



Civilizations Exchange & Cooperation Foundation

2008 Morocco: Islamic Thought and Culture

Study Abroad Program

In Cooperation with the College of Notre Dame of Maryland

January 5-15, 2008



Our participants benefited greatly through first-hand experiences of the culture, faith, and daily life, as well as visits to rich historic sites and interactions with professors, students, politicians and religious leaders.

They gained an understanding of how the Moroccan people of today exemplify the Islamic struggle with modernity, globalization, causes of extremism, and the relationship between the Muslim world and the United States.

Additionally, the participants enjoyed the scenic beauty as we drove from one city to another, the delicious food and warm Moroccan hospitality.

During this program the participants enjoyed discovering the treasures of the following cities:

Casablanca

Rabat

Fez

Tangier

Cities of Morocco

CASABLANCA

The program started with a visit and tour of Hassan II Mosque, which was the highlight of the day. The architecture, use of colors, and geometric designs that adorn this highly respected Mosque are just exquisite.



The lower level is where ablution "wudu" is performed. The water flows from a unique marble design.



Program Lectures & Meetings

CASABLANCA

Our Program began at the BENMSIK University, which includes a lecture by **Dr. Mustafa Al Samadi, "Morocco & the West: Challenges and Opportunities."**



Gaining Knowledge about the Culture

RABAT

One of the highlights in Rabat was the reception for the delegation by U.S. Ambassador Thomas T. Riley at his residence.



While dining at a restaurant or touring the city, the delegation came to learn that not only are the people of Morocco very warm and friendly, but the local cats are as well.



Religion, Science and Sites

RABAT

The activities of today began with a lecture by **Dr. Idriss Al Kharchaf, Professor of the Science of Miracles in the Qur'an & Sunnah, "Scientific Miracles in the Qur'an"**



After lunch the group toured famous sites like the Royal Palace, Kesbah of Oudaya, and the Old City. They also witnessed a demonstration of **"henna"** applied to adorn the hands of women in Morocco.



Traditional alleys and back streets of Morocco are widely used.

Women and Family from the Islamic Perspective

RABAT

Of course the group couldn't visit Morocco without looking through the markets in Rabat.



The next morning the group visited the renowned Mohamad V University and listened to **Dr. Rajaa Naji El Mekhaoui, Professor of Health Law** talk about **"Women and Family from the Islamic Perspective"**. At this point, many misperceptions were clarified and the negative stereotypes that existed in the minds of many delegation members were eliminated.

Mohammed V University is probably the best-known of Morocco's universities. The University was established in 1957 and was amongst the first modern universities to be founded in Morocco. This fine tertiary education institution in Morocco was named in honor of King Mohammed V, a famous Moroccan monarch. In the year 1993 the Mohammed V University was split into two institutions, namely Mohammed V University at Souissi and Mohammed V University at Agdal. Students attending Mohammed V University can make use of the faculties of medicine, sciences, law and liberal arts.



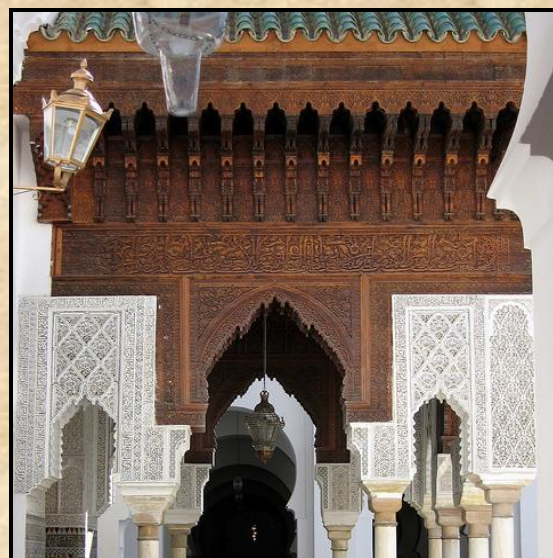
That afternoon the group departed for Fez.

Learning How Religion Impacts Culture

FEZ

A program was held at the renowned University of Al Karaouine, one of the most famous universities in the Arab and Muslim World. **Dr. Driss Kharchafi, Professor of Hadith**, spoke about **"The Role of Hadith as the 2nd Source of Islamic Law"**. The group was also delighted to meet with **Dr. Ali Al Seqally, President of the University of Al Karaouine**.

This historical institution was established back in 859 and was named the "oldest existing educational institution in the world" by the Guinness Book of World Records. Since its inception it has been an important education center for Islamic Studies with international students also coming here to study Theology.



Gaining Knowledge about the Culture

FEZ

As the group traveled from Rabat to Fez, they enjoyed the scenery, Moroccan costumes and traditional roadside stands like this one that sold pottery.



Children's Computer Center



One of the **WIDELY USED** back alleys



Site-Seeing in Fez and Tangier

FEZ

Sight-seeing, Visit the School of Sufism



After breakfast, before leaving to Tangier a local doctor and her husband came to visit the group at the hotel.



TANGIER

Visit Historic Sites in Tangier, Tour the City and Relax beside the Mediterranean



Many Doors of Morocco

TANGIER

The group visited historic sites and the Christian Community, then departed to Asilah for lunch by the sea and returned to Casablanca.



Institutions of History and Culture



CASABLANCA

Upon returning to Casablanca from Tangier, the group was given a tour of the Jewish Moroccan Museum.



As the last scheduled activity of the program, the group was treated to a performance by the Association of IDMAJ and the youth of Sidi Momen Cultural Center complete with a wide assortment of Moroccan sweets.



VOICES OF MOROCCAN YOUTH

CASABLANCA

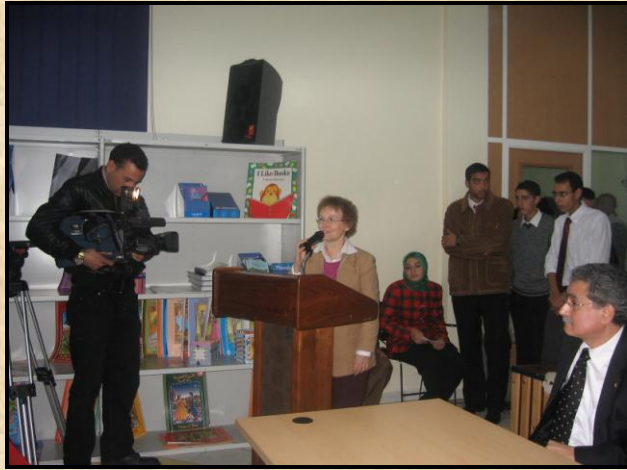
Students from a wide range of ages performed with excitement, in addition to a well-known musical group.



Expressions of Gratitude, Appreciation & Farewell

CASABLANCA

After the wonderful youth program, everyone takes last minute pictures, including the media.



The "last dinner" together followed by heartfelt farewells between our Program Coordinator in Morocco, Zineb Semmar, and the delegation as they prepare to leave for the U.S.