

EFA Newsletter 2020

The challenges and successes of a unique year



A Very Different Year

This has not been an easy or usual year for anyone. According to UNICEF, the pandemic has created *the biggest disruption to education in history*. At EFA we saw the impact very directly, when for the first time in our 13-year history we had to close our boarding houses.

It highlighted even further the importance and role of the boarding houses as a safe and supportive space to relax into learning and thrive. When back in their villages, the girls were cut off from their education, friends and teachers. We couldn't sit back knowing they were not able to keep up with their lessons and so decided to take action and fundraised to get the final year girls' tablets so they could revise and stay motivated. New solutions were needed for new times.

As well as the challenges, EFA has also had some successes. We managed to achieve membership with the global fundraising platform *GlobalGiving* and this new relationship has proved to be an important step for EFA to more widely share about our work and grow support throughout the world. You can read more about our projects in this newsletter.

MESSAGE FROM
OUR NEW PATRON



FUNDRAISING
UPDATES/ GIFT
IDEAS



CORPORATE
SUPPORT

EFA SILK TIE



DIGITAL DEVICES IN
THE VILLAGES

THE IMPACT OF THE
PANDEMIC



Cont...

We were able to open the houses again for the new term in October, and all the house mothers and girls are brilliantly adjusting to the reality of new guidelines.

We also welcomed some new members to our organization. Thomas Reilly, former British Ambassador to Morocco has now formally become an EFA Trustee, and Simon Martin, Morocco's new UK Ambassador to Morocco has taken up the new role of EFA Patron. We also welcomed Moroccan business-leader and advocate for women's equality, Zina Bencheikh, to be EFA's first female Patron. Read more about them in this addition.



The main thing that has stood out for us this year, however, is the amazing generosity of our supporters who have continued to give despite the challenging circumstances. You have sponsored girls, given to our fundraising campaigns and helped us share about our work on social media.

The courage and determination of the House Mothers and girls and the support of all of you gives us the confidence that there is nothing we cannot achieve together moving forward into 2021.

Enjoy this edition of our newsletter which includes lots of fun and interesting ways to support EFA and share about us to your friends and family members

Wishing you a happy, healthy holiday season and New Year,
Sonia, EFA Fundraising and Communications Manager

GROWING THE EFA GIRLS' DIGITAL CONFIDENCE

The pandemic taught us that learning is now going online and this is a trend which will not go back. As well as investing in digital devices for the girls to use in their villages during the disruptions to their normal routine, EFA is dedicated to growing our computer facilities so the girls can strengthen their confidence and skills. To support this project, please visit [our latest GlobalGiving campaign](#).



Life During and After Lockdown



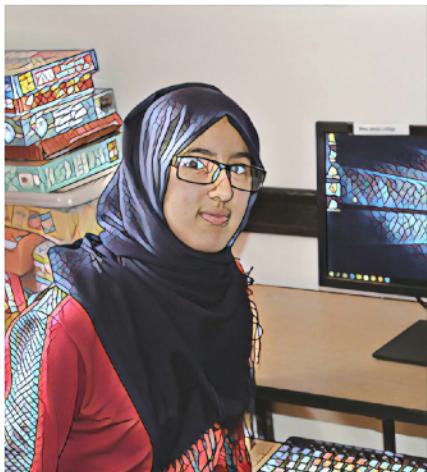
We didn't envisage ever having to close the EFA houses, however this is the reality we faced on 16 March when the lockdown in Morocco was announced.

Every day the girls spent away from education, we worried if they would give up or if their families would keep them at home. Luckily, we opened again in October, and we must be honest that two girls in their final year got married and didn't return to complete their education after the lockdown. However, all the others did, most with more conviction than ever. The tablets we managed to buy were also very helpful for the final year girls who said they would not have been able to prepare for their exams without them.

In October,
a f t e r
negotiating
with the

MESSAGE FROM GHITA ANFLOUS

"I joined EFA with a big dream that I want to achieve. I knew that EFA will be the candle that will light my life, and will make me different and unique not only in my village but in my society as a whole. I want to be an educated woman that achieves what no one else from my village has achieved. I want to work on myself, improve my personality, and make my parents and everyone who has supported me proud of my achievements."



local authorities, we put in place many hygiene systems to be able to open safely, including touch-free thermometers, hand-sanitising stations, paper towels instead of hand towels and lots of washable masks. We also reduced the capacity to 50% and rotated the girls on a week on week off system in order to meet the social distancing guidelines in the houses. This has meant that the tablets have remained a key resource during this time.

The girls are all doing great, although some of them miss being at the houses during their home week where it isn't so easy to study due to the family environment. This highlights the importance of the EFA houses in terms of offering an environment where the girls can really focus on their studies, have encouragement and support to thrive and also the resources and tools to learn-including books and access to computers.



My life during Corona Virus

by EFA student Oumaima

This year I would like to share with you about my life during Corona Virus. When they first shut down the schools in the middle of March it felt like a holiday and I was actually happy to be at home with my family. However, as time passed, I started feeling very sad and empty and missing school because since I was 5 years old it has always been a big part of my life.

During this time, I didn't have any contact with my teachers.

Coursework was programmed on television, but I found it very difficult to follow. However, I was lucky that my aunt is actually a former EFA graduate and was the first EFA girl to get a master's degree! She helped me a lot with all of my subjects.



Now that I am back at EFA and school, I am very happy and excited to see my EFA sisters, friends at school and teachers. While I am happy that we are back I am also sad because we can only be here for one week and then the next week, we have to be at home so other students can come to class.

On the positive side classes are smaller (only 21 students instead of 42), but on the negative side we only have half the time with our teacher and lessons as a result are progressing slowly. But we stay positive that things will soon return to the way they were.

Sincerely,
Oumaima Ait Hazem

SOLIDARITY

We think of all the girls around the world fighting to go to school and keep learning during the pandemic. We are grateful to all of you for supporting us with donations during this uncertain time so we can support the girls not to lose hope and keep focussed on their dreams.

[Read more about the need to preserve girls' access to education around the world during the pandemic here.](#)

A Fresh Round of University Scholarships

We couldn't be prouder to see two more EFA girls entering SIST on full scholarships, bringing the total to 5. Despite the disruption of Covid, Salma and Saida fulfilled the grades needed for their scholarships and began their new chapter of life in November. They were greeted by the first 3 girls who joined last year as the first EFA girls to take advantage of the new collaboration with SIST thanks to their Director Nabil Obaid.

A full scholarship means the girls can relax into their University studies, not needing to be held back by any money concerns. SIST which is linked to the UK University of Cardiff, offers a bachelor degree equivalent. The scholarship provides accommodation, laptops and travel costs to get from their villages to Casablanca. SIST

Thanks to EFA's volunteer programme which has included many English speakers, the EFA girls have been able to raise their English language skills in order to qualify for these scholarships. This collaboration also reinforces EFA's close links to the UK where our sister charity is located and where much of our support comes. We look forward to following the 5 girls currently at SIST and seeing what they will go on to achieve in their lives.



"It's amazing to be the first person in my whole family ever to attend University and I feel so lucky to have this opportunity with SIST "



New Patrons and Trustee

We are delighted to have such a strong team of passionate representatives and experts in their field. All have shown incredible support and dedication to EFA and we look forward to finding ways to raise awareness and support for girls' education and EFA's work with their help. Read more about their role in their own words [here](#).

Simon Martin

British Ambassador to Morocco

Britain and Morocco, having been partners for over eight centuries, are embarking on a new, closer and increasingly vibrant relationship. It is therefore a hugely exciting time to be Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco. Among all of the important areas in which we collaborate, I see education as a top priority: increasing numbers of young Moroccans wish to study in the UK; we have recently celebrated the opening of the first four officially-recognised British schools in Morocco; links between our universities are increasing all the time. Education brings our countries and our people together. It is the best way to ensure that – to pick up the old military adage made famous to a new generation by Lilo (and Stitch) - nobody gets left behind. And it has been a constant priority of the British Government, supported personally and forcefully by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, to try to achieve the goal of twelve good years of education for all girls, everywhere.

The reason for the focus on girls' education is that for a variety of reasons

it is girls who find it hardest to stay in education up to the age of 18. Morocco has a proud record in modernising its education system in recent years and in focussing effort on enabling young people from the remotest communities to continue their education. As in other countries – including my own – this can often be a challenge. I was therefore intrigued to hear during my pre-posting briefing in London about Education For All, an organisation whose entire focus is on providing the means for schoolgirls from some of the remoter villages in the Province D' Al Haouz in the High Atlas to continue their education on a weekly boarding basis and to provide a conducive environment for them to learn and prepare for adult life.

"Being from the first generation of my own family to attend university, I perhaps understood a little how they felt."



So I was hugely honoured to receive and quick to accept the invitation to become Patron of Education For All. EFA is a thoroughly Moroccan charitable foundation but one that benefits from the huge energy of one of EFA's Founders, Mike McHugo from the UK whose love for, knowledge of and commitment to the High Atlas is, among his compatriots, *sans pareil*.

As Patron, I commit myself to working in support of EFA and its important mission. EFA is underpinned by a wonderful community of professional, hardworking and universally committed people – Moroccan, British, Dutch, American and from a variety of other nations, some paid but many pure volunteers. It also works in harmony with the Moroccan Ministry of Education and local government and other organisations to deliver excellent outcomes for the next generation of female leaders of this region. Working with all of these exceptional people and organisations, it is my hope that the opportunity which

already in 2020 is reaching 250 girls from remote communities, can be extended to reach more and more, until there is nobody left behind.



The Ambassador (right), EFA Trustee Maryk (centre) and Ambassador's wife (left) Sophie's first visit to Ansi boarding house in October 2020

“ As Patron, I commit myself to working in support of EFA and its important mission.”



DID YOU KNOW?...

We broke down the daily costs of running our new house for 50 girls for a whole year!

- **54,750** nutritious meals
- **15,000** good night sleeps in a cosy bed
- **15,000** hot showers
- Full access to books and computers throughout the year
- **4,200** period supplies
- The salaries of **4** local women to run the house, including a dedicated, full-power house mother!
- Hygiene supplies to ensure the houses can open safely throughout the pandemic
- **2,800** hours of extra study support from volunteers
- **2** Excursions a year (except during Covid) to see the sea and a city for the first time!

Thomas Reilly

*Former Ambassador to Morocco,
Patron of EFA and now Trustee*

We left Morocco in August after three fabulous years, packed full of the most wonderful memories. But by far and away the highlight of our time in Morocco was the work that we did with Education for All.

The Covid pandemic has once again underlined the importance of education in releasing human potential and creating economic potential for the country. Education for All offers this to those girls in the Atlas Mountains.

One of the most extraordinary memories of our time in Morocco was meeting the girls from Education For All. How their enthusiasm and dedication and positivism shone through despite the hardships that they had all suffered in their lives.

There were so many great memories associated with Education For All - from the visit of Harry and Megan to the cooking with Chef Moha. It was fitting that our very last visit in Morocco before coronavirus shut us all down was with the British chef Richard Bertinet to the Education For All dormitories near Asni.

Time and time again I was moved almost to tears by the simplicity of the message on the poster in one of the dormitories in Asni. The poster quite simply said 'thanks to Education for All I am the first girl from my village to go

to school'. There can be no more powerful memory than that.

I'm delighted that the British Embassy during my time in Morocco chose Education For All as the embassy's charity. I am thrilled that my successor Simon Martin has taken up this wonderful cause with such alacrity and enthusiasm.

"These women are the future of Morocco. And the future looks bright"

In my new job I will continue to push for every opportunity to raise the profile of Education For All, including, wherever possible, fundraising and drawing the attention of my colleagues to the amazing work that Education For All does and to the amazing girls and women who live, study and work in the dormitory. These women are the future of Morocco. And the future looks bright.



Thomas meets EFA students during the opening of new 'Timmel 2' in January 2020

Fundraising Update



Tablets Campaign

The lockdown highlighted the huge digital divide for teenage girls from these rural mountain villages in the High Atlas and so an exciting campaign to fundraise for tablets came about and we managed to deliver 25 in May, 3 weeks before our final year girls sat their exams.

With the help of Intrepid we managed to supply tablets in Marrakech and have them delivered to EFA where each house mother set them up with SIM cards and allocated them to each final year student.

Then came the most exciting part-delivering them! Each house mother took an area of the High Atlas and set off with the tablets to deliver them to the girls. This was very emotional as it was the first time they had seen the girls in 3 months.

Providing modern technology to girls living in remote villages that still strongly echo the past, was very poignant and profound.



Global Giving Campaigns

EFA earned permanent membership in September 2020 thanks to lots of support from around the world for our Accelerator Campaign. We had to raise 5k in 17 days which we did with our distance learning tools campaign! This has helped us invest in more tablets and other useful digital learning tools such as laptops and good webcams for the increasing lessons online since the pandemic.

[Find all our projects here](#)



COMPUTERS, MITTENS, TIES & SCARVES!

There are still many projects running into the New Year, including investing in a computer room for our newest house, supporting digital tools for girls to keep studying when back in their villages, and even a branded EFA silk fundraising tie and warm mittens for the EFA Girls!

[New Computer Room](#)

[Digital Tools](#)

[Mittens for Xmas Campaign](#)

[Silk Tie](#)



Giving Tuesday

EFA also took part in Giving Tuesday this year, a global day where generosity and support for organisations is celebrated. We launched a campaign on GlobalGiving to benefit from their Move A Million campaign where they were offering a portion of a 1 million incentive fund!

The money raised will go towards our overall sponsorship programme for all 250 girls in our 6 houses. You can still make a donation this Christmas. <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/access-to-school-for-girls-in-rural-morocco/>

Projects (3)



MOROCCO / EDUCATION

Digital Tools for Girls in Rural Morocco

[GIVE NOW](#)



MOROCCO / EDUCATION

Sponsor A Girl's Education in Rural Morocco

[GIVE NOW](#)



MOROCCO / DIGITAL LITERACY

Equip A Computer Room For Girls in Rural Morocco

[GIVE NOW](#)

In 24 hours we managed to raise \$14,179 and earned \$4555 of the bonus fund, giving us a goal of \$18,734! Another reminder of the incredible support EFA has out in the world.

We are grateful to GlobalGiving for all the training, resources and support they have given us to set up these campaigns at such a crucial time and grow our community of supporters.

[To see all the campaigns we have on GlobalGiving, click here:](#)



Mittens for Christmas

Usually at Christmas EFA takes part in the Royal Mansour Christmas market and the girls spend their evenings making hand painted mint tea glasses and traditional Moroccan biscuits to fundraise! However this year the markets will not open and so we decided to introduce some other fun ways you can support EFA during this festive time.

Madeleine Williams is an English woman who lives in Marrakech and loves knitting mittens (gloves). She has committed to knitting 250 pairs to fundraise for the EFA girls' education! By donating £10 or more, a girl will receive a pair of hand-knitted mittens to keep her hands warm in the cold mountain winter, and it will support us to keep her in education so she can realise her dreams and have a better future!

Mittens for Xmas Campaign



FA Fundraising Tie

The Education For All team is excited to offer our first branded silk tie to fundraise for girls education in Morocco. Every purchase will support the running of the EFA boarding houses which make it possible for 250 teenage girls from

Fundraising Tie



remote villages to access school. A perfect gift for a loved one and for a girl in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco!

These beautiful ties are hand cut and sown from the finest woven silk, by James Morton Ties, UK manufacturers of exclusive ties for over 40 years. The tie design incorporates the EFA logo in white on a dark blue background with thin diagonal stripes in the colours of the Moroccan flag. The tie is lined (tipped) in bright pink silk reflecting that EFA is a charity supporting the education of girls and comes in a beautiful presentation box printed with the EFA logo in silver.

Price is **£125** per tie including post and packaging, for delivery anywhere in the UK and Europe, with all proceeds of the sale of the ties going directly to support the running of our 6 boarding houses. The total cost of production of the ties has already been funded by EFA supporters.

T h e r e a r e 4 0 a v a i l a b l e immediately, and donations made by 18th December will ensure they arrive by Christmas! To make your purchase, visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/EFA-Silk-Tie>

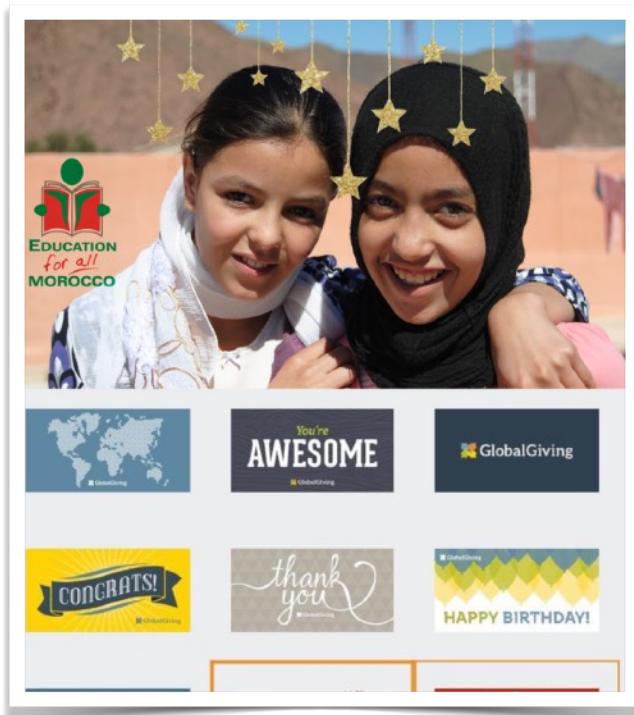
3 Ways to Turn Online Shopping into The Gift of Education



As we enter the festive season, it's a time to splash out on gifts for our loved-ones. We have some good news about how you can turn your online shopping into free donations for EFA!

1. EFA Gift Cards through GlobalGiving

Would you like to offer someone a gift card donation to support EFA's work this Christmas? GlobalGiving is offering online gift cards to support EFA's projects empowering teenage girls with education in Morocco. Select from the many designs and include a personal note for your loved ones! <https://www.globalgiving.org/gifts/>



2. Give As You Live is an online platform which includes all major online

stores in the UK. So if you are ordering your minced pies, looking for gifts or getting ready for the New Year sales, search via the [Give As You Live](#) link and select EFA to receive free donations.



3. Amazon Smile

For anyone who shops on Amazon UK, you can now generate free donations to EFA through AMAZON SMILE.

Click [Amazon Smile](#), sign in with your Amazon account details and you will start generating **free donations** to support educating girls in rural Morocco!

Water Is Life

British Business Association in Morocco donates water tanks to EFA!

How do you make sure 40 girls can wash each day when there are water shortages? The town of Asni, where 3 of our 6 boarding houses are located, has suffered from water shortages- a reminder of how vulnerable Morocco is to drought- especially in this case for the High Atlas region when the snows on the mountains don't come. This impacts on the EFA houses as we need lots of water for washing, cleaning and showering each day. Thankfully, the **British Business Association in Morocco** came to our rescue this year with 1000 litre storage tanks. Now these tanks are in place, we can store the water given by the government each week until the rains come again. We are so grateful for this brilliant and generous gift!



Corporate Support

Businesses are switching onto the power of their profits to effect positive social change, with corporate social responsibility becoming the normal way to do business. EFA has always had support from small and larger businesses, such as hotels and online businesses, who have wished to share some of their profits to keep our houses running.

Thanks To...

PURE who donated £21k to us through their virtual conference

Sugar Mat for sponsoring 3 girls through the sale of their Marrakech inspired yoga matt

Kahina Beauty for continued sponsorship of girls for over 7 years!

AMAZ Sneakers who continued to sponsor girls through the sale of their berber-inspired sneakers

If you run a business and would like to show your support and invest in girls' education, please contact sonia@efamorocco.org

for more details.

Giving Back Through Business

EFA is registered on **Benevity**, a platform used by global corporations to connect their brand and staff to good causes around the world. The platform manages donations, tax receipts and even offers payroll giving.

If you run a company or would like to get your employer to integrate corporate social responsibility, recommending **Benevity** will mean EFA can be one of your selected causes in 2021.

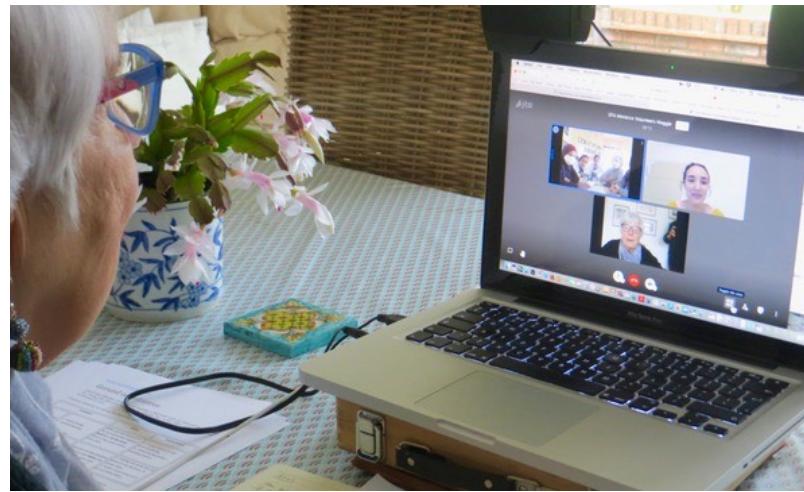
Volunteer Update

The pandemic brought about many changes to life at the EFA houses, especially our volunteer programme. Our volunteers had to leave quickly as the lockdown was announced and we have not been able to resume our programme which usually welcomes around ten volunteers per year to live at the EFA houses, however this has led to the exploration and development of an online programme. Read about People and Places who have been long term supporters of EFA and took the lead in offering their amazing volunteers to support EFA online.

Developing language skills and building friendships online during the pandemic- Article written by Dianne Ashman, People and Places Responsible Volunteering.

In normal times people and places send skills-matched volunteers to Morocco to work alongside the housemothers and girls at the EFA houses. Linda and Tina volunteered there in October 2019; Wendy and I (Dianne) were actually there in March 2020 when Covid-19 caused everything to close down. Our primary concern at People and Places was how we could continue to support EFA, and the other partners with whom we work around the world, even though the borders were closed and international travel had become impossible.

The first thing each volunteer did was to record a video message of support to send to the housemother with whom they had worked most closely in



Morocco. Then, after discussion with Karima and Latifa, it was agreed that the most useful thing we could do was continue to work with the housemothers to improve their English skills.

A weekly video conference was arranged on Zoom and these sessions took place every Friday afternoon from mid-May until the end of August, focusing on English conversation. Despite the occasional problems with connections, we all enjoyed these meetings – we picked a topic to talk about each week and our discussions ranged from their ambitions for the girls at their house to the challenges for women in Morocco. During these meetings we all got to know each other well and Aicha, Badiaa, Fatima and Khadija all became much more confident and fluent in spoken English. We were also attracting interest from other people and places volunteers and another volunteer, Carole, joined the group.

By the end of August the housemothers wanted more! They no longer wanted fairly casual conversation sessions, they wanted to improve their written English too and

they were keen to learn English grammar. So we reduced the whole group conversation sessions to once a month and paired up house-mothers and volunteers for one-to-one English lessons. Wendy is working with Khadija, Carole is working individually with Badiaa and Fatima and Linda is working individually with Aicha and Khadija- these lessons will continue until December.

The next stage will be to develop online English lessons with selected groups of the older girls. We have volunteers willing to do this – now that the girls have returned to the houses this will be much easier to organise and we hope these sessions will get underway very shortly.

Working with the housemothers while everything was closed down due to the pandemic has opened our eyes to the possibilities offered by e-volunteering – volunteering does not have to stop just because international travel has ground to a halt.

LINDA: 'I am enjoying supporting Moroccan housemothers who work for Education for All. I met most of these women last year when I volunteered with People and Places in Morocco, so I was pleased to join in when, early in the pandemic, P&P arranged a Zoom group for former Moroccan volunteers and the housemothers to get together regularly to chat online. Now I am giving weekly one-to-one English lessons to housemothers via Zoom. This type of e-volunteering is not always easy, but it can be enjoyable and is certainly worthwhile. The housemothers work very hard; they

have a difficult job looking after the girls, especially during the pandemic, and it is good to show them that, although volunteers cannot currently travel to Morocco, we still want to offer support and help. I would certainly encourage other volunteers to try e-volunteering; it can be very rewarding.'

WENDY: "E-volunteering with People and Places Morocco Project has been really worthwhile during the pandemic: it has helped improve the House Mothers' spoken and written English, giving them the vital confidence to help their students and communicate with visitors in the future. It is proving to be fun for both participants, being a real cultural exchange. I hope that People and Places will be able to extend this so that students can participate and keep it going for the foreseeable future: suiting both those who would like to volunteer but can't literally travel and a great introduction for those who would like to volunteer in person, when that becomes possible again."

People and Places has recently launched a new website to promote e-volunteering opportunities - www.e-volunteer.co.uk - and we are excited by the possibilities this offers - if you would like to get involved in e-volunteering please email dianne@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

Our volunteers are special.

They are a big part of EFA's journey and generously share their time and skills with in exchange for getting to know the amazing EFA girls, their lives and culture. Hear about Mariam's time with EFA in 2017 and how she looks back on her experience 3 years on.

Mariam, EFA Volunteer in 2017 from California

My name is Mariam Rahmaoui, I live in San Francisco and I currently work as a behaviour technician providing behaviour therapy based on Applied Behaviour Analysis, to children with autism and various mental, physical and behavioural disabilities. I am also currently going to grad school to complete the course work and be able sit for the board exam to become a BCBA (board certified behaviour analyst).

I came across EFA when I was completing my undergraduate thesis in which I focused on the resiliency within individuals and communities in underprivileged rural areas. Since I am also originally from Morocco, I shifted my focus on how the underprivileged communities there are pushing forward and expanding their resiliency in education specifically.

That is, when I came across this wonderful organisation called *Education for All*. I immediately wanted to have personal experience after reading and researching their historic background and their establishment process. EFA provided all of the guidelines in which I was interested in finding out about. Such were the resiliency despite major hurdles, continuing education with girls who were completely at a disadvantage from both the cultural aspect



and the geographical placement. EFA provided an amazing outlet for hopes, dreams to come true, and expansion that could only bring about a successful progression within these underserved communities. I say this because when I was there as a volunteer who assisted with first aid lessons, English tutoring, small group discussions, physical education, etc.

I had the opportunity to connect with the girls on a personal level, in which I found out that some of them dream of providing their communities with the same opportunities EFA granted them. In other words, they dream of making a difference big or small to help their communities the same way EFA was able to make in their individual and personal life.

Another highlight about the opportunity I will forever reflect on, is the close connections I was able to make with the house mothers. These women are perceived as mother like and role model figures to the girls, and it didn't take long to understand why. I was so grateful and will always be appreciative and profoundly proud of the work the ladies provide on a daily basis. Everyone was so hospitable, and I completely and immediately became one with them.

Working closely with the house mothers and observing their daily work schedules and their determination in making sure everything is running smoothly for the girls and the organisation as a whole, reassured me in the role I was contemplating in taking in my career.

In other words, the observations taken part, the close connections made, and the personal experiences gained from the volunteer opportunity in EFA, firmly reiterated my belief in taking a role in making a difference in underserved communities and underrepresented individuals. Hence, why I chose a career path that closely works with individuals that are at a disadvantage, hoping, to make a difference within their life; to integrate them so that they too are receiving the same prospects to succeed in life as any other individual in any part of the world.



The EFA House Mothers receive English Lessons from People & Places Volunteers

E-Volunteer with EFA



Do you have time and skills that you would like to share with the EFA girls so they can reach their potential in life?

We have paused our face-to-face volunteering programme due to the pandemic, however we are now developing online opportunities.

To find out more about our new online programme and how to apply, contact karima@efamorocco.org

Thank you for reading!

