



NEWSLETTER



Our new boarding house will open in September!

First semester results



Fundraising Update



Welcome to our latest edition of the EFA Newsletter! It is a bumper addition as we have so many things to share. Not only have we celebrated International Women's Day, taken part in photography workshops and updated our booklet, but we are also getting ready to open our new house as well as being knee deep in the final preparations for our annual cycling event, The Marrakesh-Atlas Etape. Read all about it here, as well as hearing the interesting stories from our volunteers and some of our Star Fundraisers.

And what better way to start than with a message from Latifa, EFA's Head House Mother!



Myself and the other housemothers, are so proud to say that everyone involved in the project is doing their utmost for these girls. As a result we can see our girls blossoming with confidence and self-esteem due to their excellent individual exam results, but also the strong network of social support they provide each other with.

In the very beginning we didn't know how successful this project could be, and we weren't always sure where we were going; myself, the girls, the committee etc. But now we have 149 girls in five houses as well as 9 girls studying at post-baccalaureate level, and have established a clear route of progression. In other words, we know where we're going.

Our organization is growing and maturing nicely thanks to everyone that is working hard for us, has donated money or given their time and experience to Education For All. You are truly a part of these girls' lives and futures.

Latifa Aliza



Read more about the girls photography workshop with Heather Binns on p9

Our New Boarding House for 2015!

There is a buzz in the mountain air this Spring, not only because the first blossoms are appearing on the cherry trees but also because we have nearly finished our 3rd major building project- Boarding House Asni 3. We are delighted to be running 5 boarding houses now in total, which means we are reaching even more girls who are determined to have a better future.

Some of our University Girls visited recently to see the house. They each joined the EFA boarding houses in 2008/9 when we only had one house, so it was quite a special moment for them to see that the project they took faith in has blossomed into an educational provision for many more girls.



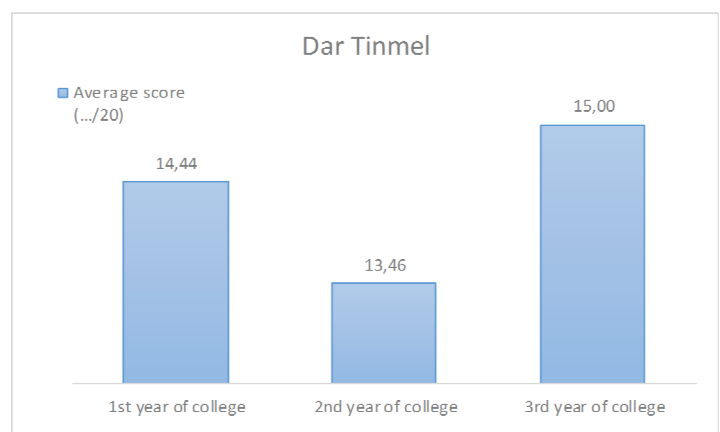
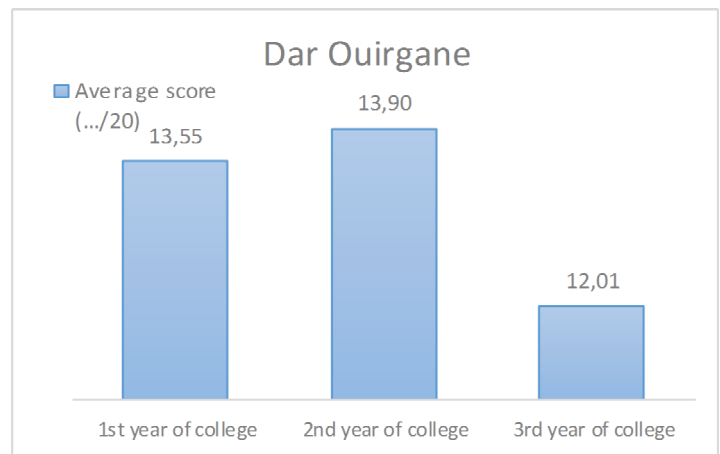
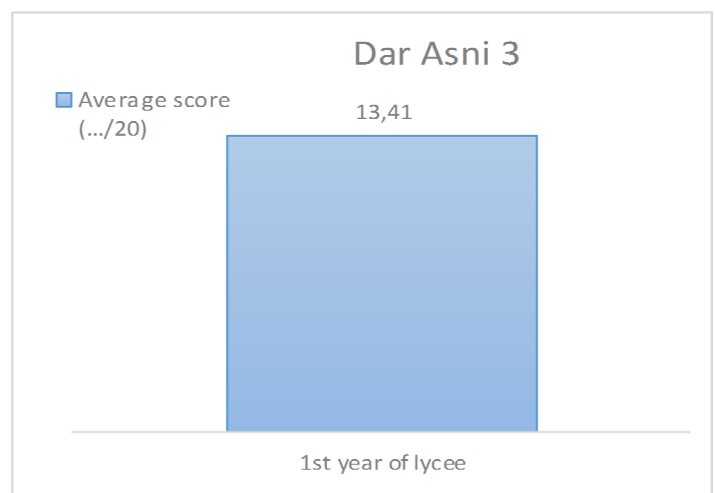
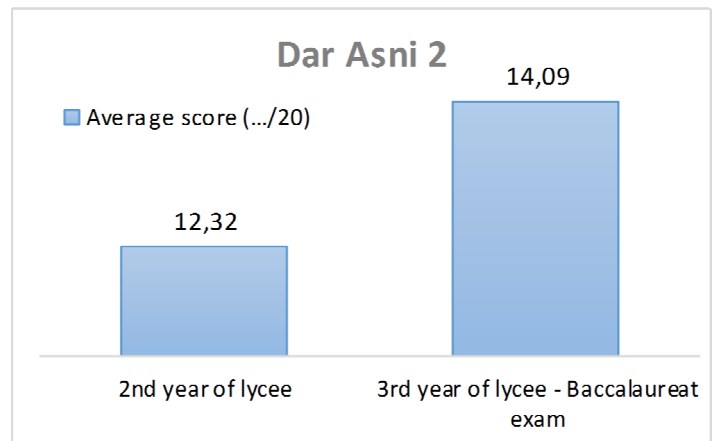
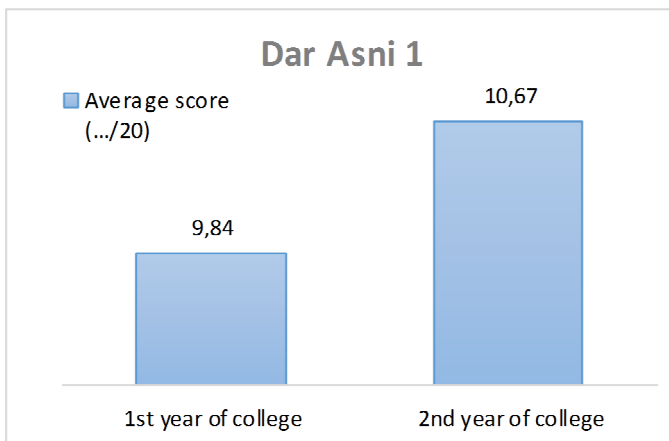
They each acknowledged their gratitude to everyone who has supported EFA with financial donations. They cannot imagine not having had this opportunity. They could easily have stopped schooling at the age of 12, like their mothers did, but now they are at University, learning useful skills to contribute to society, earning an income to support their families and making better decisions for their health and well being and generations to come.

If you want to contribute to our project, please visit our website : <http://www.efamorocco.org/donate/>



First semester results

We had a spectacular 'award ceremony' for the girls to celebrate the end of the first semester. Those who had done the best in the first semester were presented with a gift. Their teachers were invited, as were Latifa and some of the other housemothers. The girls performed funny sketches and sang and danced. It was a great success !



Fundraising update

Having more houses means more than just more girls going to school; it also means more funds are needed to keep these houses going! This is a challenge we are happy and motivated to take on. With a stronger focus on corporate funding this year, including inviting Moroccan companies to sponsor the Etape, our wish is that all good companies know how to make a good investment, and that investment is in educating girls. Not only does educating girls improve family and community health, but it boosts the economy too:

“Women tend to spend their resources on their families—prioritizing things like healthcare, nutritious food, education, and all the building blocks of a thriving society.” (Melinda Gates).

Our vision at EFA is that an educated girl can make better decisions for herself and her family, and participate fully and equally in society. Being at the EFA boarding houses is for most girls in this region the only way they will be able to achieve this. We see how the girls instantly flourish in our houses and achieve great results due to the nutritious meals, warm beds, plentiful learning resources and love and care from staff and volunteers.

It costs 40,000 euros to cover the full running costs of one house, making our target for 2015 200,000.

Whether running the London marathon (Read the next article about Richard Lawson’s Marathon at the age of 68!) or doing 24 hour indoor bike rides (thank you Queen Elizabeth’s), climbing Toubkal or doing 24 hour fundraising fasts (Thank you Bristol Grammar School) there are many ways to make supporting EFA fun and inspiring!



Richard Lawson’s Marathon



Queen Elizabeth’s

FONDATION

Cegid

L'énergie pour entreprendre.

We are delighted to confirm our partnership with **CEGID**, a French technology company based in France, to run a project delivering IT support at our houses. This will include the creation of an mini IT Center at our new house! CEGID discovered us after reading an article about us on royal Air Maroc's inflight magazine! We will keep you up to date on this project in the next issue.

We are also grateful for the continued support from **Sevenoaks** who raise £2000 annually for us through their geography calendar.



If you are a school, company or individual who would like to support EFA , you can find more information about how to fundraise here: <http://www.efamorocco.org/donate/> and by emailing me at sonia@efamorocco.org .

This Year's Marrakech Atlas Etape

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HOME • MEN • ACTIVE • RECREATIONAL CYCLING

The six best cycling sportives of 2015

Turn your New Year's resolutions into pedal revolutions with Marc Abbott's guide to the very best bike rides taking place in the UK and abroad over the coming 12 months

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Cyclists at the start of L'Eroica Britannia. Photo: Alamy

By Marc Abbott
8:54AM GMT 07 Jan 2015

Print this article

We are busy preparing for our 3rd Marrakesh Atlas Etape, which will take place on Sunday 26th April. The Etape was listed in this years **top 6 cycling events in the world** which we are rather proud of, and we are also proud to say that it is going to be the best yet! Read the article here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/active/recreational-cycling/11309043/The-six-best-cycling-sportives-of-2015.html>

We also have many new teams participating, including teams from Rabat and some more women's teams. We'd love more women's teams in the future so please get in touch if you think you can bring a group of women cyclists together. We are already working on including a team of women cyclists in Afghanistan who are currently receiving a lot of media attention. We know how much it takes from women to step out of traditional roles, whether that means continuing their education or getting on a bike. We will share more about this in the next addition.

We would like to wish all our contestants and friends a great Etape. Don't forget to plan enough training time, leading up to the event (that was from Saif, owner of Aargan Sports, sponsors of the Etape) and don't forget to get your friends to sponsor you (that was a message from Sonia our Fundraiser) as all the proceeds will give more girls the chance to receive a precious education.

Next month, Richard Lawson will run the London Marathon to raise money for EFA.

He's 68 years old. We caught up with him to ask him what inspired him to do it.



I was diagnosed in the mid 80s with spondylitis, a very painful spinal condition that generally gets worse. A Harley Street visit informed me that I should give up even gentle running and playing squash...that left me looking for something else. The short story is that I returned to Morocco, which I first visited in 1968, and began to explore the High Atlas Mountains.

For the next 20 years I went into the mountains as often as possible. Of the many lasting impressions, ones that always remain are the winter trips, high into the most remote villages, many years before any of them had access by vehicle and certainly before the days of electricity installation. Some of these villages still have no road access and are often cut off from the world for months during harsh winters. There were some schools for young children, but no access to secondary schooling. This is still the situation in many areas, especially where small villages are nestled at over 2000m.

When I first heard of the EFA foundation I knew that the concept was a huge step forward for young girls in the mountains. Many would be otherwise married by 16 and begin families. They would certainly stop their schooling and probably remain in their villages to carry on a traditional lifestyle, with little hope of realising any wider potential. I can entirely appreciate the time, diplomacy and encouragement that was necessary to convince the mothers and fathers of girls such as these that other possibilities were available to them. Thanks to EFA, tremendous positive change has already been made, new doors are open, new horizons made available.

I visited the original Asni house last year and was surprised and delighted by the attitude and perceptions of the girls, and the environment in which they are nurtured and educated. I think we should be fully aware that this system and similar ones elsewhere, are changing the world. They should be encouraged and supported to the full, and in the decades to come more and more young women will be better prepared to make new and vital decisions, based on an inspiring education such as EFA provides.

Do you plan on any more challenges?

No doubt my first reaction at the end of the upcoming race will be "Never again". A few minutes later, however, I'll be planning the next one, but not immediately telling anyone, especially my wife, daughter and all friends who are bored to tears with hearing about this one!

Meet the girls

2015 class profiles

Oumaima

14 years old.

Village : Mouldikht 18 km from Dar Tinmel.

She has a 22 year old sister who is married and stopped school after 6ieme annee primary school.

She scored of 14.18 for the first semester .

Hajar

14 years old.

Village : Mouldikht 18 km from Dar Tinmel.

She has a 7 years old sister who is going at the primary school in her village.

She scored 13.66 in the first semester.



More about them:

They are both really motivated to succeed and hope to be accepted at Dar Asni next year to continue their studies at the lycee. They both love studying French and English.

Oumaima would like to become a French teacher and Hajar a doctor. Oumaima likes reading, surfing on the internet and listening to music. She is reserved but she likes to discuss with the others. Hajar likes to read and dance. She is quite communicative and loves laughing.

They are both lucky to come at Dar Tinmel by the school bus. Their fathers pushed them to continue their studies and they follow the procedures to allow their girls to be accepted at Dar Tinmel. They are both so sweet and they definitely deserve to fulfill their dreams!

Reflections from our volunteers

Lucy Goodman shares about her weekend visit to Fatima's village and the hazardous journey to get there!



School children literally risk their lives for an education! This may sound exaggerated, but it certainly isn't a million miles from the truth as I discovered last weekend. I was thrilled to be invited to Fatima's house for the weekend. To me it feels as if I've known Fatima all my life, and although she comes from Iznagne, which feels like the most out-of-the-way place in the world, she could have come from downtown Agadir. We're starting from Ouirgane, which is on the 'main' road between Asni and Tarroudant, but is not a well-trodden tourist route because of the tricky 'Tizi n'test pass' (2100m asl) which demands careful negotiation; particularly this time of year in the snow. There is no bus service; just your standard grand taxis, passing lorries, cattle trucks and stripped out minibuses-so that double or triple the amount of people can squeeze in. Seemingly the safest and most reliable way to travel is definitely by donkey or mule, which we can refer to as the 'Berber 4x4'.

"Yallah Lucy!", Fatima was encouraging me to eat faster as we scoffed our lunch (a delicious carrot and potato ensemble, thanks to Samira) at midday on Saturday. We are rushing to make our way out on to the road to take our pre-booked 'transport'. Turns out we were hurrying to stand by the road to flag down whatever vehicle is passing and willing! The problem is that most of the vehicles are full before they leave Asni, predominantly to make the journey as economical as possible, and also because there is a general lack of transport around these satellite towns. When I say full, I don't just mean that all the seats are taken, I mean people are already riding on the roof and hanging out the window. Within an hour we managed to bundle in to a van, and the existing passengers were none too pleased to have to find room for two more bodies, especially one with a big backpack.



At least it was a beautiful day and the views were gorgeous and I was with lovely people and there was a small shop to buy snacks. And then we waited some more. And then we waited a bit longer. As it got cold and dark I was impressed at how the girls manage to keep their spirits high and how they find enough to talk about to keep chatting to each other. As the night fell and we began our 5th hour of waiting, Fatima apologized and said that this was an exceptionally long wait, although obviously it's not that uncommon. We were all cold and I shared out what ever I'd thrown in to my back- pack. The lack of clothing and footwear worn by the young people in this currently cold environment astounds me. The temperature is below 5°c and they'll still be wearing flip-flops.



After an hour this minibus appeared, battered and bruised but hopefully fit for the job. What a relief it was to sit inside. My concerns were that this van was now heavily weighed down and facing a challenging hill start; but we made it and even though on some slopes we had to get out and push, it got us all the way to Iznagen in one piece.

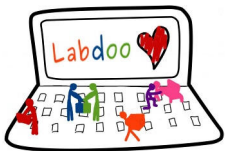


Fatima was the first girl from her village to go to secondary school. The school teacher that I met said she badgered her father for three months to let her go. Fathers are somewhat reluctant to let their daughters go to college partly due to the route being potentially dangerous and costing money. However there is another socio-economic factor that encourages women to stay at home, settle down early and breed: education can actually be considered an element of devaluation in the marriage market, and seen as a disturbance to social cohesion.

This has been a long account of a journey that for me was crazy, but for Fatima was a completely normal day. I now truly understand how difficult it is to live, let alone complete your education if you live in rural Morocco. It is essential that the few boarding houses provided by the government, and non-governmental organizations like 'Education For All' exist.

More news

Encouraging IT Skills: Labdoo donate laptops to Asni 2:



Asni 2 is a rented building which means, unlike our purpose built houses, it doesn't have a dedicated space for computers. This means laptops were needed so the girls could use the space more flexibly. We were fortunate to be contacted by an organization called Labdoo who provide computers to communities with minimal access. In February they personally delivered laptops. This was an exciting day for all the girls!

Having computers not only makes homework and self-study easier, but also helps the girls connect with friends and family who are often in villages far away. (Their families don't have computers but they probably have access to at least one smart phone!). It is also essential that girls can build their IT skills so that they can enter the employment market, and it's also a requirement for further education including University. We would like to thank Labdoo for their great work in and helping communities to access computers and for empowering the EFA girls to stay connected in the digital age from their remote mountain villages.



International Women's Day:

At 8am ALL the girls who attend the college (105) gathered outside and we marched in procession down in to Ouirgane. They were singing and had instruments, such as tambourines and their hands mainly, and made an incredible sound. Cars were stopping and there was even an ambulance to support us and provide water for the girls. A big banner led the way at the front and a Moroccan flag at the rear. We stopped several times for them to gather together and dance by the side of the road. Their energy and repertoire of songs astounds me.

Boys from the college were also involved in the organization of the day, they were helpful and seemingly impressed by their female counterparts. After a few hours of singing on the roadside and raising awareness to passing vehicles, the name of each girl was written on a race number and pinned to their jumpers. After a few speeches by the head teacher and others from the college, the race was started down by the barrage and the girls ran 3km up hill back to Collège. Everyone put in a great effort. Again there was great organization at the finish line with music, orange juice and chocolates for the girls. The fastest runners were awarded prizes. We had this little ceremony in Dar Taliban, which is the other boarding house for girls inside the perimeter of the Collège.



After couscous, everyone from the Collège, teachers, students, parents and families, were invited into the main hall for an afternoon of music, poetry, drama and all performances were related to women. The theatre went down really well...and I enjoyed watching the girls act even though I understood nothing! I realized that the topics were about education, women's rights, domestic issues, internet- dating. Lots of songs and powerful bits of writing were read and sung in between the dramas. It was a real sell-out event. People were even standing outside peering through the windows, as there weren't enough chairs. The girls have real charisma and confidence, considering some are only 12 years old. I don't think girls in England at this age have any clue about International Women's Day.

Our Lives Through A Lens: Photography Workshop at Asni 1

We are fortunate at EFA to have many professionals offering to share their experience with our girls. Last month a photographer from the US, Heather Binns, visited Asni 1 to take a photography workshop with the girls. The idea was that they learn to use a camera to tell their own story. This work is inspired by Heather's involvement in a photography project with Prints For Prints and Peace Corps Morocco.

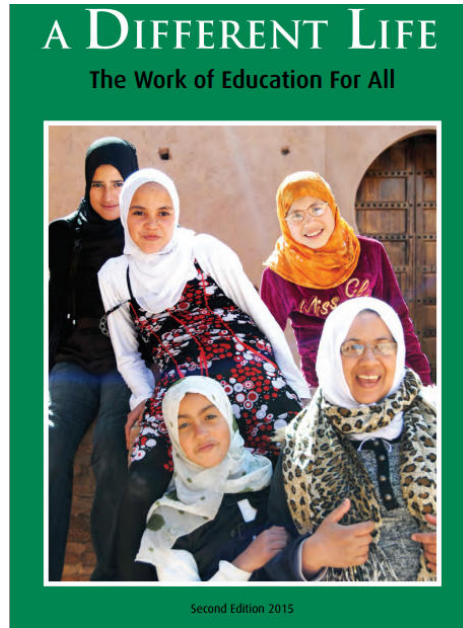
They all had a fantastic day, took digital photos and even developed them themselves on portable printers brought by Heather. All the materials used were later donated to the houses and we hope that the girls are inspired to continue telling their unique and inspiring stories.



Want to know more about **Education For All?**

The **SECOND EDITION** of the excellent and thoroughly researched booklet written by **Derek Workman** can be downloaded by using the link below:

<http://www.efamorocco.org/p/ADifferentLife.pdf>



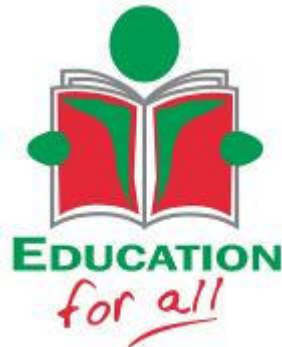
Want to get involved?
Here are some ideas:

- Are you participating in an event and looking for a charity to donate your funds to? Visit <http://www.justgiving.com/efam/> to make a page where your funds go directly to the girls.
- Financially adopt a girl to ensure that she has the opportunity to complete three years of college education.
- Visit our website <http://www.educationforallmorocco.org/donate/index.html> for tips on how to donate.
- Are you a company looking to support us? Join our corporate sponsors.

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Do you have at least 3 months to give to help girls in rural Morocco?

**If you
educate a
girl, you
educate the
next
generation**

Volunteers Required

Education for All have five boarding houses for girls, three in Asni (45km from Marrakech), one in Ouirgane (60 km from Marrakech) and one in Talat n'Yacoub (100km from Marrakech).

We are seeking volunteers who would be willing to live and work in each of our houses to support the girls with their studies.

- **Your main job** will be to help the girls with their homework and give them **extra French lessons**.
- You will also **help the housemothers** with their daily tasks.
- **Help EFA** to be connected with the donors.



Recruiting now for 2015-2016.

If you are interested in volunteering to assist the girls in Morocco, please contact

info@efamorocco.org