



Casablanca Boulevard de la gare - 1928

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DIRECTOR'S WORD :

Hello everyone, and welcome to this January'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.

This month we are introducing some of Morocco's history, climate and diverse geography.

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



STAFF DETAILS:

My name is Adil El Abdouli, I am 25 years old, and have been working as a Programme Assistant for Projects Abroad since November 2009.

The main goal of my job is to help volunteers accomplish their projects in our destination: Morocco!

My tasks include pickups, placement inductions, visits to placements

and checking that everything is alright with our accommodations.

I love my job!!!



PLACEMENT OF THE MONTH: OMDH



Our Objectives

Diffusion and deepening of the consciousness of individual and collective Human Rights in its socio-economic, cultural, civil and political domains;

- Instruction in and teaching of Human Rights;
- Contributing, especially in cases of violation, to an effective protection of those Rights;
- Ratification of the ensemble of International Conventions concerning Human Rights and harmonisation of internal legal standards towards these Conventions;
- Reinforcement of judicial guarantees of civil, political, socio-economical as well as cultural personal rights;
- Consolidation of the judicial power's independence and impartiality;
- Respect of the primacy of law and consolidation of democracy and the constitutional state;
- Reinforcement of national and international bonds of solidarity in the field of Human Rights.

(OMDH) Youth Network's Chart

Moroccan Organisation for Human Rights (OMDH) Youth Network's Chart:

What is the OMDH Youth Network?

The OMDH youth network is destined to render the organisation more dynamic. The OMDH creates a link between the youth and its actions in defending and promoting human rights.

The network is also aiming to enforce the organizations standing both at a local and national level. The activities targeting youth consist mostly of offering youth the training and familiarization with certain key themes which are central to the OMDH's activities, and to encourage the participation of these youth in such events.

Definition

- OMDH's youth network is an official part of the organization as it is directly attached. All of the youth network's activities work in conjunction with the organisation itself and therefore any action on behalf of the network must be in accordance with the organization's position. The members of the network must be familiar with and have knowledge of the OMDH's positions as well as its Ethical Charter and commit themselves respecting them.
- The members of the youth network are aged between 18 and 30 years. Any youth who is interested in becoming involved in the network's activities must only contact his local representative, or the head office in Rabat.



Rights of the Network

- Right of participation in the meetings of the departments.
- Right to organize meetings and activities specific to the young people.
- Right to encourage the participation of the youth in events of the Congress.

Duties of the Network

- Respect of the positions of the OMDH
- Active participation within the activities of the OMDH
- Create an annual report of activities

Structure

The network consists of various "youth groups", each composing of 5 members as a minimum. Their decisions are made in accordance with the National Office. The group must have a coordinator who ensures the bond with the other sections, as well as with the National Commission of Youth.

Moreover, the young people are considered as "correspondents" in accordance with the positions of the OMDH. The youth are encouraged to take part in the activities of a neighboring city, and also the national office's activities.

Representation in the OMDH Structure

The young people are represented in the departments and can be elected in the office of their department. The office of each department must include at least one young member. The youth are also represented within the National Council. The representation of the young people is subject to the rules and procedures of the OMDH.

- Departments

The youth group, as well as any young members, are automatically linked to his/her local department. If there happens to be no regional representation, then he/she is directed to the head office in Rabat.

The youth of the network can take part in the activities organized by their department, and in turn the department must support the group in its activities, both at logistic and financial levels, as far as possible.

Activities

The members of the network can take part in the activities of their section. They can also organize themselves activities in their university, house of the youth, etc. The youth are encouraged to think of various ways to project the message of human rights (for example with a club on human rights, newspaper, blogs, etc.) Each project must be subject to the National Office approval.

The General Assembly of Youth

The General Assembly of Youth takes place once a year. It assembles the representatives of each group or by regional attachment. The purpose of the assembly is to manage the activities, exchange techniques and information, and to communicate the expectations of each group.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MOROCCO

Morocco is in many ways a country apart. It nestles on the northwestern tip of Africa, separated from the rest of the continent by the towering Atlas Mountains and by the Sahara itself. Its climate, geography, and history are all more closely related to the Mediterranean than to the rest of Africa, and for this reason visitors are often struck by the odd sensation of having not quite reached Africa in Morocco. In the north, its fine beaches, lush highland valleys, and evocative old cities reinforce this impression. Yet, as one moves south and east, into and over the starkly beautiful ranges of the Atlases, Morocco's Mediterranean character melts away like a mirage. The Sahara stretches out to the horizon, and forbidding Kasbahs stare.

Location, Geography, and Climate

Morocco is situated on the extreme northwestern corner of Africa and is bordered by Mauritania and Algeria, both to the south and east.

Morocco's varied geography includes no less than four separate mountain ranges, in addition to lush river valleys, beautiful sandy coasts, and wide expanses of desert. The three most prominent mountain ranges, which run parallel to each other from the southwest to the northeast, are the Middle Atlas, the High Atlas, and the Anti-Atlas.

The ascent of the country's highest peak, Jebel Toukbal (13,665 ft. /4,165 m.), is a spectacular and not particularly difficult High Atlas trek. The Moroccan coastline, which fronts onto both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, offers plenty of great beaches as well as a number of fascinating old coastal cities. In the southeast, Morocco's mountain ranges yield inexorably to the desolate expanse of the Sahara. The Rivers that flow down this side of the High Atlas support long, narrow, and lush river valleys that resemble linear oases. The climate in Morocco is reliably dry, although small amounts of rain do fall between November and March. Temperature varies considerably by season and locale. While the southern and southeastern desert regions can reach extremely high temperatures during the hot summer months, the higher altitudes of the mountains are cool in summer evenings and freezing in winter. Most travelers find the early summer months to be the most comfortable time to visit, as rain is not a threat and temperatures are warm during the day and pleasantly cool at night.



History & Culture

Morocco's history began with the Berbers, the aboriginal people who have inhabited the country since the end of the 2nd millennium BC. Rome extended its rule over the area after defeating Carthage in 146 BC, and testimony to its presence still exists in the fine Roman ruins at Volubilis. As Rome fell into decline, Morocco was invaded first by the Vandals and then, in the 7th century, by the Arabs. Although external Arab rule lasted little more than a century, the arrival of Islam proved to be a permanent addition to Moroccan culture. In the ensuing centuries a series of ruling dynasties came to power, including the Idrissids, the Almoravids, and the Almohads, but none seemed capable of long maintaining the critical support of the Berber leaders.



By the 15th century Spain and Portugal began to intrude into Morocco, after having expelled the Moors from their own lands. Although Morocco successfully repulsed these invasions, the tide of European imperialism eventually proved too great. By the middle of the 19th century Morocco's strategic importance had become evident to all of the European powers, and they engaged in a protracted struggle for possession of the country. Finally, in 1911, France was formally acknowledged as protector of the greater part of the country, with Spain receiving a number of isolated locales. French rule came to an end in 1953, although its cultural influence on Morocco remains strongly in evidence. Today the country is ruled by King Mohammed VI. He appears to be leading Morocco toward both long-term stability and a greater degree of economic prosperity.

MOROCCAN LEMON CAKE

This easy Moroccan Lemon Cake is light, fine-textured and flavourful. One half of a large lemon should yield the small amount of fresh lemon juice called for in the recipe. Follow the conventional measures or try using the Moroccan method of measuring with bowls and tea glasses. Keep in mind that one tea glass usually holds 4 to 6 ounces of liquid.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 50 minutes

Ingredients:

Conventional Measures: 4 eggs, 1.5 cups sugar, 1/2 vegetable oil, 2 cups flour, 4 teaspoon baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 cup milk, 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, zest from 1 or 2 lemons, 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Traditional Moroccan Measures: 4eggs, 1 level soup bowl of sugar, 1 tea glass of vegetable oil, 1 heaping soup bowl of flour, 2 sachets of baking powder, pinch of salt, 1 tea glass milk, 1/4 tea glass fresh lemon juice, zest from 1 or lemons, 1 sachet of vanilla sugar.



Preparation:

Preheat your oven to 350° F (180° C). Grease and flour a small Bundt or tube pan. Zest and juice your lemon.

With an electric mixer or by hand, beat together the eggs and sugar until thick. Gradually beat in the oil.

Stir in the flour, baking powder and salt, and then the milk. Beat until smooth, and then mix in the lemon juice, zest and vanilla.

Pour the batter into your prepared pan, and bake for about 40 minutes, or until the cake tests done.

Allow the cake to cool in the pan for 7 to 10 minutes. Loosen the cake sides of the pan with a spatula, and turn out the cake onto a rack to finish cooling.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Get together meetings: Dinner at a Moroccan restaurant !!!!



Get together at Marrakshi house!!!



Up-coming events

Day trip to Fez on the 12th of February 2011

Dirty weekend on the 26th of February 2011

VOLUNTEER'S EXPERIENCE:

Erin Haarsma

Anticipating the start of law school in the Fall of 2011, I wanted to do volunteer work in the area of law and human rights. I was very excited to learn that I could spend three months in Morocco, through Projects Abroad, and would be interning with the Moroccan section of Amnesty International. My role with Amnesty involved engaging Moroccan youth through events and social media, with the purpose of motivating them to take up the cause of human rights in Morocco and world-wide. During my time there, I participated in Amnesty International sit-ins in front of parliament, attended the annual youth forum, and had the opportunity to discuss religion, politics, and human rights with several young people.

Living with a Moroccan couple in the old Medina in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, also gave me a snapshot of urban life in Morocco and the challenges it presents, while visiting the nomadic Berber people in the Sahara desert illustrated the diversity and disparity that can exist in one country. Other weekend trips included visiting Chefchaouen, Martil, Tetouan, Marrakech, Casablanca, and Bensliman! I was also able fill my leisure time with belly- dancing lessons. What fun!

Its history and location place Morocco at the intersection of European, Middle Eastern, and African ways of life; thus, I found Moroccan culture is rich, the architecture beautiful, the food delicious, and the people gracious and friendly. I enjoy hearing an assortment of languages on the street, and I can't complain about the French pastry shops either!

