

# EFA Newsletter

**A new house, a new film, record exam results, another great year!**

## Looking back over 2019

It feels like another year where we look back and marvel at the successes and achievements of EFA and the girls. As EFA grows and the girls who access school through our project grow too, we would like to take this time to thank you all for making it possible for us to exist and change lives.



There are over 80 million illiterate people in the world and 2/3 of them are women. In rural Morocco over 70% of women and girls are illiterate mainly due to not being able to access the schools due to their remote location. These numbers are what drive us.

This year, We built and opened our sixth house, hosted a Royal Visit, welcomed many volunteers and visits, collaborated with corporate partners and foundations,

participated in the making of an amazing independent short film about the lives of the EFA house mothers and girls, saw the film release and many private screenings and held our first fundraising gala in London. This year we have seen 230 girls educated, record exam results (100% pass rate for the Baccalaureate), 100% university enrolment, scholarships and many signs that attitudes are changing for the better.

All of these successes are thanks to the wide range of support we receive from our colleagues, supporters, partners, sponsors and the dedication of the house mothers and girls who are determined to change the future of the next generation of women and girls from the rural High Atlas Mountains.

Educating girls is vital for our development goals and to build a peaceful, equitable society where everyone can flourish. Thank you for supporting us so we can build and run boarding houses to educate the future women who will shape society and the world. With your support, these girls and young women are evidence of the positive impact of educating girls.

**We hope you enjoy this edition of the 2019 newsletter and wish you a very happy holidays.**



# New House- Tinmel 2- Opens

We are so happy to announce that our new house (house #6) in Talat N Yacoub is open! It has been an exciting year and emotional time for everyone at EFA to see this dream of a new house in Talat become a reality. The house has the capacity for 60 girls- our biggest yet! Designed by a Swedish architect, the house is spacious, light and colourful and has benefitted from the experience of our other houses to make sure it is designed with every feature that is needed to accommodate a large number of inhabitants with ease! Such as a bigger kitchen even more storage and big windows.



This house went from dream to reality thanks to the incredibly generous Wynn family from the U.K. We are also grateful to the architect, Bjorn Conerdings, the builders who worked all through a very hot Ramadan, our amazing team of Trustees- in particular Cees and Maryk Van Den Berg for overseeing the whole project, for Fatima, the house mother for coordinating the move and to all our staff and supporters for believing in EFA and helping it to grow so more girls can access the education they deserve. Enjoy the new house girls!

Last month we had a donation of tables and a washing machine, curtains and lamps from [Monyati Initiatives](#)- thank you so much! Monja, Monyati's Founder, came in person to visit the house and meet the EFA girls and staff. It was a wonderful visit and the desks and washing machine are now in full use! We will hold the official opening on January 18th 2020. If you would like to be there, please contact us

## DONATE TO OUR NEW HOUSE!

If you would like to make a donation for the other items needed for the new house, you are welcome to visit our [JustGiving](#) page!



# NGO, Manyati Initiatives, Visits EFA

Salaam" she says to me with a big smile while she gives me the typical two cheek-kisses as the Moroccan way of greeting. My straight-forward German handshake with a good old "nice to meet you" didn't survive long during my stay in Morocco. I must have greeted more than 100 plus students, teachers and staff and I have to say that I never had so many cheek-kisses in my entire life in one single day. I must have disappointed a few for accidentally not continuing the third, fourth, fifth cheek-kiss as customary in Morocco.



Throughout the day students come in and out the boarding house where I am currently staying. It is located in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Manyati Initiatives decided to focus on a new education project here: we supported the set up of a new boarding house for girls from 12 to 18 years. This boarding house enables girls from the rural Atlas Mountains to attend secondary higher education. In the mountains they do not have access to secondary schools and parents feel reluctant to send their girls away without caretakers, a safe home and sufficient funds. The nearest secondary

schools are too far to travel every day from remote villages where they live. Their parents are too poor to afford lodging near to the schools and they worry about entrusting their daughters to the care of existing facilities.

This boarding house was constructed and is managed by our partner organisation Education For All in Morocco, a wonderful NGO that already has set up and manages five further boarding houses for girls. This latest boarding house was built in Talat n Yacoub in the Al Haouz region and is located just across the secondary school, so that the girls have safe and easy access to attend their education. Once they complete their secondary education successfully, they are able to go to university as well.



**Manyati Initiatives** donated \$ 5107 USD to purchase items needed for the set-up of the new boarding house, such as washing machine, chairs, tables, cushions, curtains, lamps and school material; our special gratitude to donor Ahmed.

I have met smart, kind, humble young women. And while I listen to what they have to say about their plans and life, while they speak with confidence and ambition, I silently wonder "Have I been like this when I was their age?" It also forces me to acknowledge "I'm 38 years old. There is a new generation coming!" And while I write this, I hear the sound of the clock on the wall...tick ... toc. What can I pass onto the next generation?

# Changing Worlds in the High Atlas Film and Screenings

Uplifting and eye-opening, this independent short film- *Changing Lives in the High Atlas*- has been a highlight of the year. Made in May when the film crew visited EFA for a week, the film was released in September at the PURE conference, and has been grabbing the attention (and heart-strings) of audiences ever since.

The sensitivity of the film makers, Juliet Kinsman and Kuba Nowak, and their genuine passion for the life of the EFA girls and house mothers gives a very special and honest window into their world and what makes them so extraordinary! We have enjoyed the way the film reaches broad audiences, with many claiming that they had no idea of the issues and could really sense the love and trust that EFA uses to reach out in the local communities and educate girls here.



The film has also been screened in London on Nov 29th at the xxxx hotel and by Bristol Grammar School who held a school wide event, raised money through tickets ( each ticket was £4.44- the cost of educating a girl per day at the EFA houses) and made another big donation to EFA.

We hope this film, as well as raising awareness of EFA's work, will inspire people around the world to champion the causes they care about and girls and communities around the world to speak up for education.

Enjoy the [new video page on our website!](#) It includes the freshly edited 4-minute trailer of the 'Changing Worlds in the High Atlas film', made earlier this year about the EFA girls and house mothers.

[Watch the full film here](#)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HOLD A PRIVATE SCREENING TO RAISE AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR EFA, PLEASE CONTACT SONIA FOR MORE DETAILS [SONIA@EFAMOROCCO.ORG](mailto:SONIA@EFAMOROCCO.ORG)

# London Fundraising Gala

In October we held a special Fundraising Gala Event held in London. This event was organised by newly appointed Trustee, Samira Govers - El Hachoui, and was a huge success. We raised over £80k through a special raffle and auction and subsequent donations, sponsorships and matched funding by Goldman Sachs.

We had great speeches from Samira as host of the event, Jose Manuel Barroso former President of the European Commission, and EFA Patron Thomas Reilly, the British Ambassador to Morocco.

Thomas Reilly's speech included reading a letter from TRH Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, about their visit to EFA in February this year. They were unfortunately unable to attend the Gala Event and shared this with us:

## Letter from HRH, Harry and Meghan

**"One of the most impressive things about EFA is the way it is changing not just the lives of the girls who benefit directly, but the way it is changing attitudes in the villages and the communities towards girls' education."**



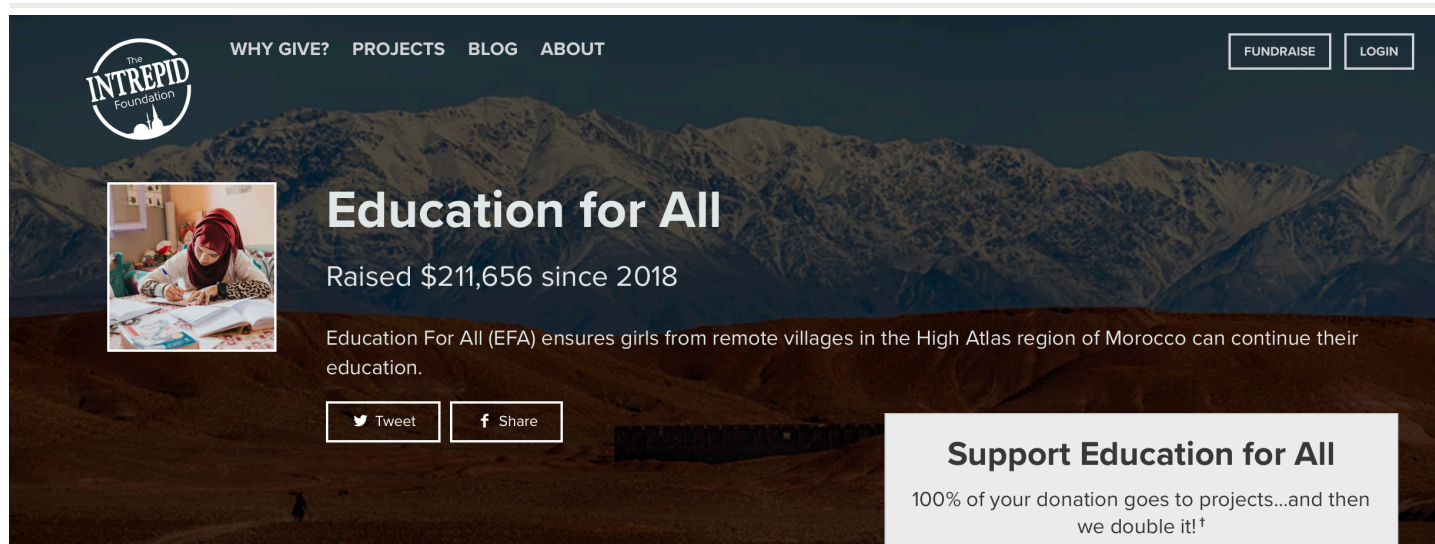
Above; Khadija and Latifa with Juliet Kinsman (Center)

Right: Khadija, former EFA student who came to the fundraising event to deliver an amazing speech about her life before and after EFA

We also had a speech from former student Khadija, who was one of the first girls when EFA started back in 2007, and is now qualified as a biology teacher! It was Khadija's first time on a plane and first time outside of Morocco. She was very excited to be in London!



# Intrepid's Double Donations Continue



The screenshot shows the Intrepid Foundation website with a dark background and a mountain range. The navigation menu includes 'WHY GIVE?', 'PROJECTS', 'BLOG', and 'ABOUT'. There are 'FUNDRAISE' and 'LOGIN' buttons in the top right. The main heading is 'Education for All' with a sub-heading 'Raised \$211,656 since 2018'. A small image shows a girl reading. Below the heading is a description: 'Education For All (EFA) ensures girls from remote villages in the High Atlas region of Morocco can continue their education.' There are 'Tweet' and 'Share' buttons. A white box on the right says 'Support Education for All' and '100% of your donation goes to projects...and then we double it!'

As some of you may know, EFA has built a partnership with Intrepid and was accepted as a foundation partner in 2018. This foundation has been doubling all your generous donations and last year we raised £82k! This year looks like we will raise around £40k!

Enjoy **this blog from The Intrepid Foundation** who are doubling all donations to EFA until the end of the year!

This doubling campaign will go on until the end of the year and any donation made via the @intrepidfoundation will double at no additional cost to you or us.

**It only costs £4 a day to educate a girl in rural #morocco. Let's make a difference together!**



**Double your donation today!**

**\*\*It only costs £4 a day to educate a girl in rural #morocco. Let's make a difference together! Please share and donate if you feel moved to by clicking this link!**



## Pure Conference 2019

We were delighted to be invited to represent EFA at the @PURE Conference in Marrakech in September. Pure has been publicly supporting EFA with donations for many years, and this year thanks to the participation of all the PUREists made another big donation of £32,000 to EFA.

This year, some former EFA girls and House Mothers came to meet the delegates and share their inspiring stories of education. Some also gave the delegates henna tattoos! We also held a screening of the new short film made by Juliet Kinsman and Kuba Nowak.

It was such a great time and we learned so much from our conversations with people at the conference. Gisele from Herman Creatives, a design agency doing lots of pro-bono work for us, was also there and Latifa had fun catching up with her. Herman Creative have designed our new information brochure, sponsorship posters, the Harry and Meghan welcome posters and also the safeguarding posters in the houses.



## Girl Blazer Project



When my first bag was ready, I went up to Michelle and said, "My name is Khloe. I've been seeing you almost every day on my way to school, and I want to have this bag." She looked inside, looked at me, and smiled. She told me that giving her the bag made her feel like a woman.

I had a lot of questions for her. I asked, "How did you become homeless? Why are you homeless?" Question my Mom couldn't answer.

She told me that her landlord kicked her out of her apartment, and she didn't have enough money to pay for another one.

We are proud to collaborate with this amazing initiative by GirlBlazer to share empowering stories about girls by girls around the world. Please check out their kickstarter campaign. One of the girls' stories will be about an EFA girl and her own unique story of pursuing an education in the remote High Atlas Mountains, against all odds!

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/girlheroes/girlblazer-childrens-book-about-real-life-girl-hero>

## Raising money for EFA on JustGiving

Every year we have many people who put on events to raise money for EFA via the JustGiving platform. They run marathons, organise bike rides, birthday parties and so much more. It is also a place to make a one off or monthly donation.



£2,356.30

raised of £2,000 target  
by 25 supporters

Donate Now

Share on Facebook

We would like to thank everyone who has donated monthly, or given us a one-off gift, and also to all those who have asked their friends to give a donation for their birthday or wedding. Special thanks to EFA supporters Nigel and Anne who have raised over £2000 from their biking challenge!

To start your own fundraising page, register with JustGiving and choose EFA as your charity of choice: <https://www.justgiving.com/efam>

## Ralle Aicha des Gazelles

We are so happy that trailblazers Marion and Sylvie will take part in the famous @rallyeichadesgazelles and raise awareness and money for EFA. If you would like to support their courageous efforts, check out their Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/gazelles.international>

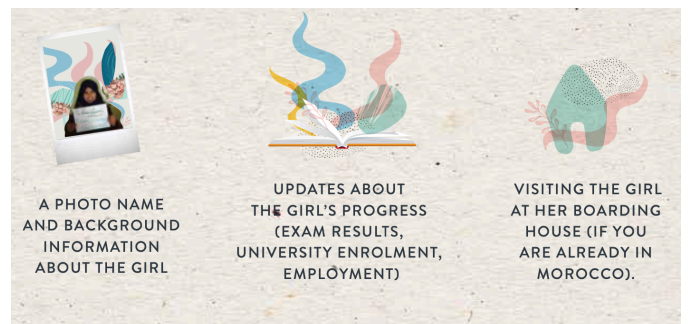




# Sponsor A Girl This Christmas



Sponsoring a girl is a wonderful way to have a personal relationship with our project, help us sustain our work and ensure that more and more opportunities for schooling are available to girls in the High Atlas region. When you adopt a girl, we provide you with:



We love this image of Khadija (below), one of the first girls to live in our first boarding house in 2007. This image captures her using a laptop at home in her village. It was donated by a school in the U.K. who were sponsoring her through her education, to help her with her University studies. Since then, she has graduated from University with a Biology degree and completed a Teacher Training post graduate to be a Biology teacher!

This is an example of what supporting girls from these remote rural villages in Morocco can do.

By supporting a girl we not only change her life but transform her entire village for generations to come!

Thanks to Gerard Wagemakers for this great image



© Gerard Wagemakers

To support us, go to: <https://efamorocco.org/donate>

# MARCHÉ DE NOËL

Au Royal Mansour Marrakech

15 DÉCEMBRE 2019  
DE 12H00 À 18H00

AU PROFIT DES ASSOCIATIONS :  
FIERS ET FORTS, EFA (EDUCATION FOR ALL),  
TRAIT D'UNION POUR LE HANDICAP, ATELIERS DE L'ATLAS

DÉGUSTATION DE FRIANNOISES DE NOËL

VENTE DE PRODUITS DU TERROIR ET  
DES CRÉATIONS ARTISANALES CONFECTIONNÉES  
PAR LES ENFANTS DES ASSOCIATIONS

VENTE DE PRODUITS DU SPA ROYAL MANSOUR  
ET DE BONS CADEAUX DE LA BOUTIQUE EN LIGNE

VENTE DES DÉLICÉS ET CONFISERIES CRÉÉS PAR  
LES CHEFS DU ROYAL MANSOUR

PHOTO AVEC LE PÈRE NOËL  
PAR CAROLINE DARCOURT

LIEU :  
SALONS PRIVÉS  
DU ROYAL MANSOUR  
ENTRÉE LIBRE

RUE ABDU ABBAS EL SEBTI, 80000 MARRAKECH  
TEL : 212 (0) 5 29 80 80 80  
INFO@ROYALMANSOUR.MA  
WWW.ROYALMANSOUR.COM

## Royal Mansour Xmas Market

On Sunday 15th December EFA took part in the Royal Mansour Christmas market- Marche du Noel- an annual event where the Royal Mansour open their beautiful hotel to the public and sell gifts to raise money for charities.

EFA is lucky to have been chosen as a partner charity over the last few years. The EFA house mothers and girls always see this as an opportunity to unleash their creativity, making dried herb sachets, Moroccan cookies, hand painted candle holders and even the odd kilim! There were many evenings baking, knitting, drying fresh mountain herbs and packing everything into gift bags with messages of thanks and love. All the money raised is shared amongst the partner charities and topped up with a generous donation from the Royal Mansour Marrakesh Hotel.



## “SUITE 60” by Peggy Rubens and Diane Button

**This past October, a group of nine women from California embarked on a journey to Morocco in celebration of a life milestone – our 60<sup>th</sup> birthdays. This epic trip included exploration, discovery and lots of fun. The warm people, delicious food and stunning scenery made for strong Moroccan memories.**



We had asked our tour guide to include something meaningful into our itinerary, not just simply visiting tourist sights every day. We wanted some authentic and realistic experiences to learn more about the people and life in Morocco. Our itinerary included a special visit to the Education for All home for girls in Ouirgane. We didn't know exactly what to expect when we arrived at the house, but as it turned out, for many of us, this day became the highlight of our trip.

We were offered tea and cookies from Badia, a warm woman who runs the home and is like a loving mom to all the girls living there. We were sitting on couches, discussing what EFA is all about when the girls walked into the room and, at that moment, our hearts simply melted. They introduced themselves to each of us, one by one, with a kiss and a smile. We sat in a big group and talked with these inspiring teen students.

We shared stories of our lives in the USA and learned about their hometowns and professional aspirations. We were moved by these personal interactions and the

girls' sacrifices, but mostly inspired by their pursuit of advanced education in light of their challenges.

## Supporting a New Computer Lab

Touched by their bravery and with tears in our eyes we toured the facilities, which is where we first set sight on their "computer lab." In this village, computers are their sole connection to the outside world. We learned that these girls walked for miles just to print their homework! With outdated technology, only 2 computers for 36 girls, uncomfortable folding chairs, and no scanner or printer at the school, these girls– the best and brightest from rural villages– are at an extreme disadvantage.



Motivated by these outstanding, dedicated schoolgirls, we decided right then and there to do something about this inadequate workspace. Before we left, we promised Badia we would start fundraising to update the computer lab. Marrakech being our next stop, we met board member, Cees, at a giant electronics store. Our spontaneous fundraising project resulted in 3 new laptops and a printer/scanner for the house–delivered and installed within one week. See what a bunch of sweet 60-year old women can get done when they put their minds to it!

Since returning home, we have continued our fundraising efforts and now have donated enough money to completely update the technology room at this home. This computer room, which we have

called "Suite 60" is a testament to what can be accomplished in a short time with a meaningful goal and a spirit of giving back.

## Perhaps you, or someone you know, will soon be reaching a life milestone?

We would like to encourage you to consider joining Education For All to support these amazing young girls. They are the future of Morocco and, if you ever get a chance to visit them, we promise you will walk away energized, impressed and in awe. And like us, you will probably have a tear in your eyes. Contact [sonia@efamorocco.org](mailto:sonia@efamorocco.org)



# Eco water Filters from The Giving Pool



A huge thanks to The Giving Pool, a clean water project in Morocco who give water purifiers to remote communities so they can access clean water.

Although we generally have good water at the EFA houses, when there is low rainfall we need to rely on reserves which are driven in from afar- so we were so happy to install these practical filters in our boarding houses and also to pack some off to the villages of the girls.

## EFA in the News

**Women in rural Morocco suffer disproportionately from lack of access to education and health care in spite of attempts to improve the situation..”**

**Read this interesting article** on the recent High Planning Commission’s report on gaps in rural women’s access to education, and comments from EFA about how we are helping to tackle the issue.



# Moving Mountains!

In the Summer, a group of EFA girls and their house mothers did something very unusual for girls and women of the High Atlas- they trekked and climbed the valleys they grew up in and then climbed the Atlas's highest peak!

Jean Pierre from Ouarzazat designed this week long adventure in the High Atlas valleys with passion. He brought experts to educate the girls about the stars, the herbs and the geology of the area. The girls had journals which they wrote every evening, and discussed everything they had seen during the day, their eyes lit up in the dark around the camp- fires.



The idea was to offer an experience of a life- time. And the cherry on the cake- to ascend Mount Toubkal. This was a challenge that symbolised so much for everyone. There are very few women climbers and trekkers in Morocco, even guides are the role of males.

However, the EFA girls are curious and adventurous and wish to get to know where they come from and not just hear about these adventures second hand.

[Watch this heart-warming video](#) about the recent trek organised by [Desert et Montagne Maroc](#).

A huge thanks to Jean Pierre Datcharry and his amazing team for organising such an informative and inspiring trip and for expanding the minds and igniting the motivation of the house mothers and girls. It is clear from the video shares that this trip changed their lives.

***"A heart soaring moment when every one of our Education For All girls and their house mothers made it to the top of Mount Toubkal. Nothing was going to stop them - when we got to the summit they were singing "this is just the beginning" It's been a privilege to be a small part of it."***



# Volunteer Adventures

Hello! My name is Ella, I'm 23 and I'm from the UK. I've been volunteering in Asni 3 since September and wanted to share some of the highlights of what has been an unforgettable 3 months. It's hard to sum up in words how amazing these girls are, and it's equally hard to choose just a few of the many memories I've made in Asni 3, but here are some of my favourites ...

## Putting on a play

A few weeks ago, I teamed up with Eolia, the French volunteer from Dar Ourigane, to put on a French play in Dar Asni 3. Rehearsals were at best chaotic! With the girls' differing and very busy school timetables, I don't think that we actually managed a full cast rehearsal of any single scene before the real show.

We'd put posters up around the house advertising the Friday night performance, so the girls were all excited! To say we were worried was an understatement.

Just before we were about to start, the cast came downstairs and Eolia and I were truly overwhelmed! The girls had organised themselves (without any suggestions from Eolia or myself) to create the most amazing costumes – my favourites were the old woman with the huge bottom (thanks to multiple pillows) and the fish seller with the beard!



The girls were truly amazing, making the audience laugh and bringing tears of pride to my eyes. French is the 3rd language for these girls, and their linguistic abilities and confidence to communicate in so many languages amaze and inspire me every day.

# Transforming the classroom

Dar Asni 3 has a purpose-built classroom. Thanks to a fundraising campaign I launched on my Facebook page, we managed to raise money to transform the classroom, buying extra educational games, stationary, English books, and lots of decorations and posters to turn the classroom into a happy and positive learning space.

Once the boxes arrived from England, we had great fun decorating the classroom. The girls' favourite are the inspiration posters, which we've translated into Arabic, with quotes such as "every mistake you make is progress" and "difficult roads often leave to beautiful destinations," which I think is particularly pertinent for these girls.



One special memory of my time in Dar Asni has been the visits I've made to 6 different girls' houses. It's said that Moroccan hospitality is the best and truly the generosity and kindness of the girls' families blew me away. It was such a special experience to see where the girls live, meet their families and walk the difficult mountain tracks they have to walk every weekend from where the school transport drops them off.

## Would you like to Volunteer with EFA?

We are always looking for motivated, skilled volunteers who are up for a challenge! If you would like to experience the culture in the High Atlas Mountains and support these amazing House Mothers and Girls who are transforming the culture of educating girls in this region of Morocco, please look at the [volunteer section of our website](#) to see our criteria and contact Karima to request an application form:

[karima@efamorocco.org](mailto:karima@efamorocco.org)

