

School's fundraising effort is helping Moroccan girls to take advantage of a full education

Why Bristol pupils are on the road to Morocco next month

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Just a few years ago, hardly any young girls from the rural communities that surround Imllil, in Morocco, had the opportunity of continuing their education after primary school.

The College at Asni, some 17km away, was not accessible to them because their parents could not afford to pay for lodgings.

That was until the area's first boarding house was finished in May 2008, thanks to the fundraising efforts of students from Bristol Grammar School.

It was designed to accommodate 24 girls, eight for each of the three years covered by the college curriculum.

Next month, a group of 14 students from Bristol Grammar School's lower sixth form will travel to Morocco to see how other pupils' hard work has helped to change a group of girls' lives.

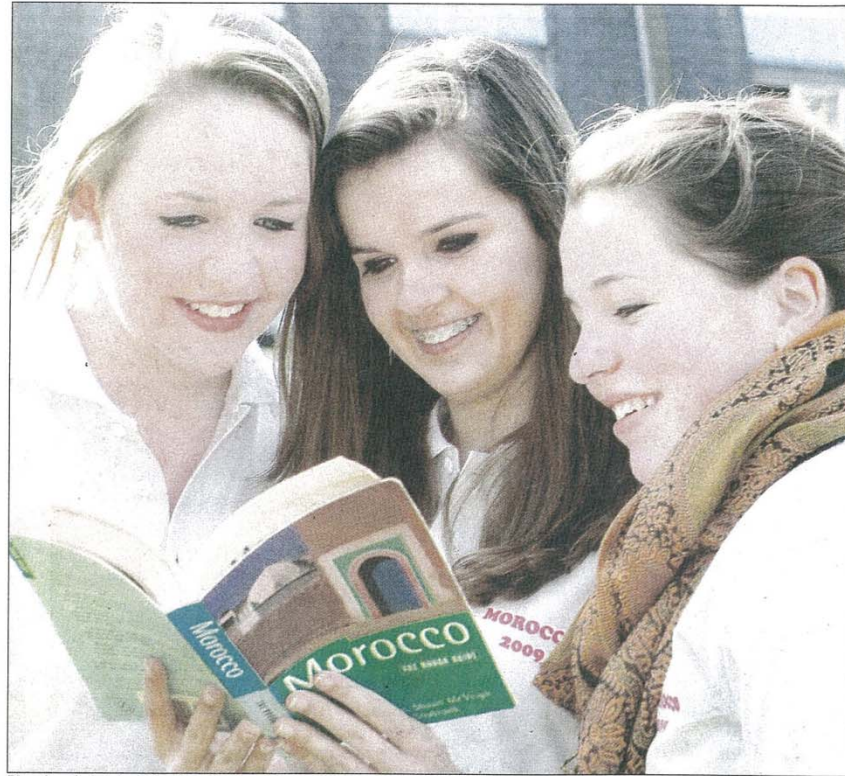
Bristol students dug the foundations for the first boarding house in 2007, and also visited the girls at the house in 2008 to see how it had developed.

Emma Prys-Roberts, 16, has just completed a sponsored five-kilometre run to help raise the £200 sponsorship money she needed to travel to Morocco. Each student must raise the funds plus cover their travel and accommodation expenses to go on the trip.

Emma said: "I really want to see what education in a different country is like. I don't think we appreciate our education enough in this country."

Alex Bragg, 16, added: "The news is often the only place we get our information about other countries, so it will be interesting to see for ourselves what it is really like."

Amy Hegarty, also 16, said: "The country is really under-developed so we will see how lucky we are. The girls struggle to get an education, so they really need us. On our trip we will be



Planning their trip: Bristol pupils Amy Hegarty, Emma Prys-Roberts and Alex Bragg

Picture: Clare Green

meeting the girls, teaching them, and practising a bit of French.

Andrew Dimberline, head of leadership at Bristol Grammar School, has been heavily involved in organising trips to Morocco, and will be going on the trip in April.

He said: "These girls now have the potential to continue their education to 18 and beyond and would otherwise

have finished their education at 11." The first Bristol Grammar School group visited Asni in Easter 2007, and a second group went in 2008. The school has raised more than £16,000 for the project in under three years.

Fundraising has included providing refreshments for school events, cake sales, raffles, selling homemade jew-

ellery at craft fairs, and bag packing at supermarkets. The highlight of the fundraising was the Souk evening in the school's Great Hall in November last year, which raised £3,355.

The building cost 80,000 euro, and to look after the girls, providing them with food, some clothing, school materials and a housemother, costs about 1,000 euro a year for each student.