

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Education For All Morocco appoints its Founder, Mike McHugo, as its first Honorary President as he steps down from the Board of Trustees**

Education For All Morocco (EFAM) is proud to announce that its Founder, Mike McHugo, has been appointed as the organisation's first Honorary President.

After many years of service as Chair and as a Trustee, Mike is stepping down from the Board - a shift that recognises both EFAM's continued growth and the strength of the foundations he helped to build.

This honorary position celebrates Mike's extraordinary contribution over nearly two decades and ensures he remains closely connected to EFAM's mission as a respected ambassador and guiding voice for the organisation's future.

Mike founded what was then Education For All (EFA) in 2007, after a visit to the High Atlas Mountains where he noticed something that would change the course of his life - and the futures of thousands of girls.

During a visit to the High Atlas Mountains, Mike noticed boys walking miles to reach school while girls stayed behind. Families explained that secondary schools were far away, transport was unaffordable, and it wasn't culturally expected - or sometimes permitted - for daughters to continue their education. Early marriage, household responsibilities, and safety concerns meant that most girls left school after primary.

Mike said of the initiative: "We understood that the future of any country is in the hands of those who are young now, through education and expanding their physical and mental horizons. We understood that while we couldn't take education to the villages, we could build a boarding house next to the secondary schools to allow those girls to study in a safe and secure learning environment a home away from home to become part of Morocco's future."

By building the first EFA boarding house in 2007, he created a safe and affordable solution that allowed girls to stay in school - transforming what was possible for rural communities and reshaping the future of hundreds of young women.

That vision became the very first EFA boarding house in 2007 - the foundation of what is now EFAM. Today, that simple idea has grown into a network of programmes supporting over 500 girls across Morocco each year, consisting of multiple programmes including secondary education, university access, and inclusive education for girls with Down syndrome.

Under Mike's leadership, Education For All grew from a single boarding house into a transformative educational network. Over the following decade, EFA expanded to reach hundreds of girls across some of the most remote rural areas of the High Atlas Mountains. By 2020, EFA had established six fully operational boarding houses, each providing safe accommodation, nutritious meals, academic support, and a community environment where girls could thrive.

This support has created a full educational pathway for rural girls who would otherwise have been excluded from schooling beyond primary level. Many of the students who entered the first boarding houses as young teenagers have now completed the entire education cycle, gone on to attend university, and are today working in a wide range of professional careers - from engineering and education to hospitality, science, and cultural arts. Their success stands as a testament to the power of access, opportunity, and the life-changing impact of Mike's vision.

As Honorary President, Mike will continue to champion EFAM's mission, offering strategic guidance and serving as an ambassador for the organisation as it scales its impact across Morocco.

"I am very proud to have been chosen as the first Honorary President of Education For All Morocco," said Mike of his new position. "But its success has been in the hands of many people, and perhaps more than we realise, it is the contribution of those hundreds of young girls who worked so tirelessly to better their lives and that of their families and communities, and as they have developed and gone out into the world, to offer inspiration to the young girls of today."

EFAM Chair, Nigel Taylor, said: "If there was ever a case of seeing further by standing on the shoulders of giants, then Mike McHugo MBE is such a giant. Whatever EFAM achieves in the future - whatever impact we have in promoting the education of girls and young women in Morocco - will be built on, and carried forward by, Mike's legacy. We are delighted that he will remain a central pillar of our work as EFAM's first Honorary President."

EFAM Managing Director, Samira El Hachoui, added: "Mike's vision has changed lives. Today, we stand on the foundations he built - safe accommodation, access to education, and the belief that every girl deserves the chance to learn. His leadership continues to inspire everything we do."

Nabeel Obaide, Operations Manager of SIST British Education Morocco, said: "Mike is not only the founder of Education For All Morocco - he is the heart of it. Through his tireless commitment, countless girls in the High Atlas Mountains have been given access to an education and a future they could once only dream of. He is an exceptionally humble man who shies away from recognition for his achievements, yet the impact of his work truly deserves to be celebrated. I feel incredibly privileged to have worked alongside someone whose life's work has been defined by kindness, humility, and an unshakeable belief in the power of education to change lives."

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### **About Education For All Morocco (EFAM)**

EFAM is a UK-registered charity funding high-impact education programmes across Morocco. Building on the legacy of the original boarding houses in the Atlas Mountains, EFAM now supports girls from secondary school to university, and funds specialist programmes for girls with Down syndrome, working with initiatives across Marrakech, Rabat, and the High Atlas regions.

### **Contact**

For PR and media enquiries, photography, and interview opportunities, please contact Amy Kilpin.