

Teaching English for Peace

Location and Background

Teaching English for Peace will take place in Fes, Morocco. In Morocco, negative perceptions of foreigners and the west are prevalent, just as many westerners hold negative perceptions of Morocco and other so-called “Arab” countries. We will be working with the Creative Learning Project (CLP), an educational project promoting creative learning. The CLP works to bridge these gaps by bringing together Moroccans and foreigners, allowing them to learn from one another, thereby breaking down these barriers. *Teaching English for Peace* will establish a solid English camp curriculum for the CLP to use to enhance their camps in a new way that focuses on peace. *Teaching English for Peace* will use the practical teaching of English to open up discussions with children, teachers, and parents about peace-building, conflict resolution, and intercultural appreciation.

Overview

Teaching English for Peace will partner with a “home” school, Amira Lalla Aisha, and will also carry out the camps in two other schools in the city. The objective of *Teaching English for Peace* is to get young children thinking about themes of human rights, peace, conflict resolution, communication, and appreciation for cultural diversity, while learning English. To compliment these objectives, activities will focus on developing leadership, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. The children, ranging from grades 4-6, have a basic level of English, so the program will be able to introduce peace-building vocabulary words into lesson plans and explore their meanings through daily activities including games and crafts.

One owner of the school said,

You probably don't think that what you are doing amounts to anything much . . . but these [children] one day will grow up and remember . . . that a foreigner cared about them . . . and they will realize that what they hear on the news or read in the papers isn't always the truth. They will understand that there are foreigners [westerners] that don't hate Muslims. There are foreigners who aren't trying to kill them or the members of their families. . . . [What] you are doing in the classroom today will influence decisions 20 or 30 years from now.

English camps similar to these have been run many summers in the past, but no curriculum has been left behind for CLP to sustain the project with. *Teaching English for Peace* will create a curriculum and teaching materials that can be used to repeat the program year after year. The camps are a medium through which we can foster a vocabulary of peace-building in a younger generation. Teachers and parents will also have a chance to engage in discussion, as the former will be involved in reviewing the curriculum and teaching along with the volunteers, while the latter will be encouraged to continue dialogue with their children and the volunteers when they meet together.

The Team

Our team is comprised of a diverse group of students from varying cultural backgrounds (India, Mexico, Japan, Canada, US, China, Nigeria, South Africa), education, skills, and experiences which contribute to the richness of the project. The diversity of the team is necessary to provide a model for the students that demonstrates the strengths and potentials of very different people working closely together. Caitlin Cobb, who has been a Resident Assistant in International House for two years and before that, the Co-Facilitator of the International House Community Council, is leading the team. Nicole Webster*, a 3rd year Education student who has experienced ESL herself after moving from South Africa, and now perfected her English, is overseeing and directing curriculum development. Christa Jette, Victoria Yeo, and Alex Freeman are heading up the sports and games component. Amandeep Kaur Singh, Joyce Tani, Tinu Atinuke, and Yue Qin* are designing the arts and crafts component. Stevie Blau*, a 3rd year design student will design the website and promotional materials in addition to formatting the teachers' handbooks, textbooks, homework books, and any other teaching materials that are used.

**Indicates those who are apart of the project development, but not traveling to Morocco for its implementation.*

Curriculum

The curriculum has two focuses. The language component will seek to provide a solid base in the most common words in the English language and how to use them, including a particular vocabulary surrounding peace. Then, throughout the lessons via a “hidden curriculum”, the students will practice

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peace-building. The concept of teaching with a “hidden curriculum” is a widely used educational practice. In this case, our curriculum will be designed to foster the ideals of building peaceful communities, avoiding and/or solving conflicts and increasing the ability to effectively communicate one's point of view to another--even while students are learning simple English vocabulary. Since peace-building is the aim of the project, it is at the core of each lesson and activity we have designed.

Camp Structure

Three camps will be run Monday to Friday during the first three weeks of July. Two volunteers will be paired with one Moroccan teacher and 12-15 students. Each day will run from about 9am-4pm, starting with an English lesson in the morning that introduces the vocabulary of the day and followed by games and crafts. Both sessions will tackle peace-building issues in a fun, creative, and integrative manner where students will be challenged to consider issues and develop an awareness of their own perspectives while developing leadership, critical thinking skills and teamwork. At the end of the day, time will be set aside for the children to reflect about what they learned.

Additional Scope

While the children are our primary focus, *Teaching English for Peace* also seeks to connect with teachers and parents outside of the classroom. For each camp, two gatherings will be organized for the parents and volunteers to meet. The team will give an overview of the camp and there will be a chance for discussion. We will also ask the parents for their feedback at the end of the camp during a celebration where the children present a special project that they completed during the week.

Sustainability of the Project

Vivian Erickson is the director of the Creative Learning Project (CLP), where she has worked for 10 years. In that time, she has seen many people from other countries working in the Moroccan school system. Their presence has not only changed them personally but it has also allowed the students, staff and parents to be exposed to other cultures. Over the years, this has greatly influenced each group’s reaction to and appreciation of other cultures. The act of working together for mutual benefit or for the benefit of others draws us together so that we no longer see ourselves as "us and them," but as "we." This interaction in itself goes along way to promoting and sustaining peace. Vivian believes that this English project will enhance and continue CLP’s efforts to that end.

Project Steps and Timeline: Dates are flexible.

<i>January-April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>August</i>
Develop curriculum Create website and promotional materials Seek sponsors for craft and sports supplies	Continue fundraisers and seek sponsors	Caitlin goes to Morocco to meet with teachers to review and finalize curriculum Print Booklets, purchase supplies June 27: Team arrives, prepares for the start of the camps	July 3-23: Camps July 24-26: Debriefing/ reviewing curriculum and camps July 27: Team leaves	Finalize Curriculum Finalize Website Complete Final Report

*With international volunteers coming each year, this allows some supplies that cannot be bought within Morocco to be brought in

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Impact</i>
Foster ideals of peace-building, conflict resolution and communication	<i>Students:</i> Will complete a project that demonstrates peace-building values by the end of the camp. <i>Parents:</i> Will generate feedback on how well the camp dealt with English teaching and peacebuilding themes <i>Teachers and Volunteers:</i> Will compose lesson plans using the hidden curriculum philosophy to be added to future camp curriculum	<i>Students:</i> Influencing future interactions and decisions <i>Parents, Teachers, Volunteers:</i> Equipped with tools for mentoring and teaching peace-building
Promote inter-cultural understanding and learning	Evidence in classroom observation, feedback, and discussion, as well as positive interaction with international volunteers	<i>Everyone:</i> Breaking down negative perceptions, stereotypes, and tensions existing between foreigners and locals
Enhancing education	Feedback on innovative “popular education” techniques and ability/willingness of teachers to adopt practices	<i>Students:</i> Greater interest in education and inspiration to work to their full potential

Please note: If the political situation in Morocco becomes unstable, we have the option to move the project to Uganda or Ghana