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Morocco is an overwhelming place; the country is ethnically, linguistically, geographically, and politically diverse. Although in the United States we often accept such diversity as normal, it is undoubtedly unique to find such a range of people, places, and beliefs in a country whose surface area is roughly equivalent to that of Texas. During the summer of 2016, I lived in Morocco for eight weeks, six of which I spent teaching at the Sidi Moumen Cultural Center (SMCC) in Casablanca. I can say very definitively that these eight weeks were unlike anything else I have ever experienced.

Upon my arrival in Casablanca, I met the six other WorldTeach volunteers for a week of orientation and introduction into the program, the country, and the culture. I was placed at the Sidi Moumen Cultural Center with two other volunteers, although we were all split into different host families. I was incredibly lucky to have been placed with the host family that I did; from the very beginning I felt comfortable and welcome, and this helped to set the stage for my entire summer. Although I had originally thought that my French would come in handy, my host family did not speak French, so we mostly communicated through the small bit of Arabic I picked up, hand gestures, and help from translators at the center. I shared a room with my host sister, and at various points throughout the summer, with other volunteers as well. The center at which I worked was well within walking distance (and by this I mean directly next door!), so I was able to wake up and walk to class each day very easily.

My teaching responsibilities at the SMCC included a Beginner 1 English class and two Life Skills classes. In addition to this, I participated in events hosted by the SMCC and spent time between classes getting to know the students at the Center through conversation, games, and sports. My English class focused primarily on conversational English, particularly because the base level of the class varied dramatically from student to student, so the best way to reach all learners was to allow them to speak and participate at their own level and progress from there. I began each class with a full-participation read aloud, to practice pronunciation and oral skills, and then moved on to a themed lesson. I adapted this structure after the first week, which was very challenging because of the wide gap between students' English levels.

My two Life Skills classes were Beginner 2 English and Pre-Intermediate English speakers, so the skills we focused on in those classes were resume-building, interview skills, goal-setting, analytical and creative thinking, and debate-style argumentative skills. For these classes, each lesson began with the students sharing current events and responding to a writing prompt before highlighting a specific topic or skill.

My Life Skills classes were incredibly rewarding, and it was these students who I know have made meaningful impacts on my life and my worldview. When students brought news to class, global events were always accompanied by a new interpretation or opinion. Very strong views regarding the United States, the Middle East, and especially the role of Islam challenged my own perspectives.

I was also very interested to learn about the education system in Morocco, and the disappointment that many students feel regarding higher education and employment. Many students, particularly in Sidi Moumen, are not afforded opportunities to receive a strong education, and they need to work that much harder to learn the skills they need for after high school. When students engaged in my classes or asked me questions about attending university, I felt like I was having a tangible effect on their future. The students in my classes (as well as students I met at the Center but did not have the pleasure of teaching) were benefited in particular by the length of time I was able to stay in Casablanca. Many of the other international volunteers had stays in Morocco that were much shorter than my own, sometimes even as short as two weeks. The stability that came from having the same class every day for six weeks truly allowed me to bond with my students and make not only my lessons, but also any conversations and relationships outside of class, more meaningful. I felt that by the end of the internship, I had been successful as a teacher at the SMCC. Whenever I heard students using the English I taught them, I was beyond proud, whether it was my Beginner 1 class describing their family or my Pre-Intermediate class using a new expression.

Thanks to Kellogg, WorldTeach, and the Sidi Moumen Cultural Center, I was lucky enough not only to positively impact the neighborhood of Sidi Moumen and the families that live there, but also to better myself both personally and professionally. I gained valuable experience leading a classroom, conducting myself confidently in front of students and other staff members, and communicating despite the language barrier. I was challenged by the difference between my life in

the United States and the reality of my situation in Morocco, but the amazing people I met, worked with, and lived with helped me to face this challenge and benefit and learn from it.