

Woman-to-Woman Worldwide Morocco Journey – 2019

(Real names not used to protect our Moroccan sisters and brothers)

1. Title:

a. “America’s First Friend”

b. In December 1777, the Moroccan Sultan [Muhammad III](#) included the [United States](#) in a list of countries to which Morocco’s ports were open. Morocco thus became the first country whose head of state publicly recognized the newly independent United States. Relations were formalized with the **Moroccan–American Treaty of Friendship** (also known as the **Treaty of Marrakesh**) negotiated by [Thomas Barclay](#) in [Marrakech](#), and signed by American diplomats in [Europe](#), [Thomas Jefferson](#), [John Adams](#) with Sultan [Muhammad III](#) in 1786.

2. Morocco Info

- a. *Borders Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea*
- b. *Claims 3 Spanish territories*
- c. *Capital: Rabat*
- d. *Rabat’s Kasbah of the Udayas is a 12th century royal fort overlooking the water.*
- e. *Largest City: Casablanca*
- f. *Size: 274,460 square miles and population of 36 million +*
- g. *5th largest economy in Africa*
- h. *Predominant religion is Islam*
- i. *Official languages are Arabic and Berber*
- j. *French is widely spoken*

k. *Berber, Arabian and European cultural influences.*

l. Ruled by a series of independent dynasties...the only northwest African country to avoid Ottoman occupation; the Alaouite dynasty rules today, seized power in 1631; a unitary constitutional monarchy with elected parliament

m. The King of Morocco holds vast executive and legislative powers especially over the military, foreign policy and religious affairs

n. Marrakech's medina, a mazelike medieval quarter, offers entertainment and marketplaces selling ceramics, jewelry and metal lanterns.

3. W2WW

4. Group pic

5. Orientation – Importance of preparation and orientation; also important to take the time to debrief

a. Sign up for daily note taking, morning meditation, evening vespers; note taker also has the responsibility of presenting gift to hosting partner and offer thanks for hospitality

6. Quick outline of itinerary: Casa Blanca, Rabat, Tangier, Fes, Oujda, Meknes, Rabat, Marrakech, Casa Blanca

a. Cities located primarily at borders since that is where the need is greatest

7. Our delegation visited the ministries of Global Ministries partners, Evangelical Protestant Church in Morocco (EEAM). The EEAM offers Christ's love in a land of many crossroads. With ten congregations in cities all over Morocco, the EEAM has a membership representing more than fifty nationalities, with the majority of members

comprised of young people arriving to Morocco as students from Sub-Saharan Africa. EEAM members come from a variety of Protestant traditions as well.

The EEAM sees welcoming the stranger as their primary ministry.

The church is committed to offering hospitality toward those who come to live and worship in Morocco, and toward those who are passing through the country as migrants. Since 2003, the church has been intentional in their response to the migration crisis. The church has formed volunteer groups to provide emergency aid, including food, shelter, medical care, and clothing for those migrating to, and arriving in Morocco. EEAM runs additional ministries such as scholarships for students, microcredit programs for migrant families, and professional training courses such as sewing and hairstyling. Another priority of the church is to offer education and theological formation for the many young adults in their churches. This includes opportunities to learn how to preach, lead worship, and to become pastoral interns for those desiring to further their theological education.

8. We had the opportunity to hear, first-hand, stories of women and families who have faced challenges and have arrived in Morocco after journeying many miles looking for refuge.

Our mission coworkers who worked very hard on all these arrangements planned for us to have lunch each day with

some of the church and CEI members – an opportunity to have real conversation

- also a way to offer thanks by paying for the food for delegation and hosts

– the hosts did all the work of meal prep, serving, and clean up

9. Overview collage –

- Many of our meals included Moroccan bread and olives; a group favorite was Moroccan tea
- Tajine (2 slides)– dish named after the earthenware pot in which it is cooked
- Mosque
- Dinner with partners
- Palm trees
- Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean meet – can see the change in the color of the water
 - Mediterranean appears blue and the Atlantic appears green
 - The Mediterranean Sea lies between southern Europe and Africa, linked through the narrow Strait of Gibraltar. The different colors depend mainly on the amount of sunlight scattered from their surface....depends on the substances dissolved in the seawater. Most oceans appear blue but decaying plants on the ocean bed produce a green effect on the Atlantic ocean in the Strait by scattering both blue and yellow light...which appears green.
- Water inside cave
- Can't resist babies

- Outdoor dinner
- Oils and spices
- Emmanuella and Fritz Joseph – mission coworkers
- Mosaics
- Mosaic steps
- Coastal areas
- Mountains
- Pottery
- Sunset

10. Casa Blanca – EEAM

Permanence Casablanca ('open door') ...church over 100 years old.

80,000 refugees in Morocco

Given the opportunity to observe interviews where it is decided how to give help – food, clothes, \$ for rent, water, electricity

-- workers function as counselor/psychologist/pastor/social workers/detective/police.

Needs of migrants are great; numbers are growing.

Stuck at border with desire to enter Europe – police stop – receive money to prevent crossing

1. Young man from Guinea had left family behind to look for work; he was the oldest and his father had died
2. Young man, also from Guinea, looking for work.
3. Young man wanted help with an apartment for himself and five friends. He and his friends were sleeping in the cemetery

and the police would come intermittently and run them off. He was concerned about winter coming. He was angry, not understanding why he did not have the things others had.

4. One woman was only asking for \$40 to pay her rent. This was an opportunity for us to be reminded of our training and preparation. Our initial thoughts were we should be able to just give her the \$40 but what needs to be remembered is what happens next...how is this sustainable? This is a lesson in why we work with Global Ministries' partners to make the appropriate decisions on how they spend their funds.

We had a special outing that evening to Rick's Café decorate to look like the café from the movie "Casablanca" with beautiful 40s décor and music. It was also a splurge night ordering from the menu and enjoying desserts.

Each day ends with a debriefing which are often emotional because all of the feelings from the refugees' situations and this day specifically because of the interviews we observed.

[CLICK for picture]

11. Rabat – Pastor Training

Prior to our departure we got a request from our mission coworkers in Morocco asking if any of the delegation might be able to lead the pastors and their wives in a self-care training. We quickly discovered the huge need for this training. The issues and numbers are overwhelming; if pastors don't do self-care they won't be able to be effective and healthy.

Pat asked Sheila Spencer if she would be able/willing since she has gifts not only in training but in spiritual growth and self-care. She graciously said, 'yes', and prepared materials and presentation which were also translated into French since the people of the church speak French primarily. One of our mission coworkers, Emmanuela, translated from English to French and did an amazing job of translating not only the words but also the intent and emotion that we saw in Sheila.

There were seven male pastors and one female pastor. Her name is Naafte and she is one of very few female pastors. She has a church in two cities outside of Rabat.

The training went very well. Two members of the delegation were pastors' wives and had the full attention of the male pastors as they shared their perspectives.

Although the pastors had initially planned to bring their wives they had changed their minds. They were so appreciative of Sheila's training that they were saying they now regretted not bringing them.

Also, one of the pastors asked Sheila to preach at his church that coming Sunday to share that training with his congregation.

Pastors' training: Be still and Receive, Matthew 11:28-30

Illustrations:

[click for picture]

Plane – oxygen, put on your own mask first

Empty cup – can't pour from an empty cup

[click for picture]

Recharge cell phone – panic when charge gets low

Reminder that rest and recharge is important to those who are doing this difficult work.l

[click for photo]

*Pastors making affirmation “Rest is good for me”

[click for photo]

While the class was going on in the afternoon, the rest of the delegation visited the Kasbah of the Udayas

[click for photo]

which sits on the Atlantic Ocean.

[click for photo]

Inside the fort was the Blue City which was large and the homes were tall and it had narrow walkways. The walls were painted blue...there are several theories as to why they are painted blue.

[click for photo]

1. One popular theory is that the blue keeps mosquitoes away.
2. Another is that the Jews introduced the blue when they took refuge from Hitler in the 1930s.
3. The blue is said to symbolize the sky and heaven and serve as a reminder to lead a spiritual life.

We also visited the Hassan Mosque which has a very large tower that was the largest in the world in the 12th century. The intricate tile work and the massive size are impressive.

12. Tangier – Ceuta and visit with migrants

We picked up a few people from the Tangier Immanuel Partanaires of Christ Church who toured Tangier with us the rest of the day. Along the way, we viewed the Tangier Med Port, which is said to be the largest port in Africa. The roads were very winding. There were beautiful hilltops and valleys. You could see horses, goats, cows and camels along the roadside. There were also people sitting and walking along the edge of the highway.

Ceuta and Malilla are Spanish territories in northern Africa that share a border with Morocco. If migrants can cross the fences they will be in European territory even though they are still on the continent of Africa.

As we traveled toward Ceuta, where migrants attempt to cross into Europe to escape to freedom, the sky became very foggy laying down a heavy mist, which only added to the feeling of despair and hardship of the migrants. Our view was limited but we observed a massive number of vehicles and people gathered in small groups. We were also able to see guards monitoring the barbed wire fences and people lying in the crevices of rock and along the walls. There were children begging for food and knocking on car windows.

[click for photo] fences

[click for photo] fences

[click for photo] cars

[click for photo] cars

[click for photo] guard

[click for photo] guard

[click for photo] young man

We watched a teenage boy trying to slide underneath a truck hoping to be able to hold himself up under the carriage of the truck to cross the border. When he was not successful he appeared to be discouraged and disheartened and he collapsed on his back on one of the walls.

[click for photo]

We left Ceuta and visited the church at Tangier and met the CEI team. We listened and observed more interviews with migrant women and their children. This day was a day of food distribution; however, many women had additional needs as well.

[click for photo]

That evening we met with the pastor and some of the team for dinner. We enjoyed live music in French and Arabic. For those who wanted to, we enjoyed a stroll back to the hotel along the beach.

[click for photo]

As we walked we were reminded that Europe (Spain) is a 35 minute ferry ride from Tangier for those who are able to take it. We can feel the frustration of the migrants.

13. Tangier – Worship

Worship at Tangier – true welcome, praise and worship; congregation pleased, welcoming and curious about the delegation of women and our area executive, Peter Makari

Our presence did not inhibit the natural flow of worship --- God transcends language, culture and all human created barriers. One people – one belief –

Sheila Spencer was the guest speaker. Tia brought greetings as did Peter. Pat was presented with a framed photo of the group. Lovely and powerful experience in worship. The participants were all surprisingly young. The announcements included an upcoming wedding.

[click for photo] worship

[click for photo] worship

[click for photo] Sheila, Emma, pastor

[click for photo] Peter, pastor

[click for photo] Dinner with church the night before

14. Fes

A four-hour ride to Fes – it's an ancient landscape – conflicted landscape of old world and modern – rolling mountainous area terrain – it seemed barren but that was deceptive – there was life ever present – cattle, sheep, donkeys, bales and bales of hay. Groves and groves of olive trees and other plants.

Children playing – vendors with produce stands, buildings that looked long abandoned were homes. An ancient land with modern nuances.

Visited the Evangelical Church in Morocco – Fes.

Our host told us that they do not call them migrants, but sisters and brothers. It forms community. Most of the people helped are women and children.

[click for photo]

15. Fes - CEI

Challenges:

Need education:

School is free but need to learn Arabic and convert to Islam. Private school is preferred, but expensive. Private school \$1000-2000; a church in US committed to pay half for one child.

Medical Care:

A child with a recurring illness gets turned away from medical care because of fear that the relationship is getting too close...for example, one of the children needs blood every 6 months but is now turned away.

Housing Needs:

Husband trying to cross to Europe, ask for money in street but not enough

Live in poor conditions

One woman and child living with pregnant woman; where will they live when child is born

Pregnant women supposed to be cared for in public health but difficult to access

No choice but to send to private sector

Women:

No choice but to sell body; get diseases/HIV

A lot die because they can't go back to housing that is not good for their health

[click for photo]

16. Fes – CEI

How the Church Works

Monthly budget divided by weeks – only a few are helped with housing; \$5/month

Buy medications

Accompany to social events – like playing soccer

Heavy Cases:

Fes special in that category

- required to spend 1500 – 2000 dirhams
- more cases of death; already 4 by end of September

2019

2 kids, 1 mother (living in the woods without prenatal care), 1 with heart problem but treatment didn't go well

Joys:

A lot with cases

Some quite well – 1 out of coma for a month (Cameroon)

[click for photo] group picture

17. Fes - CEI

N and M – Ivory Coast

Bad family situation, sold things – business bad, unable to cross to Europe, 1 woman in group planning to cross – currently sleeping in tent; every 4-5 hours police come to arrest (“running in the wild”)

Traveling with 3 girls – saw Moroccans and got raped by them; Miracle result of that night; wanted abortion but CEI in Rabat told her not to abort; child from rape growing inside you hard; birth at home alone prematurely – took to hospital; baby cold so assumed dead; focus on her bleeding; not ability for proper burial so wrapped him and put him in trash; when worker went to empty trash heard baby crying; brought back to hospital; because he was dead – took him out of incubator and sent her away so not birth certificate – no papers – doesn’t exist; struggling because didn’t want, making life even harder, church imposed on her; shame on family that she didn’t want him; was staying with a friend who crossed over; now no place to live; was a waiter, cashier, cook

Woman from Nigeria – trying to make better life, trying to adapt/survive; learned by word of mouth; group traveled together – 2 weeks and 2 days, been here 6 years

Woman from Cameroon – Misery! no work; 3 kids left behind, came to find better life for them; hairdresser but no clients – took a year to get here; sends whatever she gets

home so kids can go to school. (4, 6, and 10 year old); been here 1 1/2 years

Equatorial Guinea – woman's daughter went to France for school, got pregnant, asked mom to come to Morocco and she would come to get her to help with child, no documents so daughter created fake ID, arrested when she came and is now in prison, left child with neighbor when she came; neighbor taking child to embassy; released daughter and sent to Cameroon; now she can't go back because she has no documents; grandkids and sick husband at home she can't get to; she is also sick – not sure if age or stress; had papers but were taken at the border

Need CEI person with them to get needs at pharmacy

Served last after Moroccans, groceries on street- raise price for them

The King's palace – hidden majestically behind endless walls; contrast between this and those looking for scraps of food and begging

Guide in Fes told us that the oldest university in the world was built by a woman.

Explored history and visited site where pottery was inspired.

We visited area that included palace and what were quarters where Jewish people lived (16C) when Hitler asked Morocco king to dismiss Jews, King refused and told Hitler they are Moroccan.

[click for photo]

18. Fes

During debriefing of stories of the day, Peter and Pat reminded the group of the importance of showing up with ministry of presence and listening. It's not about us fixing, but advocating.... And sitting at their feet.

Dinner in a local restaurant – amazing food. Delightful wait staff, curiosity from some other patrons – great fun.

As we listened to these stories we recalled Syvoskia's morning devotion about waiting and the realization that waiting is much harder if you don't know when it will end; wonder if you have been forgotten.

[click for photo]

19. Oujda – CEI Team, lunch cooked by chef and helpers, Fritz's congregation

Oujda – next to king's residence – only church on same block as mosque

- mosque built so church wasn't only presence
- church is part of social service network for migrants
- only church in Morocco welcoming migrants 7 days a week
- open house – don't have to be in church to be accepted; may just want to rest

If they want to talk after rest it is available – walk beside!!! Not in front or behind

If we don't have what you need maybe somewhere else does

People who come are traumatized – violence, etc. during journey

Most vulnerable especially women and children

Accompany people through everything – sometimes until they die

[click for photo] program leader

[click for photo] Oujda church

[click for photo] Wall paintings

[click for photo] Wall paintings

[click for photo] Church Art

20. Oujda

MAN: 25-year-old with mental disability; can't decide for himself; ask him to sit down and he can't decide where to sit; if he left, he would die

Teacher/psychologist 150km away comes to work with them

- want him to go back to his country; he doesn't want to

??how did you get here? – may be injury during the journey

O – 15 years old; found him; lost 70% of eyesight; blind in one eye; doctor – no solution

Man with tuberculosis – brought him from Casablanca to give him space to heal; tried everything but passed away; during worst times church was with him – church traumatized; 4 days after another man came with tuberculosis – what to do for him? Just lost one but will try my best – quarantine from other group for 1 month; more contagious than first one; do our best, part of Gospel

Woman – 25 years old with cancer – accompany for one year until death

Team – deal with own trauma and faith questions – why didn't God help? –Emergency Place

1st space – rest/relax

2nd space – people ask for their needs

Separate – Hope House

Stay 1-2 years; decided not to go to Europe – making life here – electricians, bakers, mechanics.

M – 2 children, 1 from rape; got to Morocco; met father of 2nd; came to church one month before delivery; father died 1 week after trying to cross

Woman – wanted prayer before crossing – Pastor told her he felt something bad would happen – but she said she would see – police chased here – she was 10 minutes late and saw boat leaving – sunk and 70 on board died – she came back to the church devastated

Man – asked for prayer for business before taking boat to cross to Europe; pastor didn't support but prayed for wisdom

1 woman with child with disability begged for 2000 euros to pay to cross; successful – 1 in 100 successful

[click for photo] Courtyard

[click for photo] Pastor Fritz and CEI worker

[click for photo] Visiting with the children

[click for photo] Chef

[click for photo] Office

[click for photo] Cake made and decorated for our lunch

[click for photo] Cake designed especially for our visit

[click for photo] Young men who are learning from chef to be chefs

21. Meknes

Yes, there is McDonald's food in Morocco

We had lunch between Oujda and Rabat and wanted to make it quick.

McDonald's food in Morocco is certified to be in accordance with Halal, Islamic dietary restrictions...primarily the way meat is processed.

(We may be more familiar with Jews requiring foods that are Kosher...in accordance with their dietary restrictions.)

Our stay in Meknes was just a layover.

22. Rabat – Permanence

Rabat:

- welcoming the children – pregnant women and their children; provided daycare but now not enough funding to continue
- following with them through doctors' visits
- testing and scanning of fetus – many have suffered trauma – want to track growth for baby
- lots of house visits
- accompany in hospital and while in labor
- often no social connection other than church's presence
- See maybe 50 women a month
- Maybe 2 or 3 find their way to better situation
- Help buy medicine
- When speaking to women 'feels like transfer from one soul to another' – discussion

[click for photo]

23. Rabat - CEI

- Look at list at home – check to see who are the most vulnerable and focus on them
- Difficult stories that must be kept confidential
- Pamela Mbelabomi, really happy when she sees one make it
- Majority of people get no assistance at all
- Bread for the World is their primary funder
- Depend on foreign grants
- In Morocco status is a church – no right to ask for funding from government or EU
- Focus on relationship with other church organizations in Europe

[click for photo]

24. Rabat - CEI

Trends in migrants:

Morocco follows Africa's pattern

W. Mediterranean passage – Central Med Route

Italy extremist government block all migrants

Algeria most common path – sent back to own country

- breaks international law

- less oppression in Rabat – number increasing in Morocco

Refoulement: The act of forcing a refugee or asylum seeker to return to a country or territory where he or she is likely to face persecution

Waldensian church – search and rescue in Mediterranean ;
Lampadosia rescuing immigrants from water; “Humanitarian Corridors”; 1,000 visas for special cases

[click for photo]

No slide:

We were accompanied to the medina, which is the old city and is the shopping area of Rabat. We wound our way through the narrow passages where shops selling just about everything could be found. There was clothing, shoes, food, spices, jewelry and all kinds of stuff.

We experienced blatant racism against dark-skinned people; car attempted to hit one of our women.

25. Rabat - CEI

CEI national board leader, Jean Louis told us about their various programs.

They have agreed to help students in some congregations. Members struggle with the fact that the church is doing so much to help migrants and many church members feel their needs are ignored so they have matching grants to help church members in need.

CEI also helps with burials for migrants. As Christians, the burial expenses are higher than for Muslims. Also, many migrants do not have family to cover this expense.

Pamela spoke about the programs for mothers and children called “welcoming the children” Programs have evolved over time. They help with daycare; they also help expectant women get needed tests and medical care. They make sure they get an ultrasound and other tests to check on the health of the mother and child.

They do home visits and follow up on the women who come to them for help. Many migrants lack social support. They also help the women prepare for the coming baby, especially regarding getting the needed documentation. Pamela reviews a list of women and ponders who she can really help. She also makes referrals to the pastor when appropriate.

Jean Louis then talked about the unique context of Rabat as an urban setting. Many people have housing but often 20 people share a room since living expense are higher, many migrants must beg.

While there are many NGOs in Rabat, many people don't get help because each organization has such specific guidelines. They also talked about funding. Many organizations in France and Germany

help in addition to Global Ministries. Many rely heavily on foreign aid especially from church related organizations. As a church they can't get help from other places like E.U.

Peter spoke about the work of churches to aid migrants. He spoke about the Waldensians in Italy among other things

[click for photo] pic with young women

[click for photo] Vegetation

26. Marrakech – Meeting with president of women's ministry

Church delegates among several volunteers to offer food, clothing and medical help to migrants. The church theme this year is coming to the water with Jesus. "Come to the water stand by my side."

Patricia, the leader of national women's ministries for the church, joined us and told us about the work she is doing with the migrant women. She also told us that she employed migrant women at her personal business. We talked about the cultural differences between women in ministry in the USA vs Morocco. We exchanged stories and advice. What a wonderful connection.

I'm surprised how little the language barrier affects us. Relationships and connections find a way. Love finds a way.

We went to look at Mama Patricia's stores and were amazed! She is truly a super woman! All of us had a great time shopping and felt good contributing to her businesses. It's been a good day.

Twining

- match migrant woman with similar woman in church
- age issues etc

Special pastoral care for woman who gets pregnant, have child along the way

Care for woman and child

- find women in the street
- don't have to be Christian

Protestant/Catholic and one other

- most leaders are from Protestants
- many meet in home/house churches

Catholic – no women's ministry – welcome newcomers w/sports, etc.

90% are young adults so sports good welcome for newcomers

Most 16-18 year old students but no specific ministry for them

- grow up and become part of women's ministry

[click for photo] Mama Patricia – national women's ministry leader

27. Casa Blanca – departure to US

28. Project :

Ministries of Global Ministries partner, the Evangelical Protestant Church in Morocco (EEAM).

- EEAM offers Christ's love in a land of many crossroads

- Ten congregations in cities all over Morocco
 - Membership representing more than fifty nationalities
 - Majority of members comprised of young people arriving to Morocco as students from Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Come from a variety of Protestant traditions
- EEAM sees welcoming the stranger as their primary ministry.
- Committed to offering hospitality toward those who come to live and worship in Morocco, and toward those who are passing through the country as migrants.
- Since 2003, the church has been intentional in their response to the migration crisis.
 - Volunteer groups provide emergency aid, including food, shelter, medical care, and clothing
 - Runs additional ministries such as scholarships for students, microcredit programs for migrant families, and professional training courses such as sewing and hairstyling
- Another priority of the church: offer education and theological formation for the many young adults in their churches
 - Including opportunities to learn how to preach, lead worship, and to become pastoral interns
- Disciples Woman-to-Woman Worldwide and Global Ministries welcome gifts to support the ministries of the Evangelical Church of Morocco.

29. How to give to projects

- You can donate to projects online
- If you prefer to donate by mail be sure to send to the proper address and make a note on the memo line of where you want your donation to go: **W2WW Morocco Project**

- Mail to:
Global Ministries, Resource Development
P.O. Box 1986
Indianapolis, IN 46206
- Link is:
 - <https://donate.globalministries.org/onlinegiving>
 - Use dropdown menu to specify W2WW Morocco Project
- 100% of your gift will be directed to W2WW Morocco Project
- You will receive updates on the work in this area as they become available

30. Pic of Delegation