



# A Living Lab in Göreme

by Daniela De Gregorio (ISMed-CNR)

From 1st to 14th December 2019, I performed a Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) in Göreme, Cappadocia Region. The hosting Institution was the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. My experience was mainly based on conducting interviews to the most representative stakeholders of Göreme, performing on field surveys, and participating to the Second Living Lab Stakeholder workshop. During my experience, Ahiler Development Agency of Turkey supported me in understanding in depth not only the cultural and heritage values of Göreme but even the spirit and the intangible values of the Region as well as local people attitude and character. All the information and data collected during the STMS wouldn't make sense if they weren't deeply connected to the atmosphere and the Cappadocia Region local magic. All stakeholders that I interviewed, as well as all tourists, storeowners or ordinary residents I met told me their vision of the area, their values, their solutions, their hopes about the future of Göreme area. Everything and everyone in Göreme contributed to my report, even the Fairy Chimneys covered by the snow in a silence broken only by the muezzin and in a fairy-tale image where cats are also leading characters.



The second part STSM was based on the designing and organization of the second Living Lab workshop that took place on December 11, 2019 at the Ahiler Development Agency of Turkey. More than 20 stakeholders joined the workshop. The event aimed at taking the first steps of implementation of stakeholder dialogue testing brainstorming methodology through raising awareness among local entrepreneurs, universities, companies, institution on the issue of preservation and valorisation of the "Göreme archeological site" considering main constraints and barriers. At first, I was frightened because I had to animate a "Laboratory" made up of people who were very expert in the field of the cultural heritage and tourism; I was faced with people who knew more about it than me, what could my contribution be? The enthusiasm and energy that all the participants, including me, transmitted during the day overcame all barriers, including language barriers, and the final results went beyond expectations. Stakeholders agreed that while tourism contribute to socio-economic development and cultural exchange of the area, it has, at the same time, the potential for degrading the natural resources, social structures and cultural heritage. They identified a small area (Karaya), where villagers lived before moving to Göreme area to valorize within eco tourism business proposal. Karaya is a very suggestive, unexplored and not yet valued area with a volcanic water source with sulfur coming out of the ground and a land art park made by a famous Australian artist Andrew Rogers . [https://www.HYPERLINK](https://www.hyperlink) "<https://www.andrewrogers.org/land-art/turkey/>". [HYPERLINK](https://www.andrewrogers.org/land-art/turkey/) "<https://www.andrewrogers.org/land-art/turkey/>" andrewrogers.org/land-art/turkey/ After the meeting a delegation of the participants went to visit and explore the area to start thinking about development, valorization and reuse ideas.



Photos: D. De Gregorio