

ProjectsAbroad

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Director's word

Hello everyone, and welcome to this February's newsletter for Projects Abroad Morocco. This newsletter aims to inform all our volunteers with news and pieces of information about Projects Abroad Morocco, and the country in general.

On the Projects Abroad Morocco Facebook group all new, current and past volunteers can ask questions, get advice and keep up to date with what the Projects Abroad Volunteers are doing in the country. Please feel free to join this group and become involved. The link is:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=107221012639679>

We hope you will join us in Morocco, or one of our other destinations, for a rewarding and worthwhile experience in one of our many projects.

Whatever you decide to do, Asmaa, Adil, Lotfi and I will be here to advise and support you before you arrive and whilst you're here.

We are here to help you plan your project abroad with Projects Abroad. So, if you have any suggestions, please feel free to drop us an e-mail on morocco@projects-abroad.org

Wishing you the best and happy volunteering!

Saad Rbiai

Country Director for Morocco

Projects Abroad Morocco



What is ARDES?

ARDES stands for l'Association Régionale du Développement Economique et Social (Regional Association for Economic and Social Development). It is a Moroccan non-governmental organisation working among and for underprivileged populations in urban and rural northern Morocco.

ARDES was formed in 1998. The aims of the Association are to promote solidarity, and to encourage and support integrated development, among the underprivileged populations it serves.

ARDES aims to:

- improve socio-economic and educational conditions for both rural and urban women;
- foster development through practical training leading to a qualification;
- Promote working in partnership with local community associations.

ARDES works in the region of Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer, one of sixteen administrative regions in Morocco. The region is divided into four prefectures:

- a. **Rabat** – urban
- b. **Salé** – urban
- c. **Skhirat-Temmra** – semi-urban
- d. **Khemiset** – largely rural (made up of 43 communes, 8 of which are classified as urban and 35 rural)

Of the four prefectures, Khemiset is the poorest, with a high level of illiteracy amongst the population.

ARDES and Projects Abroad

One of ARDES' activities is to offer training courses for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in tourism, hospitality, catering and cooking. These take place in Salé and Tiflet and are usually one year full time courses providing a mix of theoretical and practical training, for which the participants pay a nominal fee. At the end of the year the participants receive a certification accredited by L'Entraide Nationale (a public body under the umbrella of the Moroccan Ministry for Social Development, the Family and Solidarity, whose mission is to bring all kinds of aid to the population and to contribute to the promotion of family and social values). The courses provide a footing from which students can find employment or launch a career in the hospitality industry.

The training course in Salé includes a language element focussing on language needed in the hospitality industry, and through Projects Abroad English and French language teachers are placed with ARDES to teach on the course.

About the school

We will be visiting a primary school in the rural commune (village) of Sidi Boukhalkhal in Khemiset. ARDES (acting through its headquarters in Salé and its regional centre in the nearby town of Tiflet) has been working with this primary school for some time, providing educational materials to the children at the school and pinafores to the kindergarten age children there.

The school is state funded and the teachers are paid for by the state. There are 242 pupils ranging in age from 6 to 12 at the school, and also 27 pre-school children at the nursery.

The village is agricultural and the children will come to school every day from quite far afield. The village was only connected to the Moroccan national grid (electricity supply) in 2007 (and parts of it not until 2009).



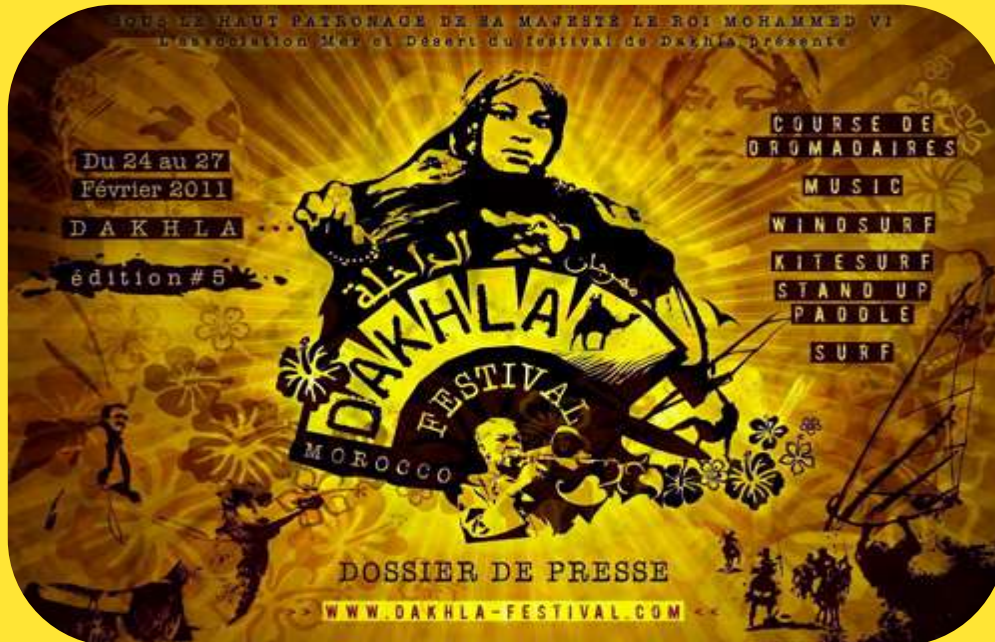
Education in Morocco

Morocco has a population of 31.6 million, of which 27% is under the age of 14. 44% of the population is rural. Average life expectancy is 71. 14% of the population lives on less than \$2 a day. The literacy level among the adult population is 56.4% for adults (age 15+) and 76.6% among young people (age 15 to 24). In both cases the figures for men are higher than for women. 25.7% of the national budget is spent on education, of which 45% goes on primary schooling.

By law, education is compulsory for all in Morocco until the age of 16. However UNESCO statistics place the actual number of children enrolled in primary school at 90% (87% for girls and 92% for boys). 81% of children complete their primary school education, and 79% move on to secondary education, although the indications are that the level completing secondary education is much lower.

Destination of the Month:

Dakhla Festival



The communion between sky and sea, desert and singing will once again be demonstrated by the outstanding Dakhla festival, which is about to host its fifth festival in as many years. The town of Dakhla has finally confirmed its position as a world surfing spot, while also asserting itself as a mecca of cultural encounters.

The festival has become an annual event for sportsmen and world famous artists, as well as the inhabitants of the region Oued Ed-Dahab-Lagouira who are equally eager to welcome them. Besides the cultural enrichment of the region, the festival of Dakhla has significantly boosted its economy, as shown by the complete overhaul of the bay where new prestigious hotels have been built. Many investments under consideration will help to consolidate the sustainable development of the area and help to strengthen existing structures.

The high-flying exhibitions will again brighten the sky facing the sea; the Bay of Dakhla host the longest sprint of the world and have recently confirmed the presence of American legend Kevin Pritchard who will be windsurfing. For four days, young talents of the new Moroccan scene cross internationally renowned artists. This year it is a huge honour for the festival to welcome the great artist and ambassador of Moroccan music Doukkali Abdelwahab, the star South African Johnny Clegg and the talented Ivorian Alpha Blondy.

Also, in this context of sustainable development, the festival renews the experience of Dakhla Women here and elsewhere, are able to share and exchange between women of the region, the gliding champions and representatives of press. The youth of the region will not be left behind, because this year they can still enjoy the many sports and arts workshops, prompting many vocations.

Social Manager's experience to the first Nomad Project Induction

Once upon a time in the Sahara



My Nomad experience started when Nick and I arrived at Ouarzazate and met Soufiane, the Nomad coordinator and the driver. We soon left Ourzazate and started heading to M'hamid el Ghizlane. Once we arrived, Nick and I sat next to the fire and drank some Moroccan tea with some dattes, ate some Saharian CousCous for dinner, because we arrived Friday and we all know that Moroccans serve CousCous every Friday.

After that Soufiane showed us our room, blankets and where to place our bags. We slept well and woke up at 09:00, ate breakfast and bought some Nomad scarfs. Boha was the driver that picked us up from M'hamid el Ghizlane and drove us across the desert with his Landrover, to reach Mr Ali Tazmamar and his wife.

Once we arrived we built Nick's tent, and while waiting for the host family to come back with their camels and goats we prepared tea and ate some dattes as usual. Mr Ali, Nick's host father, welcomed us and changed Nick's name to Allal, which means the flying bird in Tamazight language. Playing with the little goats was really fun. We climbed a sand dune and waited for the sunset; it was really beautiful and amazing. After eating dinner with the family, Allal "Nick" and I planned to play a game of chess. I went out of the tent to observe the stars; I have never seen so many stars in my whole life, I really enjoyed the clearness of the sky.



Day two in the middle of the Sahara was pretty amazing. The rooster woke us up really early. The climate there was really healthy, you don't feel that you are stressed or tired.

Mrs Tazmamar made us breakfast which included Saharan bread, soup, tea, coffee and milk. Bouha came back that morning and brought us more blankets, lots of vegetables and other things we needed there.

Hussein, Soufiane's brother, stayed with Nick in his Nomad project. I talked with him about the activities and work that Nick should be doing while he is there. Hussein built his tent next to Nick's, and told me that they will build a wall around their tent with rocks and mud, Sheppard the goats, collect wood for the fire, pick up chicken eggs, help with cooking and explore the area. That means they will wake-up early in the morning, eat breakfast, take lunch with them, to explore, and visit other Nomad families.

Nick was happy about everything, and that made me happy as well. It meant that my job was accomplished. Bouha took me back to the village where I spent the first night. I meet some Saharian musicians in a camp nearby; Shtouky, Brahim and Ali formed a really wonderful group of folk singers.

Once back at the room I started writing about my experiences until I slept. Waking up at 5:30am to catch the CTM bus to Ouarzazate I realised that going back from the Sahara was quite sad, because I would be leaving a part of me there. People are generous, the weather is fine and the climate is perfect.

I arrived at 11:00am in Ouarzazate, dropped off my bags in a hotel, took a shower and had some rest after eating lunch. Discovering Ouarzazate city with it's Hollywood studio and history monuments was amazing; Gladiator, Prince of Persia and others films were produced there.

Tired after a long walk, came back to the hotel and slept. I woke-up at 05:00am, to catch my early flight and headed to Casablanca Airport.

I finished writing my experiences on top of the clouds, in the airplane of course. Sharing it with others was a pleasure for me.

Thank you for reading it and hope you will experience this moments sometime soon.

Cheers Lotfi!!! ©



Day trip to Fez with Volunteers



The schedule for Fez day trip



Time Table	Description
07:30	Meeting at Bab Buiba
08:12	Departure from Rabat by train
10:35	Arrival at Fes
11:00	Tour in the medina with the guide.
13:00	Lunch at Berrada restuarant
14:00	Visit the museums
15:00	Visit Mdrsa, Coffee break
16:50	Departure from Fes heading back to Rabat
19:42	Arrival in Rabat

Dirty weekend: Sidi Boukholkhal



Channing is helping the kids to paint !!!





Volunteer's experience:

Je suis arrivée à Casablanca, et ai été accueillie par Adil qui aimablement fit bien des efforts pour communiquer avec moi en Français.

Sur l'autoroute, nous avons crevé, par chance, j'avais ma lampe de poche, ce qui permit au chauffeur de réparer au plus vite. Chez nous sur l'autoroute cela aurait été tout une histoire avec la police et tout le tralalala. Ici tout se passe calmement et simplement, en fait c'est un agréable moment.

Nous traversons la Médina pour nous rendre dans ma famille d'accueil, et là, le Maroc me saute au nez avec ses odeurs de marché, aux yeux avec toutes ses couleurs et au cœur avec son appel à la prière.

Je suis une femme qui vit en pleine nature. Donc pour moi, tout est étranger : le monde, le bruit, les odeurs, les chats...

La famille d'accueil est très sympathique, ce qui se confirmera tout au long de mon séjour.

Premier matin d'école, évidemment je me trompe de bus, mais Asmaa, très professionnelle, me récupère et tout rentre dans l'ordre.

Le rapport avec les enseignants et les enfants de l'école Egyptienne est très enrichissant. Je côtoie des jeunes qui veulent vraiment apprendre et leur affection envers moi est touchante.

L'après midi je rejoins l'école hôtelière ARDES où les étudiantes ont entre 18 et 34 ans. Je perçois chez elles aussi une grande envie d'évoluer en Français.

Les journées passent à une vitesse folle tant je me régale de ces partages.

J'ai la chance et l'honneur de sympathiser avec une Marocaine qui a, entre autre, une voix sublime et nous partageons deux week-ends supers. L'un dans la montagne où nos pas nous conduisent sur des chemins escarpés embellis par des paysages somptueux. Je ne vous parle pas de la maison d'hôtes et de son petit déjeuner avec vue panoramique sur le Rif, Fabuleux !!!

L'autre fin de semaine, nous la passons au bord de l'Océan qui nous régale de sa splendeur.

J'ai été très bien accueillie ou que j'aïlle, les Marocains sont très respectueux et aimables. Ils me manquent déjà.

Tous ces jours ont été ponctués d'exquises saveurs marocaines. Il faudrait que tous les jours soient vendredi, afin de déguster plus souvent le traditionnel Couscous !!!

Je ne sais si j'ai pu apporter quelques connaissances à ces étudiants, mais pour ma part, je rentre beaucoup plus riche en mon cœur grâce à cette expérience.



Margaret Coll

Margaret and Romain are dancing at a get together meeting!!!!

Thank you!!!