

EDUCATION
for all
MOROCCO

May 2018

#23

NEWSLETTER



**Marrakech Atlas
Etape**

Photos of this year

**Chef Moha and the UK
Ambassador visit**

*They made a Master Class
with EFA girls!*

**Volunteers and
fundraising**

Updates

School results

Welcome to our May edition

With International Women's Day only just behind us, we are still reflecting on the amazing success of EFA and the many girls who have had their lives transformed due to being at the EFA boarding houses. This all came about because a few people living in Morocco decided to make it happen- one boarding house at a time. And luckily there were many people happy to help with financial and other support. So we continue this edition of the newsletter in the empowered spirit of International Women's Day, knowing that we are providing a precious opportunity for girls from rural Morocco to become the empowered women- and leaders- of the future! Enjoy this Spring-time edition of our newsletter.



Chef Moha and the UK Ambassador do a Master Class with EFA girls!

It seemed like a dream, but on Valentine's Day, the celebrity Moroccan chef, **Chef Moha**, gave a cooking masterclass at the EFA boarding houses. In an initiative by our new Patron Thomas Reilly -the new UK Ambassador to Morocco- this spectacular event was a big highlight for EFA and we are still wondering if it actually happened!

It was amazing to learn Chef Moha's incredible culinary techniques and we were so impressed by how clearly and humbly he communicated his skills with us all. There was also TV crews there, making some of the EFA's girls celebrities when the event was aired on national TV! The whole day ended with a feast enjoyed by all of us, and memories we will feast on for many years to come.

Read more in an article by the British Ambassador here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chef-moha-shows-the-way>



reat success for the MAE 2018

The annual Marrakesh Atlas Etape had its 6th year on April 22nd with **over 150 cyclists from Morocco and many other countries**. A record-breaking **8 EFA girls** took part this year and all did extremely well! Ghita was the fastest! She is the girl having an emotional hug from Aicha her house mother. We were delighted to see the British Ambassador Thomas Reilly and the Minister for North Africa and the Middle East, Alistair Burt, taking part this year- and as you can see the EFA girls were very happy to receive their medals from them!

The dates are already confirmed for next year- **Sunday April 28th 2019!** If you would like to take part in this fun and rewarding event, register now marrakech-atlas-etape.com/register and begin your practice in the fine Summer weather.

This event is a perfect way to spend a weekend in Morocco with friends, family or even work colleagues for a team-building weekend. We also offer this event as part of a Corporate Sponsorship Package in which you can put forward a corporate team with a donation to sponsor a girl through her education at EFA. For more information about this contact sonia@efamorocco.org



Dormitories of Hope- Article by Thomas Reilly

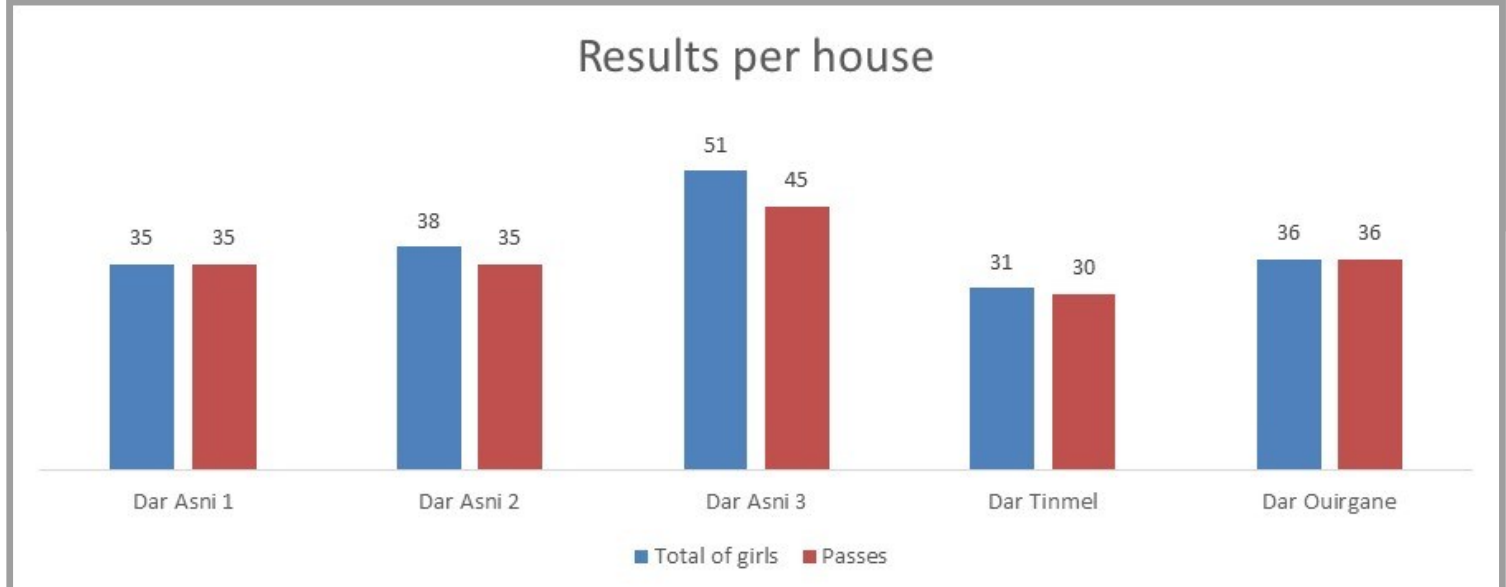
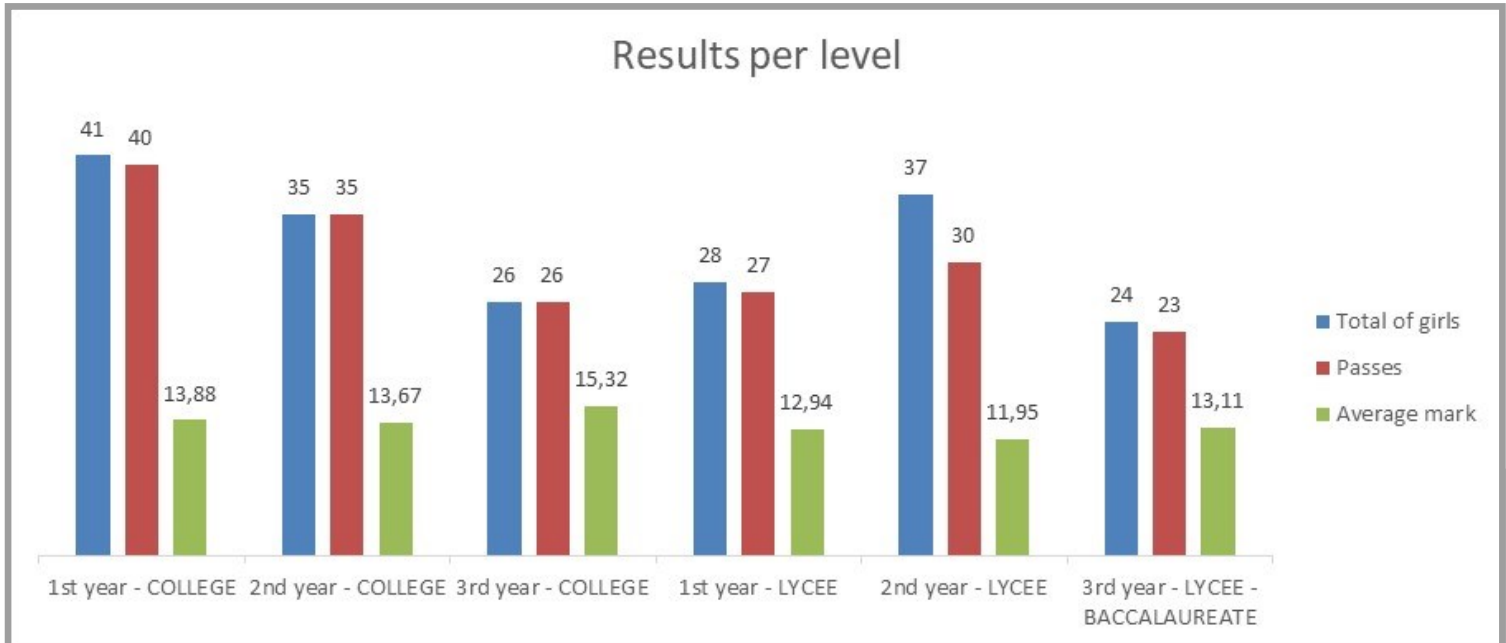
"As I was shown round the buildings, it dawned on me why the success rate is so high. The girls in the dormitories came from the poorest families in the poorest villages. I saw pictures of some of their houses – whole families living, eating, cooking and sleeping in one room. No one in their families had had an education. These girls were being offered a huge chance and they were seizing it firmly with both hands – it made me embarrassed to think how easily we take a formal education for granted in the UK and how often we waste that opportunity...."

Read more about Ambassador Thomas Reilly's visit to the EFA houses last December, and why he has become an avid supporter of EFA : <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/dormitories-of-hope>



Exam Results—First semester

We are delighted with another great set of results from the EFA girls. They continue to achieve results above the national average which goes to prove that as well as access to education, a positive and supportive learning environment is key to motivating the girls to learn and take their learning as far as they want to.



New Funders- FCO



We are delighted to announce that we will be receiving a significant fund for the EFA houses from the **British Embassy in Morocco** as part of their initiative to support stability, security and prosperity in North Africa. The fund will cover a percentage of costs for all 5 boarding houses. We look forward to developing a great relationship with the Embassy and contributing together to positive social change in Morocco and the region. We are also very grateful that Thomas Reilly, the UK Ambassador to Morocco, has taken on the role as our Patron and the amazing impact and awareness raising he has already done for EFA in his first few months.

Monkey Bike Mafia



Two young women are planning to ride through Morocco on monkey bikes to raise money and awareness for EFA- a crazy, brilliant adventure that goes to show we can do anything we set our minds to!

Read more about them here!
<https://monkeybikemafia.com/>

Introducing Abryd



Founded in 2017 by three friends, Abryd is a registered charity which aspires to help the poorest people in Morocco by organizing treks and other activities throughout the country. They came across EFA due to one of their treks being in Ouirgane where we have one of our boarding houses! Casablanca born Hasna is passionate about educating girls in Morocco and says:

“Abryd was created when we realised that we could have a substantial impact on people’s lives through our passion, trekking. We chose EFA after visiting one of their houses where we could see the direct impact of their work, especially how a very small donation can change a girl’s life and the one of her community. This encouraged us to set the target of raising funds to sponsor a girl for each trek Abryd organises.”

To find out more about their tours, check out <https://abryd.org/trekking-in-morocco>

Morocco International Women's Association come together to support EFA



On Sunday 25 February 2018 the Morocco International Women's Association (MIWA) hosted their first ever Sunday market at Cafe Clock Marrakech. MIWA sold an array of items from vintage home decor, fancy party caftans, children's toys, local artists' designs, books, makeup, Mexican tast-ers and everything else you could think of in between!

The items also included some hand-painted candle holders and glasses made by the EFA girls in a workshop the week before.

The proceeds will be donated to EFA and Dar El Bir Oual Ihssane, a home for the elderly in Marrakech.

We are so grateful for the kind initiatives like this that not only serve the community, but raise awareness and funds too.

Project Trust—Exploring Potential in the Atlatains

We are delighted to begin a partnership with Project Trust, a well reputed UK volunteer organisation which sends over 300 motivated Gap Year students to international projects- and EFA will be their new project in Morocco! During an assessment visit, Ingrid (Project Turst's CEO) was impressed with the work and results of EFA. She writes in her article, **"Rarely have I been so inspired by a project. It is highly successful yet incredibly simple, and I think that's part of its magic."**

We look forward to having their highly-selected and well-trained volunteers supporting the EFA house mothers and girls with fun activities and learning support for 9 months.



Here is Latifa (Head House Mother left), Ingrid CEO of Project Trust and Sonia (right) Fundraiser for EFA during the visit last month.

Read the full Project Trust article here: <https://projecttrust.org.uk/exploring-potential-in-the-atlas-mountains>

Sponsor a girl in 2018



Sponsoring a girl is a fantastic way to make a difference in Morocco, transforming an entire village and building the foundations of a peaceful, equal society and world.

It's easy to do!

Make a monthly donation or a one off donation today. Get in touch if you would like more details: sonia@efamorocco.org

Read this blog from Abbie



Would you like to immerse yourself in Moroccan culture and boarding school life? Are you passionate to share your skills and contribute to a project which is transforming the lives of girls and whole communities in rural Morocco? **Join our volunteer programme for an experience of a life-time.**

Read more about the experience of Abbie, an International blogger who volunteered with us last October.

<http://speckontheglobe.com/2018/03/08/volunteering-in-morocco/>

Our regular volunteers

Alison—from USA

Hello. My name is Alison and I am from the United States- San Francisco California, to be exact. This is the third time I have been a volunteer at EFA. I have volunteered at Asni 3, Dar Ouirgane, and Asni 2. Each time I come, I stay a little longer!



My experience this time was uniquely characterized by the presences of two women who are important in my own life. First my goddaughter Kay, an educational therapist, who came for a week during the spring break at her school in the US, eager to share her expertise about studying, learning and staying calm in the midst of frenetic exam prep. And my sister Paula, who was at Asni 3. A retired ESL teacher, she provided ESL classes for the housemothers, and I am lucky as I was her

teacher's aide. I hope my teaching skills will improve after the classes with these two gifted teachers.



I have been looking at the volunteer blogs and I feel very humble to be in the company of so many women who have shared so much of themselves with the girls. I'm impressed by the way each has reached out in her own way, and how in a few weeks or months the lives of the volunteers become remarkably intertwined with the lives of the girls. Although we are of different ages, nationalities and backgrounds, I think a common thread among us all is that we come to help but leave feeling that we are the ones who have been profoundly enriched by our stay here, varied as our experiences may be.

Most of all I continue to be inspired by the passion and dedication of the housemothers and house staff who work in the EFA houses with the girls. There are more and more girls in the houses, and more students in the already overcrowded schools. The curriculum and educational demands on these young girls seem quite rigorous to me. The support and structure that the housemothers provide is key to their success. The housemothers must get tired. Yet year after year they continue to reach out, inspire, and nurture the girls, to provide the safe haven they need to pursue their studies. And lucky for the volunteers, they manage to reserve a good measure of kindness, patience and compassion for us.

Paula—From USA

I volunteered for EFA at Dar Asni 3 again, and a lot has changed in the last 2 years!

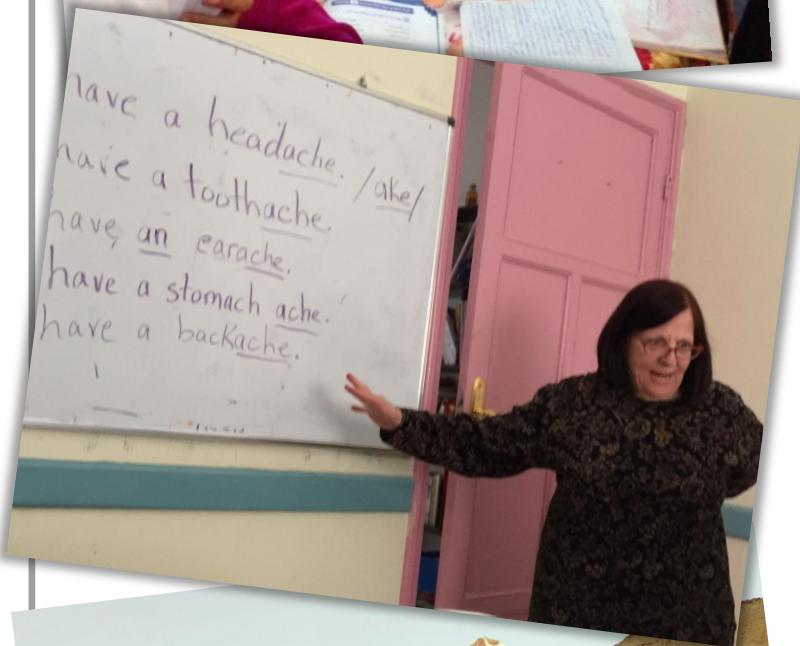


One such innovation is the reading program that Khadija (the house mother) initiated five months ago, and so I thought that I would share that with you.

According to Khadija, it used to be very difficult for the girls in Dar Asni 3 to focus on reading a book for any great length of time, because in their villages, this was not part of their culture. During their free time here, the girls would enjoy chatting, singing, etc. but Khadija felt that it would be valuable to add periods of sustained, continuous reading on a daily basis to prepare the girls for higher level studies.

In November, she implemented a reading program which she also shared with the other houses. I was amazed at this, as, unbeknownst to Khadija, we often do something similar in NYC schools!

For one hour after school, there is complete silence in the house. Each girl must take a book from the house library and read to herself in French, Arabic or English. (In US schools, this quiet, independent reading is sometimes known as Sustained Silent Reading.) While they are reading, the girls take notes. After the silent reading time is over, six girls per night volunteer to stand up in front of the others and present a summary of what they have just read. This offers an ongoing opportunity for the girls to gain confidence in giving oral presentations to their peers, while becoming better public speakers. Khadija said that since the program began five months ago, the library books that were once gathering dust are now an integral part of the girls lives, and she sees a big difference in their approach to reading.



Jean—From UK

As ever I have had a wonderful time helping at Dar Asni 3 doing anything from helping the girls with their English to assisting Khadija with writing reports to peeling vegetables to gardening. But I would like to write in particular about two highlights of my stay there.



One of them was the celebration of International Women's Day at the Lycee in Asni, which had been organised by the students. I felt very honoured to be invited and it was wonderful to listen to the confident presentations of two of the girls from Asni 3. They stood with microphones in front of a big crowd of teachers, students and guests to talk about Women's Day and to ask various guests what it meant to them. (And I was included in those questions!) We were then presented with certificates and flowers and had mint tea, cakes and biscuits.

The other highlight which was perhaps even more interesting and personal was a subsequent discussion we had in the house with all 51 girls on the topic of the early marriage of girls. They first discussed this (very animatedly!) in small groups in Amazhir. In fact that discussion could have lasted all evening but I reluctantly had to draw them together to talk about it in English – both to help their communication skills in English and so that I could understand what they were saying! Not surprisingly they were unanimous in their condemnation of early marriage and could see no advantages. They identified the causes as being poverty, traditional views and ignorance. We then moved onto the problems caused by early marriage which included depriving girls of a normal childhood when they should be playing and getting an education, and forcing them into taking the responsibility for a family at too young an age. Many girls drop out of school which then affects the education of the children of these girls. They also mentioned health problems for the girls in that they are giving birth at a very young age. The early marriage of girls can also lead to violence against women and even divorce.

Several of the girls had personal stories to tell, some of which were tragic. One girl who was going to be forced to marry a man at a very young age committed suicide as the only way to escape her fate. The best friend of one girl was married at the age of 16 and was desperately homesick as she had to move to her husband's family in Casablanca, far away from her village in the mountains. One girl's mother married when she was 14 and her husband has now left her for another woman, leaving her mother, sister and brother in a desperate situation.

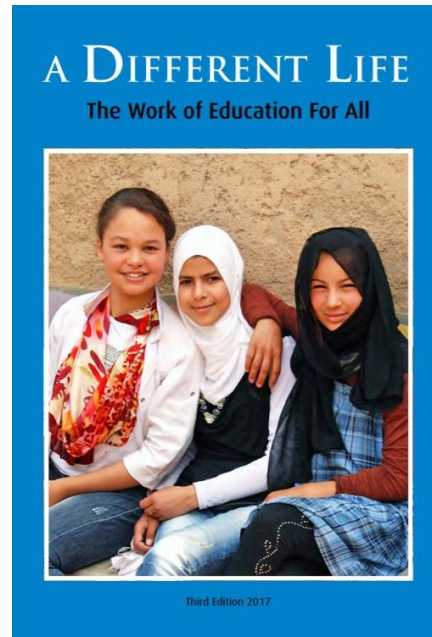
We went on to talk about the dreams of the girls here at Asni 3, who have grasped the opportunity to get an education and they were all totally inspiring. The father of one of the girls was convinced that she would return to her village pregnant after having attended an EFA boarding house. She is determined to prove him wrong and aims to return with a degree certificate rather than a baby! In doing this she hopes to change the mentality of the people in her village. Many of the girls have dreams of becoming teachers; one wants to be a businesswoman, another a journalist and another a tourist guide; a couple want to be police officers; one wants to be a nurse and another a social worker. Many of them are the first girls in their villages to get a secondary education and to go to university. What unites them all is their determination to help their families and communities in the future. In the words of Zahira and Hajar who summed up at the end:

'We want to be successful women who can then choose our own husband when we are ready for marriage.'

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:

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 2018-2019.

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

info@efamorocco.org