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The MOROCCO ECHO

The official newsletter
Of Projects Abroad Morocco

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Director's word:

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

This September, we had our colleague, Frank Seidel – Projects Abroad director for the French office, for about a week visiting us. Frank had the chance to visit some of our human rights and medical placements.



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/groups/projectsabroad.morocco>

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, Yousef and I will be here to advise and support you before you arrive and whilst you're here.

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

2) Inside Out:

Moroccan oasis

Oasis is used to designate a small area in the desert made fertile by the presence of water. However, oases are not natural ecological systems; they are the product of the intervention of human intelligence in the desert. They are the result of a meticulous programme of desert organization and management. They interrupt the continuity of the desert space, through the creation of well-balanced niches and micro-environments. The creation of an oasis requires a complex set of advanced knowledge and techniques, of diversified skills and of a sustainable knowledge of the setting. Therefore, to create an oasis implies a human presence and a continuous supply of work; an oasis can be defined as a combination of human work cultivating an area in the desert.



In Morocco oases played an important role as a network for commercial exchanges through caravan's routes, which cover the whole of the Afro-Eurasian deserts. The 'oasis' model explains the genesis and functioning of ancient communities. Also, it helps us understand the techniques, processes and principles which can establish a viable equilibrium between human presence and organization of the territory. The oases constitute a knowledge heritage that can be diffused and employed on a large scale.



It's true that the oasis is an extraordinary model for the whole planet to migrate and adapt the climate changes. Nonetheless, they are decreasing day after day. Morocco has started works within the Arab world a strategy to mitigate and adapt oasis to climate changes, but requires building solid partnerships and mobilizing important funds in order to safeguard this model of sustainability. A typical criterion of the Moroccan oasis is that of the Kasbah or palace built in the middle of the place; among the most known oasis in Morocco:

Oasis	Location
Tata	Southwestern Morocco. Northwestern of the Sahara
Merzouga	South Morocco. Nearby Arfoud and Rissani
Safsaf	South Morocco, Ourzazat
Tazzarine	South Atlas mountains, Agadir

2) Inside Out:

Moroccan dress (Caftan)

Caftan is a cotton or silk cloak buttoned down the front, with full sleeves, reaching to the ankles. Dating back to the Greco Roman era, originally Caftan was brought to Morocco from the Middle East, since Persians, Turkish and Russians worn it before with slightly different shapes. Caftans were worn only by the rich or people in power; colors, buttons, ribbons and tissue were chosen according to the social rank of the person to whom they were presented. In addition, many patterns that characterize the Caftan have changed and are still changing to catch up with international fashion's standards. However Caftan was worn by men but, little by little, women have captured the Caftan, making this a distinguishing symbol of their beauty. Nowadays males still wear a derivation from the Caftan called, Gandora, Caftan can be dressed casual to extremely formal depending on the material used and patterns; they can be worn at dinner parties, Ramadan, baptism, engagement parties and weddings. Recently Moroccan and international designers fond in the Kaftan a new object to work on and produce different creations, day after day, the Kaftan is a soul of the past that has been recognized internationally. Indeed, the whole world began to recognize its beauty, all with events like "Kaftan Maroc" Festival sees the competition between charming Moroccan and foreign designers to offer the best of their talent, which is also the best top clothe models in the world. In a nutshell, this costume has been largely developed now and expands in the 21st Century. For instance, in every home in Morocco as weaving is less expensive and stylish cuts are rallying with tradition and modernism, putting a woman on a pedestal under her dress and giving her the look of a princess.



Lalla Salma at the royal wedding



AMINA BOUSSAYRI



NISSRINE EZZAKI BAKKALI



DAHAB BEN ABOUD

2) Inside Out:

Child labor in Morocco



In theory, the Moroccan minimum age for employment is 15 years, and this applies in all fields: industrial, agriculture, handicraft and commerce. Children under 16 years are prohibited from working more than 10 hours per day, which includes at least a 1 hour break. Children under 16 years are also not permitted to work between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. in non-agricultural work, or between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. in agricultural activities. The law prohibits

employment of children less than 18 years in stone quarries or for underground work carried out in mines. Employers may not permit workers less than 18 years to use products or substances, equipment, or machinery deemed potentially hazardous to their health or safety, or permit minors to perform activities that pose an extreme danger to them, exceed their capacities, or result in a breach of public morals. While in practice, children work in all dangerous fields at an early age, such as maids at houses where little kids are abused and tortured, tobacco and drugs fields in the north, handicrafts in Medinas, old part of cities, Sellers in markets, picking fruits and vegetables etc. of imperial cities, cigarettes and plastic bag. The children that are excluded from the society and looked badly upon, some of them are feeding a whole family, but most of them don't have that family. Their shelter is the street, their pillows are the bakeries' doorsteps and their cover from the cold is the sky.



One of the national presses made a study field and talked about the subject, illustrating with interviews one of the kids called who Othmane left his home and school at the age of 14 to live on the street. He no longer wanted to see his mother fight the daily battle to get bread for his five little siblings, struggle to lease a shantytown house and pay for his school expenses. "The street is not more merciful," Othmane says, "This is a lie; but at least she will not have to think about my daily living. In the meantime, I may be able to help her." Othmane carries bags of vegetables and other purchases for customers at a nearby market. In this way, he earns a few Dirhams a day, enough to bring a little money back home when he visits once a week and still be able to buy the cheap narcotics which help him endure his suffering.



2) Features:

Overview on Tanger:

Tanger stands high in the position of power up on cliffs. For ages it was the center of cross-cultural exchanges, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean Sea. Place de la Kasbah is the highest point in the Medina of Tanger, where you can visit the Sultans', King in the past, palace. Tanger's strategic position made of it a crossroads of civilizations; Tanger is the gateway to the African continent looks across at Europe from the shores of Atlantic and Mediterranean. As a meeting-point of routes to so many different destinations, Tanger has inevitably been marked by the History-Phoenicians, Berbers, Portuguese and Spanish had all left their mark on the city. It is called the white city, as it's all painted in white, or the windy city due to its location between two sea sides.



Tanger has got so many landscapes including the alleyways of the medina to the terrace overlooking the straits of Gibraltar. Nearby, various excursions can be made including Cape Spartel -the extreme north-westerly point of Africa, close to the famous Caves of Hercules and Cape Malabata. Besides, the open economic orientation of Tanger contributed in the establishment of many foreign investments and industrial factories that provided a wide range of services and products. The free zone of Tanger responds to international quality standards.



2) Features:



Festival



TANJazz:

TANJazz Festival dates back to 1999 when Philippe Lorin launched the first Jazz festival in Morocco with his own money. Year after year, the festival gained popularity and become famous. As the festival founder said; "Launching such a festival in such a city that is dying will bring it back to the lead". Indeed, now it's one of the most important cultural and musical calendar events. Thanks to the festival the city attracted over 4000 tourists during the last years' edition. In brief, TANJazz aims to amuse the inhabitants of Tanger and bring the city back on the screen. This year the 12th edition is taking place in 4 public stages plus a number of hotels as well as street shows, from 21st September to 25th, 4 days of soul and Jazz will vibrate and rush the marvelous city of Tanger, with a total number of 25 artists and bands.

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|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Roy Hargrove■ Lillian Boutté■ Roberta Gambarini■ Witchcraft■ Sarah Lenka■ Matthieu Boré■ Mélanie de Biasio Trio■ Terrakota■ The Jive Aces■ Wab | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Ben Prestage■ Jeff Zima■ Zuluwannsago■ Swing Dealers■ Jazzworkers■ Les Pomme de ma Douche■ Divinas■ Fouad Hani■ Elsy Fleriag & The Alzy TRio■ Alice Martinez 4tet | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Swing Messengers■ Le Gros Tube■ Ens'Batucada■ COMD■ Roger Cactus |
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2) Features:

Festival de Court Metrage Tangier

Festival Du Court Métrage Méditerranéen, that is characterized as an artistic manifestation, culturally and promotional productions, will put a number of fiction movies into a challenge. The selected films will compete for 4 prizes: Le grand prix du festival, le prix spécial du jury, le prix de la réalisation and le prix du scénario. This edition's programme includes a special "Moroccan short film," followed by a discussion panel, and a competition section that is open to short films made by Mediterranean film makers and other activities in parallel.

Five short films were chosen out of 61 films short movies in total, for the official competition; by the selection board this year, which includes: Essafi Ali as a director and the films selection's committee is composed of film critics Boughaba Ahmed, Moulay Driss Jaidi Mohamed and Mohamed El Belfqih Khait.



3) Tributes Series

Taher Benjeloun (writer's biography)

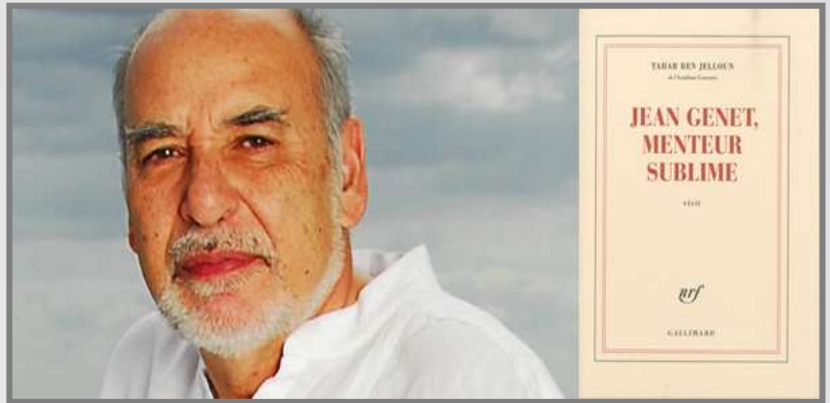
The history of Moroccan literature starts in the early middle ages. In the era of the Berber dynasties, coinciding with the flowering of Al-Andalus there were several important Moroccan writers, especially in the field of religion and historiography, but also poets employed in the courts of, for instance, the Marinid sultans. The same goes for the period of the Saadian and Alaouite kings. The influence of France and the English world (Paul Bowles) on Morocco starts in the 30s of the 20th Century. When a new generation of modern writers took the lead; writers such as: **Ben Salem Himmich, Laila Lalami, Joseph ben Judah of Ceuta, Driss Chraïbi...** for our tribute series I chose to introduce an outstanding skilled writer: *Taher Ben Jelloun*. Tahar Ben Jelloun is a Moroccan poet and writer in French was born in Fez on 1st December 1944. After attending an elementary school bilingual Arabic-French, he studied at the French lycée in Tangier at the age of eighteen years and then went on to study philosophy at the University Mohammed V in Rabat where he wrote his first poems, recueillis dans *Hommes sous linceul de silence* (1971).



3) Tributes Series

Taher Benjeloun (writer's biography)

He then taught philosophy in Morocco, but had to leave to France in 1971 after the teaching of philosophy was translated to Arabic in Morocco, and he was not trained for that. He wrote repeatedly to the daily press *Le Monde* in 1972. He pursued a doctorate in social psychiatry obtained in 1975. His writing took advantage of his experience as a psychotherapist (*La Réclusion solitaire*, 1976).




In 1985 he published the novel "L'Enfant de sable", which made him famous. He received the Prix Goncourt in 1987 for "La Nuit sacrée", a sequel to "L'Enfant de sable".

Friday, June 18, 2004 THE IRISH TIMES

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BLINDING PRESENCE: Tahar Ben Jelloun takes IMPAC prize



Moroccan writer wins €100,000 literary award

Eileen Battersby,
Literary Correspondent

Exposure of human rights abuses in Morocco is at the heart of the novel which won the €100,000 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award yesterday, the world's richest prize for a single book.

The Blinding Absence of Light, written in French by the Moroccan novelist, poet and critic Tahar Ben Jelloun, is a magisterial work which he describes as "a celebration of the human spirit and its determination to survive".

It is set in the nightmare world of a secret desert prison complex in Morocco in which soldiers involved in a coup d'état against King Hassan II in 1971 are punished for their abortive rebellion. The shrewd light of the title acts as a central metaphor in a narrative that is both metaphysical odyssey and physical endurance test.

As I write when reviewing the novel last March, all the characteristics of "the tiny grave-like cells, the half-hearted conversations, the panic, terror and the slow release of dying" are conveyed in prose of stark elegance and beauty. "What good was reason there, in our graves? I mean where we had laid in the earth, left with a hole so we could breathe, so we could live for enough time, for enough rights to pay for our mistake, left with ... a death that was to take its

time." The narrator, a former political prisoner, observes the plight of others, an artistic individual, the son of a powerful man in the king's residence, nothing to help his own. Meanwhile the narrator visits himself and his colleagues the palace of glory by recasting and films from his memory.

The winning book, reviewed by Linda Coverdale, emerged from a shortlist of 30 titles at a group Dublin yesterday. Ben Jelloun delighted at winning and also felt vindicated as he had been criticised on publication in France by some observers who argued it had no right to write about a country he had not experienced.

Shortly after yesterday's announcement, he explained had been approached by a man who asked him to tell his story. "I doubted my ability to do this," he said.

Much of the horror of this novel and the narrative lies in its own having been written in an imprisonment was going on. I cannot with many readers, Jelloun admitted, "I know not about it either. I had left Morocco in 1971".

Revelations about the camp survivors, who were released having spent 20 years in jail, eventually emerged through the efforts of Amnesty International.

This Blinding Absence of Light, sixth winner of the IMPAC prize, also the most important prize since the Nobel Prize, was awarded by the jury of the IMPAC prize. The Lord of Green Plains, one of the most beautiful and important books most of us have ever read. An interview with Tahar Ben Jelloun will appear in the Weekend Review section in the Times tomorrow.

Jelloun, winner of the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award 2004, at ceremony in City Hall, Dublin, yesterday. Photograph: Alan Botson

His work has been translated into many languages, namely "L'Enfant de sable" "The Sand Child" (Seuil 1985) and "La Nuit sacrée" "The Sacred Night" Prix Goncourt in 1987 have been translated into 43 languages, including, in addition to European languages and English, Indonesian, Lithuanian, Vietnamese, Hindi, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Albanian, Slovenian, Arabic etc. In addition, most of his books have been translated into Arabic. Also "Racism Explained to My Daughter" is a best seller in France, Italy and Germany, has been translated into 33 languages including the three major languages of South Africa (Afrikaans, Siswati and Ixixhosa), Bosnian and Esperanto! Tahar Ben Jelloun was awarded the IMPAC Dublin in June 2004, this Prize, awarded by an international jury selection made by 162 libraries and bookstores. "This Blinding Absence of Light" novel was crowned by Anglo-Saxon's. The book written was after an interview with a former inmate of Tazmamart prison in Morocco.

3) Tributes Series

Chaiibia Tallal



Chaïbia Tallal was born in 1929 in a village near El Jadida called Chtouka. Chaïbia was raised in the countryside neither educated nor schooled. Away from school Chaïbia developed a naïve style, a painting without embarrassment that could dare all international and national professional painters. Her first exposition was held in Casablanca back in 1966. Her collections were considered by international and national painting critics. She was married at an early age while she was 13 years old, and was both a widow and mother at the age of 15. She was discovered by artists' friends of her son. Soon her paintings were exposed in a tour in Morocco and Europe including Paris, Copenhagen, Ibiza, Menton, Rotterdam and other art capitals where the naïve art was already known. In May 2003, she received in Paris the gold medal of the French Academic Society for Education and Encouragement of Arts, Sciences and Literature.

Chaïbia Talal died in 2004 at the age of 75 in Casablanca. Nowadays Chaïbia is considered the most popular painter in Morocco. For instance, go out in Moroccan streets and tell people randomly chosen great painters, dead or alive, figurative or abstract, names such as: Pierre Alechinsk, Betye Saar, BOUCHAÏIB HABBOULI etc; there is a high chance that Chaïbia Tallal would be recognized first. Today Chaïbia Talal is considered the most popular painter in Morocco. "Nothing prepared me for painting, except the dream I had at the age of 25 years and said to me: Get up and paint" she once said.

MOROCCO	MAROC
 <p>CHAÏBIA</p>	

4) Gastronomy

Dried Apricot Tagine

Although Moroccan cuisine has influences from other regions around it, it is unlike other Arab, African or Mediterranean foods that you may be familiar with. Moroccan gastronomy offers an interesting offering of meats, vegetables and spices. Characteristic flavorings include preserved lemons, unrefined olive juices and dried fruits. Spices such as saffron, turmeric, cumin and paprika as well as herbs like parsley, cilantro and mint are heavily used. Our monthly meal is a mixture of sweet dried apricot and spicy ingredients all together in the dried apricot Tagine ☺ Bsaha.

Ingredients:

- 1 kg beef or lamb
- 2 onions
- 250 g dried apricots
- ¼ cup of vegetables' oil
- Salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- 1 pinch saffron
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 4 cloves garlic
- Water
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- 100 g walnuts

Preparation

In a Tagine, place the meat with oil, chopped onion, salt, spices, crushed garlic and stir all the spices to permeate the meat, sear for 5 minutes. Cover meat with water and simmer until the meat is cooked (40 minutes).

Poach the fruit in a pan of water and then drain back into the pan by adding honey, cinnamon and butter and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring continuously.

When the meat is cooked, add the apricots poached for meat, garnish the Tagine with sesame seeds and nuts.



B-SAHA W RAHA ☺

5) Volunteer's corner

Javier Zamora-Rojas

Un mes en Marruecos (18 de junio al 18 de julio del 2011)

Después de diez años de soñar con visitar Marruecos, al fin la vida me brindó la oportunidad de estar allá durante un mes. ¡Qué hermoso haber visto desde el avión la separación entre Europa y África! Marruecos, primer país africano y primer país árabe-musulmán que visito. Tal como lo describió el Rey Hassan II a través de una muy hermosa metáfora: *"Marruecos es como un árbol cuyas raíces yacen en África... pero cuyas hojas respiran en aire europeo"*. Esta frase envuelve muy bien el sentimiento que se vive en este impresionante país.

Cada lugar de Marruecos que pude visitar tiene su propia personalidad y ese algo que lo identifica. Rabat, su capital administrativa, una hermosa ciudad a orillas del Océano Atlántico en donde estuve la mayor parte del tiempo... una ciudad que me recibió con los brazos abiertos.



Marrakesh, su capital turística, una hermosa ciudad con un gran contraste, con un ambiente nocturno incomparable por la gente, los olores de la comida y las especias, los animales, el sonido de instrumentos, las luces, y su plaza central Jemaa El-Fna, declarada por la UNESCO una "obra maestra del patrimonio oral e intangible de la humanidad".

Fes, la capital cultural y espiritual del país, con su impresionante medina, la más grande y antigua del país. Absolutamente de todo se consigue dentro de la Medina... y todo lo que allí fabrican y venden es impresionante... dan ganas de comprar de todo... lámparas, alfombras, platería, especias, vajillas, almohadones, telas, espejos, artículos en cuero teñido naturalmente, entre miles de cosas más. Chefchaouen y Akchour, dos sitios hermosos al norte del país; el primero un pueblito encantador y muy pintoresco, y el segundo caracterizado por sus montañas, sus ríos, sus rocas... una maravilla de la naturaleza. Casablanca, la ciudad más grande del país y centro financiero por excelencia, con un gran desarrollo, y con su impresionante mezquita cuyas dos terceras partes fueron construidas sobre el mar

Vivir en Rabat por 1 mes fue una gran experiencia, y definitivamente me convencí de que la diferencia la marcan las personas. No sólo la ciudad es preciosa, sino que fui recibido en la familia más amable y acogedora que me pude haber imaginado; además de grandes amigos que conocí, marroquí y de otras partes. La experiencia de vivir en la medina fue muy enriquecedora, ya que ahí es donde se conservan más intactas las tradiciones.



Llegué a Marruecos lleno de expectativas y me fui enamorado del lugar, dejando personas muy queridas a las cuales espero poder visitar muy pronto, especialmente en Rabat en donde hallé un nuevo hogar. Extraño a mi familia, a mis amigos, las hermosas calles de Rabat, las caminatas en la noche y el delicioso té marroquí... pero siempre con la esperanza de regresar.



Javier Zamora

5) Volunteer's corner

September's Album



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