

Cultural exchange, language learning in El Guettar and renovation of the Midoun municipal theatre

Culture, language and urban development

Culture and language are essential tools for implementing sustainable development initiatives, facilitating communication and strengthening social cohesion. In a sustainable society, these elements are crucial to ensuring respect for diversity and mutual understanding. They also help to strengthen links between individuals and communities in a multicultural context. For example, in the context of urban development project partnerships between Tunisian and German municipalities, culture and language have supported technical exchanges and provided a better understanding of the context of urban projects.

The regional project “City-to-City Cooperation Maghreb-Germany” (KWT II), commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), was implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in cooperation with the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) of Engagement Global gGmbH, from March 2020 to February 2024. Among other activities, the regional project supported project partnerships between German and Maghreb cities. The good practices highlighted in this factsheet have been developed by the partner municipalities El Guettar and the district of Böblingen on the one hand, and Midoun and Fürth on the other. These practices will be scaled up as part of the follow-up regional project “Urban Adaptation to Climate Change in the Maghreb”, running from March 2024 to February 2027.



German and Tunisian Arabic language learning in El Guettar and Böblingen

In Tunisia, the regional project KWT II was implemented in collaboration with the Directorate-General of External Relations and Decentralised International Cooperation within the Ministry of the Interior.

As part of their project partnership, El Guettar and Böblingen each organised free distance learning courses in German and Tunisian Arabic for participants from their partner municipalities. This two-way exchange was supported by the regional KWT II project. The aim was to promote culture in the two partner towns, enabling them to gain a better understanding of each other's culture, discover commonalities and give a new boost to their project partnership. The aim was to help create a new vision and a better mutual understanding.



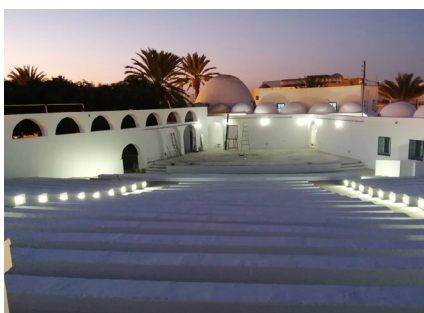
Renovation of the Midoun municipal theatre

The Midoun municipal theatre, a true cultural symbol of the city, has benefited from a complete renovation, thanks to the partnership between Midoun and Fürth, implemented during the first phase of the KWT I project between 2016 and 2020. Since 2016, technical delegations from Fürth have visited Midoun several times to discuss and plan the renovation work. The renovation programme that resulted from these fruitful exchanges included a complete overhaul of the electrical system, the sewage networks, the emergency staircases to the grandstands and the provision of easy access for people with reduced mobility (PRM).



Approaches and actions

The German language learning initiative in Böblingen and the Tunisian Arabic language learning initiative in El Guettar, as well as the renovation of the Midoun municipal theatre, were implemented through the following stages (diagram 01):



Left: Midoun municipal theatre before its renovation, February 2017.

Right: Midoun municipal theatre undergoing renovation, January 2020.

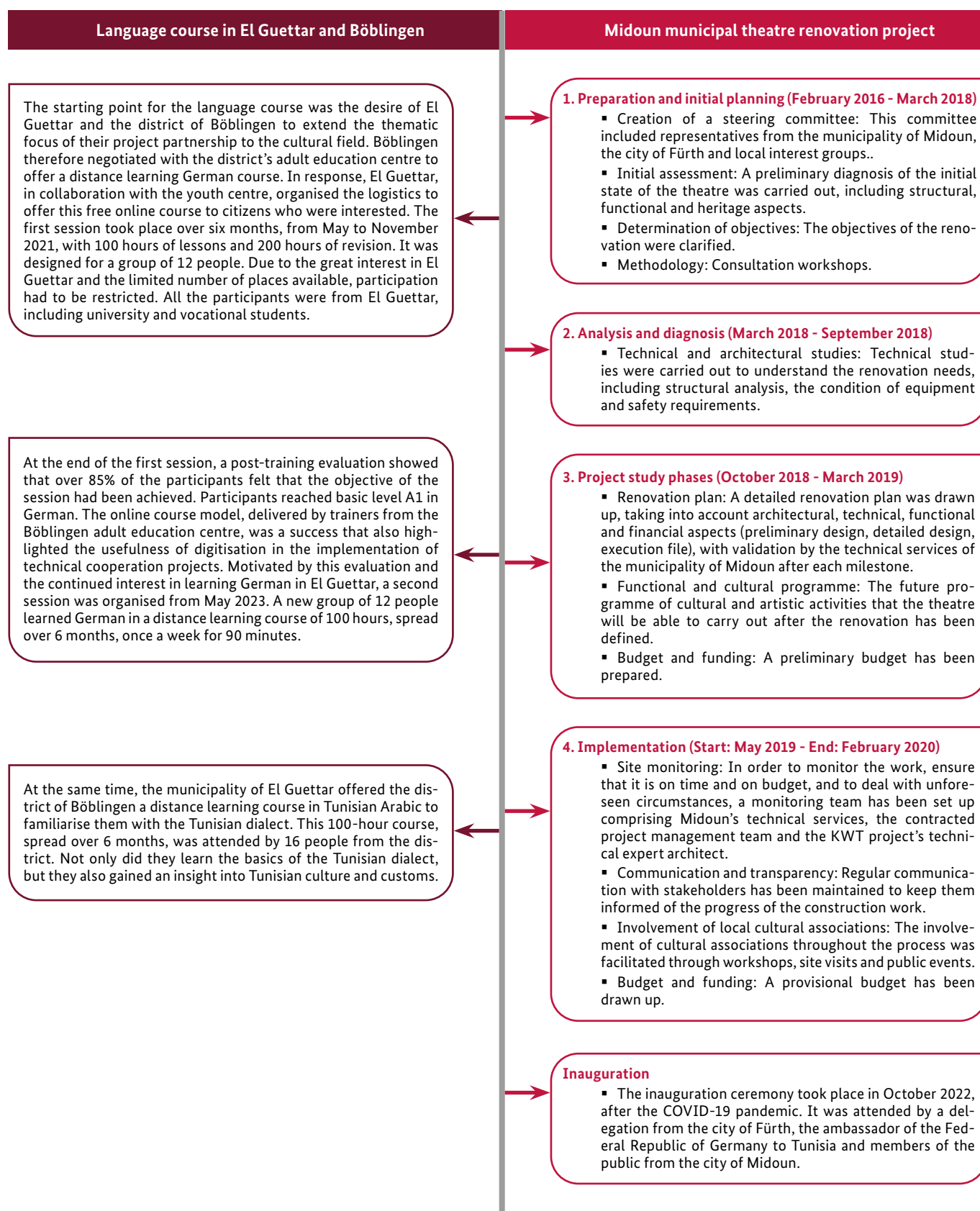


Diagram 01: Methodological approach. © GIZ



Achievements

The projects achieved the following results (diagram 02):

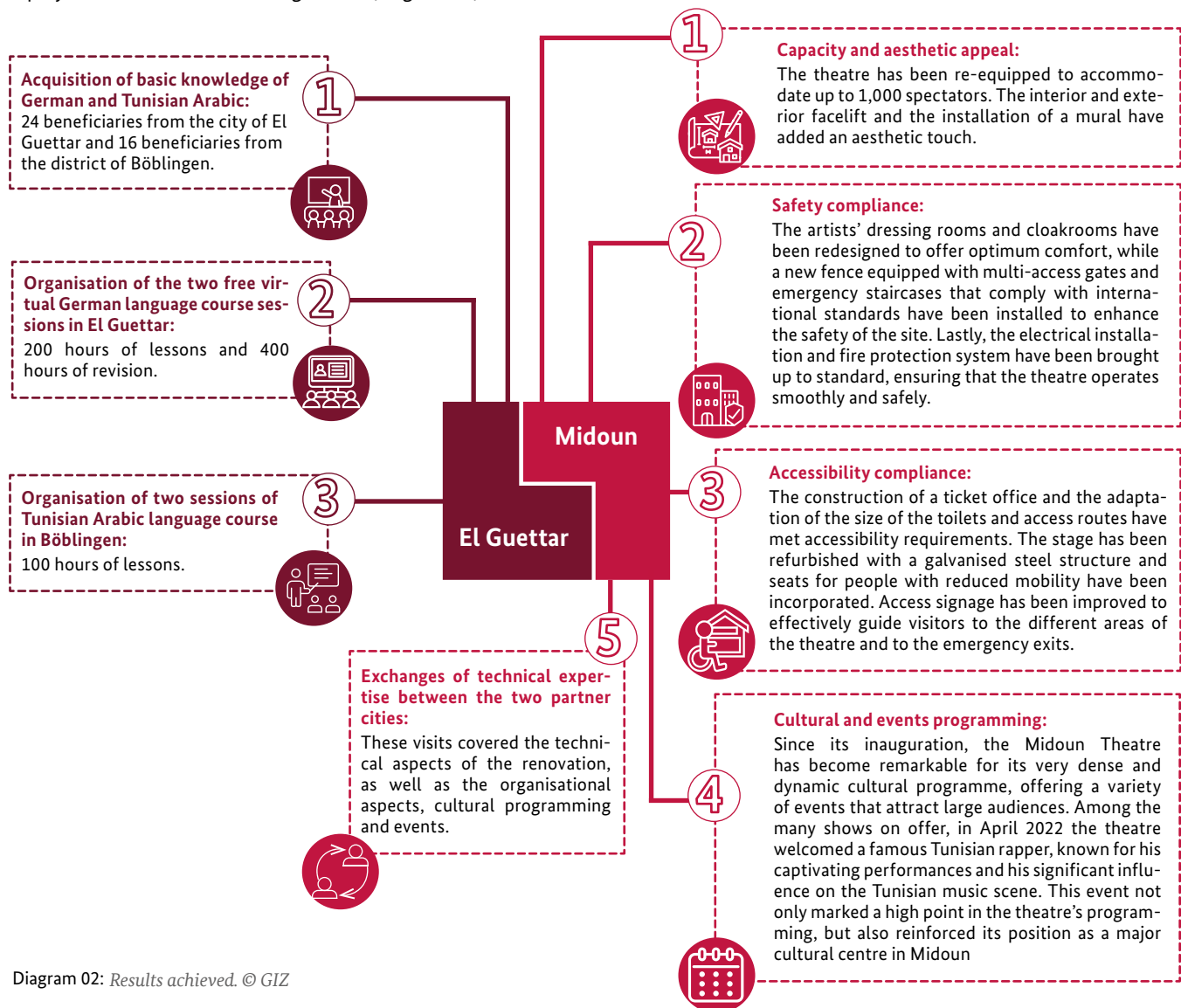


Diagram 02: Results achieved. © GIZ



Challenges

The language course initiative in El Guettar and Böblingen and the project to renovate the municipal theatre in Midoun faced two main challenges (diagram 03):

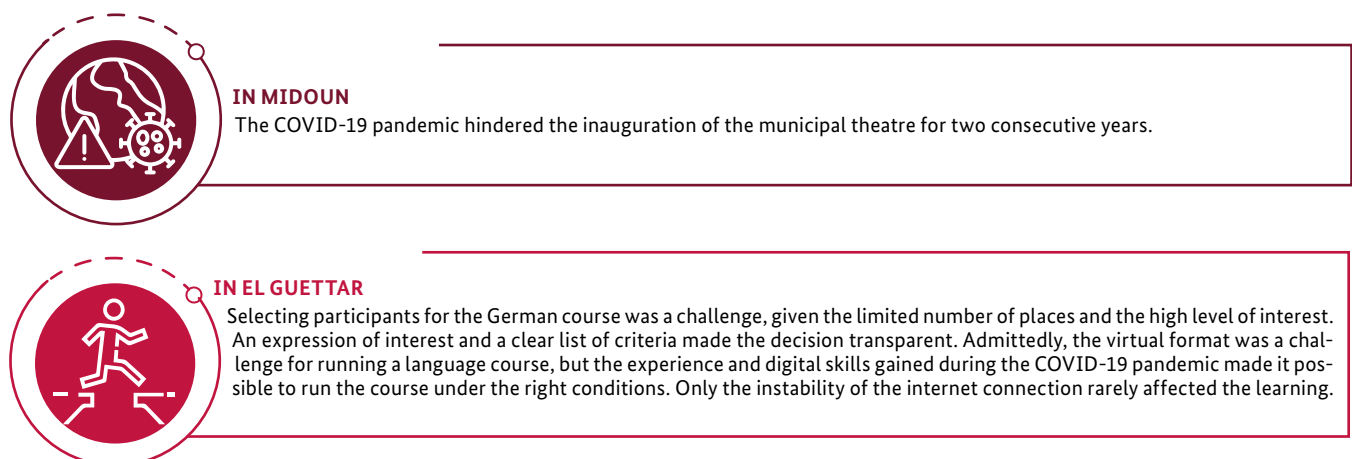


Diagram 03: Challenges overcome. © GIZ



Left: Official inauguration of the Midoun municipal theatre, October 2020.

Right: Delegation from the German municipality of Fürth at the inauguration ceremony. In the background, a mosaic plaque symbolising partnership, peace and the coming together of peoples.

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Innovative aspects and strengths

The projects in El Guettar and Midoun stood out for their strengths, reflecting a commitment to inclusion by promoting cultural and technical exchanges between the partner cities (diagram 04):

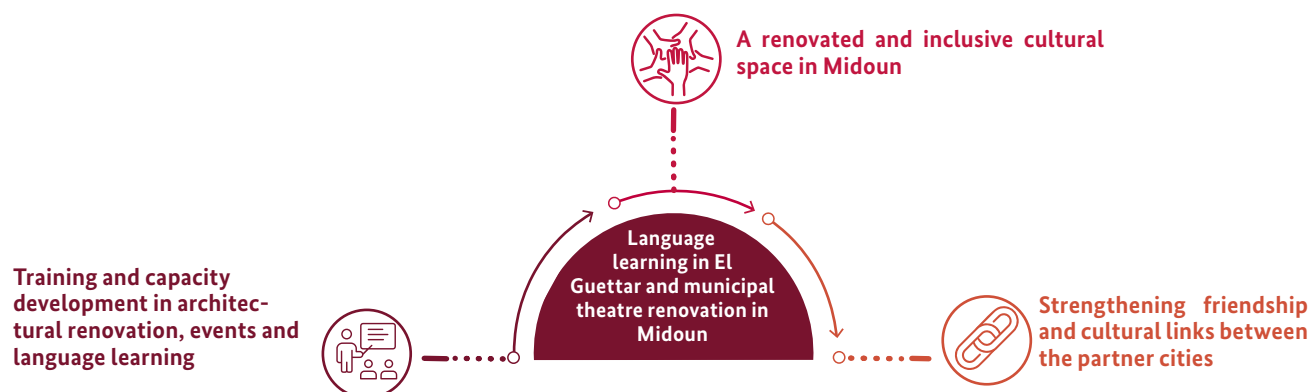


Diagram 04: Innovative aspects and strengths. © GIZ



Best practices, lessons learnt and advice

Several important lessons have been learnt and good practices identified from the experiences in El Guettar and Midoun, which should be considered when implementing similar projects:



BUILDING ON THE EXISTING EXPERIENCE:

Midoun drew inspiration from its German partner, the town of Fürth, during face-to-face and virtual exchanges concerning the renovation of Midoun's municipal theatre and cultural programming.



MUTUAL LEARNING:

El Guettar and the district of Böblingen have learned from each other, not only through face-to-face and virtual technical exchanges, but above all through the various language courses they have run. These courses were not only an opportunity to learn each other's language, but also to discover new cultures, common interests and viewpoints, and to understand customs and traditions. This has been the basis for deepening relations between partners on both sides of the Mediterranean.



TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR MIDOUN ARCHITECTS ON THE TECHNICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE THEATRE RENOVATION:

This project enabled the municipal architects to benefit from comprehensive and free technical assistance for the renovation of their theatre, thereby strengthening their autonomy and expertise in renovation.

Diagram 05: Best practices, lessons learnt and advice. © GIZ

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