



Nadia Ammi and Gabriel Génin, two international United Nations Volunteers in discussion with the Grand Imam, Abderrahmane Ben Essayouti on the activities to conduct on social cohesion and heritage Conservation in Northern Mali. (UNV programme, 2017)

## World Day for Cultural Diversity: Heritage safeguarding is at the heart of peacebuilding

On the occasion of World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, we would like to focus on some examples of activities led by Nadia Ammi, a United Nations Volunteer responsible for the cultural component of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Since the beginning of its peacekeeping operations in 1949, MINUSMA is the only mission to be tasked by the United Nations Security Council with safeguarding cultural heritage.

"Working with MINUSMA has allowed me to deal with many challenges and to learn a lot about the Malian culture. My experience is a commitment to the vision of UN Volunteers which is to be "*l'inspiration en action*". All the work involved with heritage protection had to be invented and developed during the last three years."

Nadia is responsible for ensuring there is liaison between MINUSMA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Mali. She is the "go to" person for heritage safeguarding projects and for intercultural dialogue for MINUSMA. She supports Malian authorities who are in charge of culture, and ensures that personnel receive training in the protection of Malian heritage and in respecting its society.

“ To provide support for a country's culture during its recovery period means having a clear vision and a holistic approach to what the needs are, in order to move forward with the peace process. It's an idea that could be adapted to other situations around the world

Nadia has provided support for several projects as part of the intercultural dialogue. Three libraries of ancient manuscripts which were damaged during the 2013 attack, have been renovated in collaboration with UNESCO and the Timbuktu Cultural Mission. In Gao, she ensured her support for the protection of an archeological site in collaboration with the *Direction Nationale du Patrimoine Culturel*, the Gao Cultural Mission and the local association "Alanga". The local band which had all its equipment destroyed in 2012, was completely restored with the help of the Gao *Direction Régionale de la Culture*. Now, communities can hold important events again such as concerts, marriages and baptisms.

(video in french)

Lastly, she provides major logistical support for the cultural heritage restoration program coordinated by the Ministry of Culture and UNESCO. For example, the support has led to the reconstruction of the mausoleums destroyed during the Timbuktu conflict, the provision of materials for Gao and Timbuktu cultural authorities as well as for nine libraries of ancient manuscripts.

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*This article has been translated from french by the [UN Online Volunteer Marguerite MacMillan](#).*

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