equitable, democratic futures, chapters explore the role of different modes of communication, social imagination, and creative efforts to solve problems, promote equity, and change the status quo.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Daniel, A., & Neubert, D. (2025). Sociology under scrutiny. Challenges of post-colonial, global and development sociology. Critical Sociology, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205251391298.

Abstract: Today, the post-colonial reasoning has reached mainstream sociology. The main point of criticism is sociology's focus on the modern "West" and its ignorance of non-Western societies as well as the universalistic claim of sociological theories developed in the North Atlantic. This produces hierarchies and power in knowledge production and ignorance of epistemologies and research on and in the Global South. It is sometimes overlooked that this debate is not entirely new. Western hegemony is a long-standing topic in Development Sociology and led to the fundamental post-development critique. Later on, Global Sociology focused on inequalities in the science system and the exclusion of non-Westerntheories and epistemologies. With this article we organise this academic field, reveal differences and overlaps between these intellectual traditions and identify their particular focus, including their claims for future sociological studies. In conclusion, we argue for an empirical turn in the decolonisation of sociology.

Hanrieder, T. (2025). Contesting neoliberalism with human rights? Liberal exhaustion and exploitation in Colombia's health system. Journal of European Public Policy, 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2025.2578283

Abstract: The neoliberal reorganisation of social policy has provoked counterreactions worldwide. One genuinely liberal contestation of neoliberal restructuring is based on human rights mobilisation, and, in many countries, judicial guarantees of social human rights. This article investigates the interaction of neoliberalism and human rights liberalism in the domain of health policy. I focus on Colombia, where 'health as a human right' has become a widespread reference for resistance against neoliberalism. However, human-rights-based mobilisation has proven unable to revert disinvestment from public infrastructure. Rather, the judicialized enforcement of the right to health has reinforced a pharmaceutical bias and cost-shifting towards profitable care. Neoliberalism and the right to health co-create a politics that offloads the actual cost of care to precarious workers and vulnerable patients. I draw on feminist economics and critical public health to capture these exhausting and exploitative tendencies of (neo)liberalism. The article is based on rich qualitative material gathered in the context of 'post-neoliberal' reform struggles and health system crisis in Colombia.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Hanrieder, T., & Janauschek, L. (2025). The 'ethical recruitment' of international nurses: Germany's liberal health worker extractivism. Review of International Political Economy, 32(4), 1164–1188. https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2025.2450399

Abstract: International institutions increasingly promote 'ethical recruitment' as a standard for health worker migration from poor to rich countries. We analyze how this notion is interpreted in a country considered to be an exemplary, 'ethical' recruiter of international nurses. In Germany, international nurse recruitment initiatives are proliferating, and programs such as the public Triple Win scheme and a private-sector voluntary fairness certificate promise gains to all participating actors. We find that 'ethical recruitment' is a regime of largely voluntary protection of and care for migrant workers, which legitimizes the extraction of health workers from the Global South but hides underlying structural inequalities between countries and workers. Gains for sending countries are postulated, yet de facto merely assumed to happen through remittances, and developmental demands by sending countries remain unaddressed despite talk about circular migration and support for health systems. In short, 'ethics' facilitates a regime of liberal health worker extractivism: This regime recognizes individual rights (however imperfectly) but disregards developmental and social rights, and it limits state intervention to market facilitation and soft regulation. We draw on primary sources including documents retrieved through freedom of information requests, and over thirty interviews with recruiters, regulators, employers, unionists, and civil society experts

Nyundu, Tony, & Hosseini, S. A. Hamed (2025). Higher Education under Neoliberalism: A Perspective from South African Student Activists. In H. Onodera, M. Kaskinen & E. Ranta (Eds.), Citizenship Utopias in the Global South: The Emergent Forms of Activism in an Era of Disillusionment (pp. 121-136). London: Routledge.

Abstract: This chapter presents the findings of an empirical study on the student collective response during the national protest movement known as Fees Must Fall (FMF) that took place in 2015 and 2016 in South Africa. It provides a contextual background by examining the implementation and impact of neoliberal reforms on the higher education sector, the emergence of the movement in this context, and its social bases and historical precedents. The post-apartheid state shifted its policy towards adopting corporate authoritarian values, thus enabling the spread of neoliberal practices in public HE. In response, the movement rose to defend democratic and social justice values in public higher education. This chapter explores the insights gained from in-depth interviews with FMF student activists, exploring (1) their perception and contestation of the neoliberalist shift, (2) the role of race, class, and gender in the movement, (3) the state's repressive response, including physical violence, the criminalization of activists, and the suspension or expulsion of student activists from universities, and (4) the accomplishments and shortcomings of the movement and its progress over time. The chapter concludes by discussing the implications for an inclusive and context-specific understanding of neoliberal HE in the field of transformative global studies.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Hosseini, S. A. Hamed, & Gills, B. K. (2025). Navigating the Pluriversal Terrain: Dilemmas, Dynamic Diversities, and Synergies. Globalizations, 22(2), 167-179. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2024.2445468

Abstract: This paper outlines the shared purpose of the edited collection, The Prospects of a Pluriversal Transition: to explore the dynamisms and dilemmas of fostering systemic and synergic transformations through the lens of pluriversal politics. It situates the collection within the context of escalating intertwined crises and introduces the central dilemma addressed by its contributions: the tension between preserving the richness of diversity on the one hand and working across differences and overcoming divisions necessary for transformative action on the other. The paper introduces the concept of 'compartmentalization' as a framework for examining the onto-epistemological and praxiological underpinnings of this grand dilemma. It provides an overview of the contributions, highlighting how they address the challenges of navigating fragmentation and interconnectedness while proposing relational, ethical, and governance strategies. The paper frames the collection's contributions within a shared critical agenda, providing a foundation for pluriversal pathways to systemic change and future activist-scholar dialogue.

Hosseini, S. A. Hamed (2025). Compartmentality, Commonist Impulses, and the Path to Pluriversal Transformation: An Australian Perspective. Globalizations, 22(2), 180-220. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2024.2433835

Abstract: This article combines theoretical exploration with empirical analysis to critically engage with the pluriversal theory-discourse. The first part introduces the concept of 'compartmentality,' suggesting that internalized ontologies of modernism, colonialism, and capitalism likely disrupt societal interconnectedness within the 'actually existing pluriverse,' weakening its transformative capacity. By constructing and operationalizing the notion of 'commonist tendency' as a counteracting impulse, it sets the conceptual stage for an empirical examination of potential pathologies and their theoretical implications. A novel methodological framework is outlined to explore the Australian pluriverse as a case study. The second part applies quantitative analysis to secondary data from a nationwide meta-mapping survey to evaluate the influence of compartmentality among the participant initiatives. The study employs social network analysis and multivariate methods to uncover the social-organizational determinants of the commonist tendency. It also highlights the existing capacities for overcoming divisions while exposing the subtle yet pervasive forces that hinder the pluriverse from realizing its envisioned potential.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Hosseini, S. A. Hamed. (2025) Revalorizing Value Beyond Capital: From De-Commonization to Re-Commonization for Liberating Life. Paper presented at the NENA 2025 Conference. 10–12 October 2025, Broadbeach Cultural Centre, Gold Coast, Queensland. https://dx.doi.org/10.14293/pr2199.002452.v1

Abstract: This conference paper presents a modular conception of capitalism grounded in an integrated Commonist Value Theory (CVT) by drawing on the framework developed in set of recent publication by this author. Critically reconstructing traditional approaches, including limitations within Marxian value theory, this framework expands the understanding of value sources under capitalism to include labor, nature, social reproductive relations, and political organizations. It distinguishes between commodity value, capitalist value, t rue value, and fetish value, arguing that capitalism primarily produces fetish value by decommonizing sources of true value. The paper explicates how life-affirming commons are transformed into capitalist relations through key infra-processes: reification (turning subjects into objects), fetishization (attributing compensatory value and fetishistic subjectivity to reified objects), and appropriation (coercive or legal seizure and control). Using contemporary socio-economic examples, particularly the decommonization of food production, the paper illustrates how these processes operate. It also discusses recommonization as the inverse struggle to reclaim, de-reify, and de-fetishize these sources, highlighting ongoing efforts to restore or create commons for liberating life and producing true value. This analysis provides a more comprehensive, processual, and normative understanding of capitalist dynamics and the possibilities for transformative change.

Poghosyan Gevorg, Poghosyan Rima. “Quantum Sociology and Social Behavior of Digital Avatars”. LIBERTE JOURNAL, Volume 13, Issue 10, pp. 333-339. 2025. Canada. ISSN:0024-2020. DOI:20.14118.LRJ.2025.V13I10.485574

Abstract: The expanding digitalization of social life and the active development of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) are creating a completely new social reality. Contemporary digital challenges and hybridization processes of reality necessitate the development of a new concepts of causality in sociological theory. As American sociologist Edward Tiryakian noted, today's intra-civilizational challenges impact all human practices in a nonlinear manner (Tiryakian, 2014, pp. 91–112). In physics, the quantum uncertainty paradox is well-known, according to which elementary particles can be in different places at the same time. Moreover, their state changes depending on how they are observed in an experiment. In other words, physical observations influence the outcome of the experiment. Sociology also recognizes the phenomenon whereby the results of public opinion surveys directly influence people's behavior. “We need to realize that the moment any sociological data is measured, it is like taking a snap shot of a quantum state, just the same as a quantum physics experiment”(Brent Cooper. 2017). Our observation affects the outcome: the study of society is affecting the society as an object of this study.

NEW PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Roșca, D. (2025). The role of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in closing the education gap. In N. Kakar & A. Shostya (Eds.), Pathways to sustainable development: Implementing the Pact for the Future (pp. 123–138). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Abstract: This chapter analyzes the role of emerging technologies, digitalization, and AI in advancing SDG 4, which seeks to ensure an inclusive and equitable quality education underpinned by opportunities for lifelong learning, particularly in the developing world. It explores the transformative potential of digital tools and AI in elevating educational standards and closing the educational gap. The chapter will also discuss the challenges and opportunities of integrating these technologies in developing countries. Using Indian and the Republic of Moldova cases, the chapter critically examines the challenges of integrating digital and AI-driven technologies within regions and developing urban and rural areas. It also highlights the process of transferring these technologies from developed to developing countries and evaluates their impact on specific SDG 4 targets, namely, equal success in technical/vocational and higher education (target 3); relevant skills for decent work (target 4); effective learning environments (target 8); teachers and education (target 10). The chapter discusses contextual local conditions/factors and obstacles that prevent a smooth transfer of these technologies (regional inequalities in terms of infrastructure, skills gaps, etc.)

Woodward, S., Shortt, H., & Khoo, S. (2025). Cultivating connections, disrupting boundaries: introducing the Journal of Creative Research Methods. Journal of Creative Research Methods, 1(1), 2-17. https://doi.org/10.1332/30502969Y2025D000000010

Abstract: It is with great excitement and pride that we welcome readers to the first issue of the Journal of Creative Research Methods (JCRM). As Co-Editors in Chief, we are delighted to be part of creating this new and much-needed space for exploring, celebrating, advancing, and critically reflecting on creative methods in research. The launch of this journal marks a significant moment, not just in terms of publishing innovation, but in the ongoing, global conversation about what counts as knowledge, who produces it, and how it is communicated and shared across academic and non-academic contexts. But although this is a global conversation, and of course, an international journal, we thought we would start our inaugural, collective editorial a little closer to home, and, by way of introducing ourselves, reflect first on our own starting points for engaging with creative methods and sharing how our paths have converged to this point. Our personal research routes, taken together, exemplify the multiple disciplines and pathways that have opened up to researching creatively, indicating new and exciting possibilities for finding ourselves and connecting to others to co-create a lively creative methods community.

CONFERENCES AND SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

Title: Enterprises and Sustainable Development in Africa South of the Sahara
Where: Anvers, Belgium
When: 29/06/2026
Event format: Blended/Hybrid format
Event organizers: Ulrike Schuerkens and Seydi Ababacar Dieng

The issue of corporate social responsibility is a recurring theme in the discourse on relations between businesses and society in African societies. The idea of CSR presupposes that businesses have obligations towards society that include contributing to the resolution of 'difficult' social and ecological problems.
Two major questions emerge: The role of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors as drivers of CSR means that if CSR is to be meaningful in Africa, it must commit to socio-economic development objectives. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence. A first step involves empirical studies based on how local populations experience CSR, how socio-cultural factors shape local people's expectations and perceptions of CSR, and a comparative analysis of different CSR processes and outcomes in Africa.
Second, available data suggest that companies are currently more of a tool than an agent of development. It is therefore necessary for the analysis of the link between CSR and socio-economic development in Africa to go beyond the commercial perspective and begin to explore the factors that motivate and limit CSR initiatives and their ability to contribute to development. For example, how do historical, contextual and institutional factors drive and limit CSR initiatives, and what are the implications for corporate social development in Africa?
Empirical case studies that attempt to answer the questions raised here are welcome.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Title: SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFORMATION: Research and Innovation Network for Quality Information, Better Sustainability Reporting Practices and Business Resilience (STAR)

Funding Scheme: HORIZON EUROPE 2021-2027
Project Number: HORIZON-MSCA-SE-2023-SE-01-101179323
Contacts: starmsca-eu@upb.ro

Project Abstract: Sustainability reporting is a critical component of corporate responsibility and accountability in today's business landscape. It involves the disclosure of an organization's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance to various stakeholders, including investors, customers, employees, and the public. To increase scrutiny of businesses' sustainability performance and strategy, current legislative changes endorsed by the EC emphasize the shift from voluntary to mandatory ESG disclosure as a world effort to address climate change and social inequalities by having the same referential framework for sustainability information. Thus, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners should collaborate to drive progress in this critical area. Our proposal aims to create a transnational, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary research network aiming to design and provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural and contextual factors shape sustainability reporting practices i.e. corporate disclosure on ESG risks and opportunities.

Title: Overshadowed Labor in the Corporate University: Tackling Systemic Inequities for Culturally and Racially Marginalized (CARM) Workers in Australian Higher Education; 2-Beyond Silos: Measuring Cross-Sector Collaboration in Australia's Progressive Transformation Efforts

Funding Scheme: College of Human and Social Futures - 2025 COLLEGE PILOT RESEARCH SCHEME
Project Number: N/A
Contacts: hamed.hosseini@newcastle.edu.au

Project Abstract: This project will develop a comprehensive framework to examine systemic inequities faced by Culturally and Racially Marginalized (CARM) staff, including Indigenous workers, in Australian academia, with CARM encompassing intersectionally marginalized groups whose experiences are compounded by gender, disability, sexual orientation, and class. It investigates structural barriers such as market-driven governance, cultural hegemony, workforce precarity, standardized curricula, superficial diversity strategies, and AI-driven systems like automated performance metrics while exploring how these mechanisms perpetuate marginalization. Aligned with national inclusivity goals and Australia's Healthy and Thriving Communities priority, the project aims to advance evidence-based reforms, moving beyond surface-level diversity to improve CARM staff career progression, well-being, and institutional equity. Outcomes will include robust research tools, partnership models, and policy insights to support systemic change in higher education

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Title: Beyond Silos: Measuring Cross-Sector Collaboration in Australia's Progressive Transformation Efforts

Funding Scheme: New Economy Network Australia Co-op Ltd
Project Number: N/A
Contacts: hamed.hosseini@newcastle.edu.au

Project Abstract: Grassroots movements are vital for transformative change but often constrained by "compartmentality"—a siloed approach to societal sectors like economy, politics, community, and ecology. This project overcomes that fragmentation by developing a novel social indicator measuring the "commonist tendency," an organization's capacity to integrate sectors holistically.
Using a 2021 national survey of 96 Australian social justice and sustainability organizations—with expanded data collection—the study analyzes responses to 16 cross-sector integration statements. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) validates the indicator, while Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) identifies factors shaping this collaborative mindset. Social Network Analysis (SNA) and meta-mapping test whether higher commonist tendency predicts greater real-world collaboration, mapping networks and identifying key actors.
The research delivers practical tools for organizations, policymakers, and funders to diagnose and enhance integrated action. It provides NENA with insights to strengthen advocacy and offers the University of Newcastle a pathway to methodological innovation and community impact. Ultimately, the project accelerates social transformation by empowering the most collaborative, cross-sector initiatives.

Title: Preservation, Promotion and Documentation of Folk Traditions: A Study of Ladakh

Funding Scheme: Ministry of Science and Technology in India, Science and Heritage Research Initiative (SHRI)
Project Number: N/A
Contacts: rukmini@aud.ac.in

Project Abstract: The project is a interdisciplinary research initiative by the University of Ladakh and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, funded by the Dept. of Science & Technology (DST) to use modern technologies for safeguarding Ladakh's rich cultural heritage, integrating folk practices with cutting-edge research through academic partnerships and community involvement. This initiative, active since 2025, aims to document diverse Ladakhi traditions like mask dances, folk music, and crafts, countering threats from modernization by involving local communities (Panchayats) and promoting national documentation.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Title: Tarek - TAREK - Tourisme Associatif Résilient et Écologique dans l'Atlas Kabir

Funding Scheme: EuropeAid
Project Number: EuropeAid/182581/DH/ACT/MA
Contacts: augusto.gamuzza@unict.it

Project Abstract: Project TAREK advances a community-led model of post-earthquake reconstruction and socio-economic recovery in Morocco's Marrakech–Safi region. Working across 14 rural douars in the provinces of El Haouz and Chichaoua, the project addresses documented vulnerabilities in access to essential services and infrastructure, livelihood fragility in rainfed agriculture and under-structured value chains (livestock and crafts), and persistent gender inequalities that constrain women's economic autonomy.

At the core of TAREK is a governance and capacity-building package that combines vocational pathways (notably in ecotourism), leadership and conflict-management training, and community-based disaster preparedness. A distinctive operational pillar is the Community Management Committees (Comité de Gestion - CdG) established at municipal level to anchor local ownership and accountability. These committees are responsible for: (a) identifying and selecting priority community microprojects; (b) ensuring that training content is tailored to locally defined needs and directly connected to the chosen microprojects; (c) safeguarding inclusiveness—particularly the effective participation of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups; and (d) assessing proposals against criteria of relevance, economic viability, and social and environmental benefit. In the project's sustainability strategy, the committees also contribute to the long-term stewardship of resources through the management of a support mechanism for essential follow-up actions (e.g., maintenance, continued training), and they interface with participatory monitoring arrangements through periodic evidence-sharing meetings.

To strengthen coordination and learning, TAREK complements community governance with multi-stakeholder networking (public institutions, private actors, and civil society), thematic roundtables, annual events, and the use of open geospatial tools (e.g., HotOSM, OsmAnd) to support information-sharing and synergies across initiatives.

The project will establish a TAREK Scientific Board of Experts calling RC09 scholars working on participatory methodologies and post-disaster studies and any related research topic to provide scientific input through a cycle of meetings scheduled from April 2026, the project's start date.

Join the Tarek Project Scientific Board of experts.