



Igniting English Literacy in Morocco: Late 2025 / 2026 Projects

Barb Mackraz

Founder & Exec Director

Morocco Library Project, a program of Oliveseed Foundation

barb@oliveseed.org

November 2025

Responding to the continuing popularity of our Morocco Library Project (MLP) Literacy & Youth Writing programs, we hope to add several small highly tuned class libraries in Morocco this fall and publish anthologies of more writing by youth in rural areas. This proposal seeks funding for these modest but high impact initiatives. Our projects are the only English libraries in rural Morocco, and we run the only national writing program for youth in the country. We have found a growing desire for access to quality knowledge resources in the most under-resourced rural areas, for literacy in English and the global connection it brings for youth, and for an opportunity for young people rarely heard from to share their voices with the world. These programs are also building a bridge of friendship between the U.S. and North Africa.

For more on MLP Libraries:

<https://www.oliveseed.org/morocco-library-project>

For more on the MLP Short Stories program:

<https://www.oliveseed.org/mlp-competition>

“The Reader Is Father of the Writer”:

<https://www.oliveseed.org/post/the-reader-is-father-of-the-writer>

Literacy & Libraries in Rural Morocco

Our library projects address challenges in literacy and access to quality knowledge materials in underserved areas, especially in the desert and southern regions of Morocco. These are places that had not had libraries before, and they transform the schools and encourage the development of extra-curricular opportunities for highly motivated youth.



"I have taken part in many interesting English Language Teaching programs nationwide. Morocco Library Project, though, is exceptionally different. Its impact can be felt in our students' mindset and behavior. MLP's impact has gone beyond improving English to boosting students' critical thinking, creativity, self-confidence, and motivation. MLP to me is that abundant source of hope, inspiration, and love. Students from underserved areas are giving more importance to reading as the real engine of change."

~Ali Amhal, Biougra, Morocco
English teacher & founder of the Access Language Center

Class Libraries for 5 Rural Schools in Guelmim-Oued

We have developed school libraries in the southern reaches of Morocco, as well as the first public English library in rural Morocco (at the Access Language Centre in Biougra, also in the south). We worked with Ali Amhal on these projects, a dedicated English teacher who is now the teaching supervisor of the region. Mr. Amhal has asked us to help him put small learning libraries at 5 under-resourced middle and high schools in the rural Tan-Tan area of the Guelmim-Oued region.

These modest libraries will not only be resources for schools that are, as he says, “desperately in need of help,” but will also support a new training program for English teachers in the area and an extra-curricular circle of reading clubs across the schools, organized by Mr. Amhal. This program has been very successful elsewhere in the country, with our help.

We will supply books and other learning materials, chosen in collaboration with the teachers and with the knowledge of what has been successful in our other MLP projects. This area has a high rate of adult illiteracy, especially for women. Like all our literacy projects, this program will strongly benefit girls.

MLP BUDGET REQUEST: \$2000

Public English Library in Chouiter

Eight years ago, we developed a comprehensive English library for Chouiter High School outside Marrakech, in collaboration with the teacher Taoufyq Elmoussaoui. There were no libraries and no resources in English here before we came. The level of interest in the community has since exploded, and they are now asking for a community library in English. The town has offered to give a nice space for the library in their Community Center, and the local Teachers Association will manage the library and related study programs.

Mr. Elmoussaoui has asked us to help with books and other materials, using a list the local teachers have prepared based on earlier MLP projects. This resource will provide reading and learning materials for all ages, from young children to adults. With all our libraries of this scale, we add items like globes, games, and puzzles to create an engaging space.

MLP BUDGET REQUEST: \$3000

Anthologies for Morocco's "Emerging Voices"

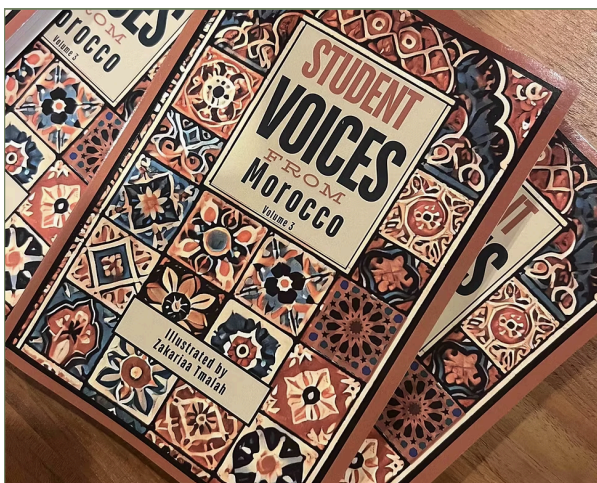
We currently have two writing projects in Morocco: (1) the 4th iteration of our MLP Short Story Competition for high school students throughout the country; and (2) the Indigenous Story Project. The writing is finished in both projects, and we now need to publish a book for each project, with editorial support. On the Morocco side, these programs are managed by Larbi Arbaoui, an English teacher with whom we have collaborated for many years.

The Short Story Competition was featured at the 2025 Marrakech English Book Festival in January, with young writers from rural locations speaking to an international audience. This is one of the most inspiring ways to ignite literacy (in any language!).

We funded these two writing projects earlier for the teaching, writing, judging, and (in the case of indigenous stories) collecting and filming portions. The funding we need now is to edit, develop, and publish the books, and we are a team experienced with publishing.

The Indigenous (Amazigh) Story Project

We began our Indigenous Story Project in 2024, with students from Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University in Fes interviewing their elders in the south and southeast of Morocco, to capture traditional wisdom and oral stories before they are lost. The stories were recorded in video, with the students then transcribing them in their native Tamazight. We will publish the stories in Tamazight in the Tifinagh script and Roman script, as well as in English. Tifinagh has ancient roots in North Africa and appears in rock art. The students, who are in the Tamazight Department of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, will also translate the stories into English.



From the 3rd MLP Short Story Competition

The new collection of stories, **from the 4th Competition**, is ready for final editing and publication. The theme is “civic responsibility,” with students writing about how to make a more civil society. At this point, the writers have already been honored at an event in Fes, the top three were awarded with prizes, and the teachers received stipends. Now we are seeking funding to turn the students’ accomplishments into a published anthology, which will need book design, layout, illustrations, printing, and distribution. This book will be distributed to libraries, classes, and individuals throughout the country and beyond.

FUNDING REQUEST (editorial, design, images, layout, printing): \$1500