



CORPSAFRICA/MAROC

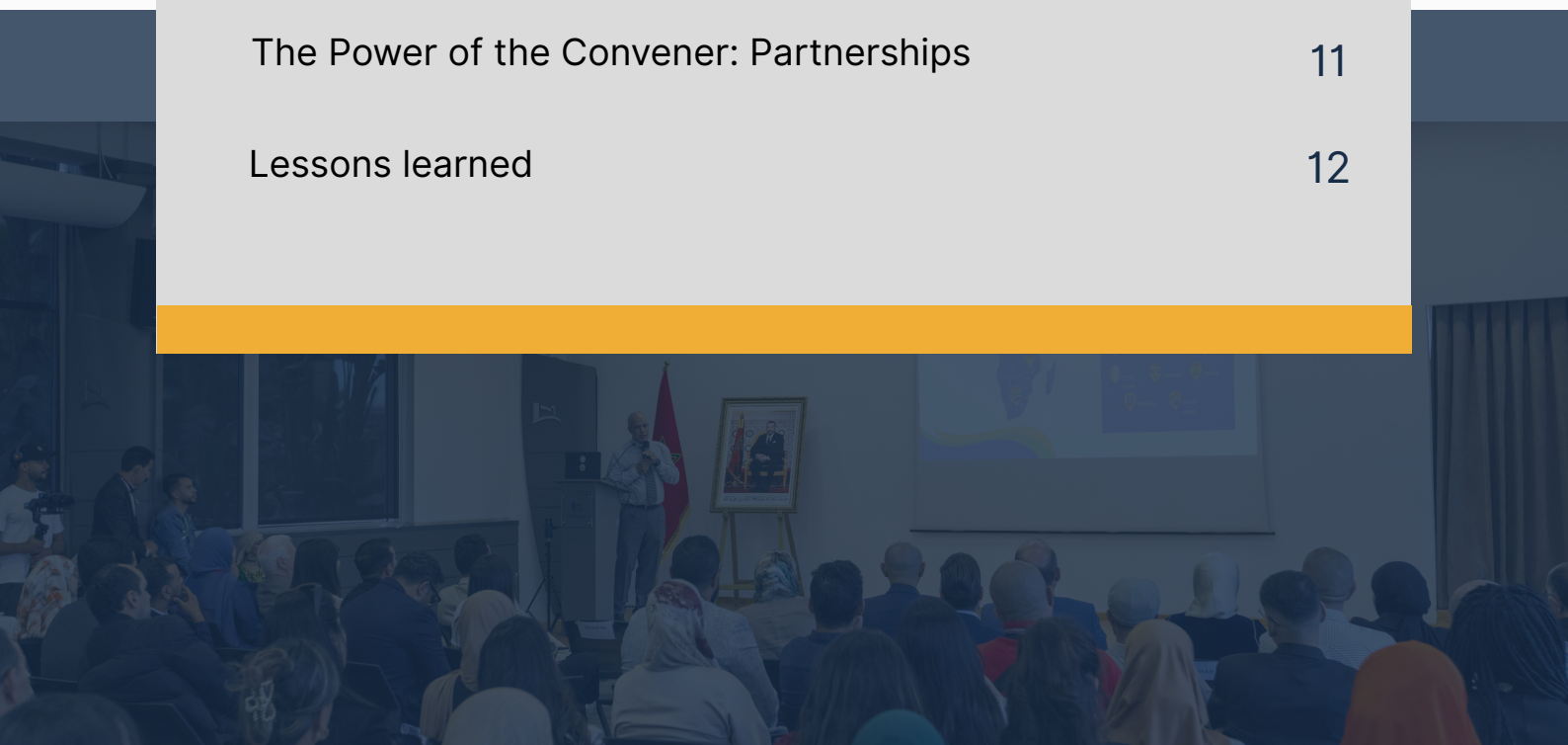
Al Haouz Earthquake Response Report

2023 - 2025



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About CorpsAfrica

Founded in 2011 by Liz Fanning, **CorpsAfrica** empowers young Africans to drive change from within by serving in rural, under-resourced communities. Launched in **Morocco** in 2013, the organization has since recruited, trained, and supported hundreds of Volunteers who live and work in villages—listening to local people, identifying their most pressing priorities, and implementing sustainable, community-led projects in sectors such as education, health, agriculture, water, environment, and economic development.

Now operating in eleven African countries, CorpsAfrica is cultivating a new generation of civic leaders—young people equipped with the skills, confidence, and vision to lead from the ground up and to shape Africa's future through inclusive, locally driven development.



CorpsAfrica recruits and trains passionate, civic-minded young Africans to live and serve for one year in rural communities, where they facilitate participatory, community-led development. Immersed in local life, Volunteers gain a deep understanding of community dynamics, assets, and challenges—enabling them to guide residents through the design and implementation of high-impact projects that address locally identified priorities. In doing so, they help strengthen community resilience while developing critical leadership, problem-solving, and professional skills that prepare them to shape Africa's future.





Mr. Omar Laafoura, President of CorpsAfrica/Maroc

“On the night of September 8, 2023, as CorpsAfrica/Maroc’s team was finalizing site assignments for our eighth cohort of Volunteers, the earth shook in the High Atlas mountains. The 6.9 magnitude earthquake affected five provinces and claimed 2,960 lives. The area close to the epicenter was well known to CorpsAfrica. For nearly a decade, CorpsAfrica Volunteers had been working in various communities throughout the area.

In the ensuing hours and days, the typically quiet mountain areas witnessed a flurry of activity. Alongside an impressive deployment of search and rescue efforts by the government, citizens and civil society organizations mobilized across the country to deliver emergency aid, food, and support to the affected populations.

Given our longstanding ties to the affected area, calls quickly emerged—from within and around the organization—for action. After consulting with provincial authorities and organizational leadership, it became clear that an immediate deployment would neither be appropriate nor effective. We therefore made the deliberate decision to pause, prepare, regroup, and retrain, carefully evaluating our capacity to make a thoughtful and impactful contribution to the recovery efforts.

Over the following two years, 73 young men and women would serve as CorpsAfrica Volunteers in 49 remote villages in the Al Haouz province. With courage and humility, they embedded themselves in affected communities, living alongside the people, and working with them to design and implement projects that addressed both urgent recovery needs and long-term development goals.

At the heart of this work was resilience—demonstrated daily by the communities that endured immense loss and yet found ways to rebuild, heal, and grow. Our Volunteers matched that resilience with compassion, service, and innovation. Together, they transformed challenges into opportunities—to restore livelihoods, rebuild local infrastructure, and lay the foundations for a more sustainable future.

None of this would have been possible without the strong partnerships that supported our response. We are deeply grateful to our national and international partners—Moroccan government institutions, civil society organizations, donors, and community associations—who generously invested their resources and expertise. Most importantly, these partnerships reflected a shared trust. And each partnership was built on the belief that lasting development must be collaborative and community-driven.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to a vision where youth play a leading role in supporting resilient, thriving rural communities. Over the past two years of response to the Al Haouz earthquake, our Volunteers have shown that, with the appropriate support, young men and women can rise to the most difficult challenges and deliver measurable, sustainable results.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Volunteers, staff, partners, and the local communities—and to the Mastercard Foundation, whose generous partnership has made our work possible. Together, we continue the journey of recovery and development—much like the winding roads to our mountain communities, it challenges us with patience and perseverance, yet leads us to places of hope, resilience, and shared accomplishment.”

A Complex Reality

The 2023 Al Haouz earthquake stands as one of the most devastating natural disasters in Morocco's recent history, impacting a vast and predominantly mountainous region spanning 53,135 square kilometers—an area roughly the size of Costa Rica or the U.S. state of West Virginia. The affected zone encompassed five provinces and one prefecture: Al Haouz and Chichaoua and the prefecture of Marrakech in the Marrakech-Safi region; Ouarzazate in Drâa-Tafilalet; Taroudannt in Souss-Massa; and Azilal in Béni Mellal-Khénifra. Al Haouz Province, home to the quake's epicenter, bore the heaviest toll.

For more than a decade, CorpsAfrica Volunteers have lived and worked alongside mountain communities in Al Haouz—listening to residents, understanding their priorities, and co-creating solutions to improve daily life. This deep, enduring presence meant that when the earthquake struck, CorpsAfrica was already a trusted and familiar partner. CorpsAfrica/Maroc staff knew the terrain, the people, and the cultural context, and shared that knowledge with their Volunteers—allowing them to respond with speed, sensitivity, and impact.

By building on relationships of trust and collaboration that had been forged over many years, CorpsAfrica's response was not only timely but deeply rooted in community needs—supporting both immediate recovery and the long-term resilience of the people of Al Haouz.



In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, Morocco witnessed an extraordinary surge of national solidarity. Civil society groups, local associations, and private citizens mobilized swiftly and effectively, delivering food, blankets, tents, and other essentials to isolated mountain communities. The government's rapid action was equally vital—restoring key infrastructure such as major roads and communication networks within days of the disaster.

But the true test came in the months that followed. The long, winding mountain roads—both literal and symbolic—revealed the immense complexity of recovery. The dispersed geography of the affected areas required deeply localized and carefully tailored responses that could address the specific realities of each community and its economy. What was needed was patient, community-centered engagement—the kind of work that CorpsAfrica was uniquely equipped to lead.

A Strategic Deployment Approach

The deployment of CorpsAfrica Volunteers to communities affected by the Al Haouz earthquake was a complex and delicate process that unfolded over the fall and winter of 2023. The context was defined by uncertainty—repeated aftershocks, limited access to remote mountain villages, and the need to carefully assess which sites were safe for Volunteers and when deployment could responsibly occur. From the outset, adaptability was essential. Conditions changed rapidly, requiring quick decisions and constant recalibration. Long-term planning often seemed impossible, so CorpsAfrica focused instead on intensive preparation and training—ensuring that when the time came, our teams were ready to act with confidence and care.

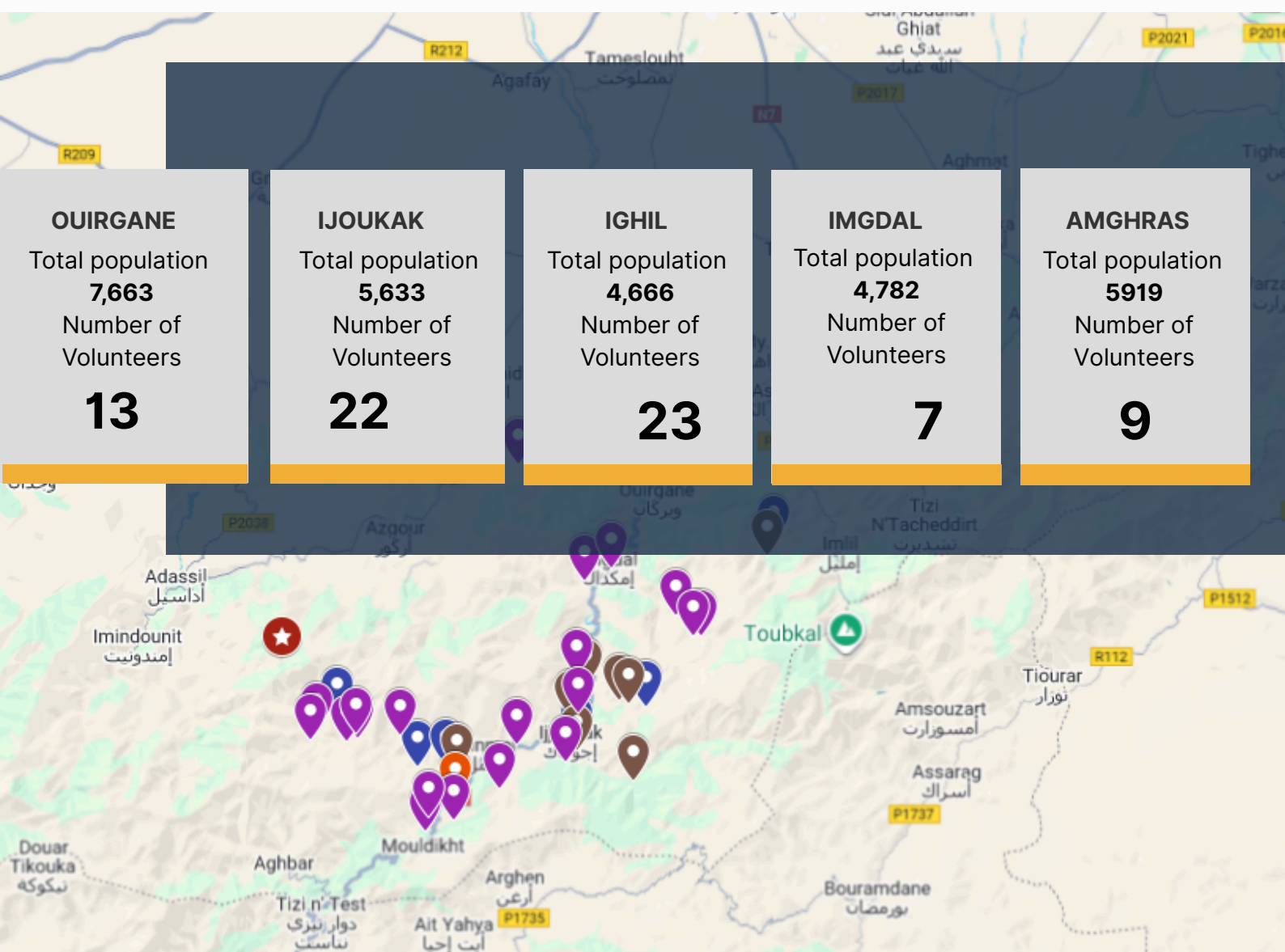
As an organization rooted in community-led development—not emergency relief—CorpsAfrica had to determine the right moment to engage. Launching an improvised humanitarian response would have been both unsafe and inconsistent with our mission. Our true value lay in the phase that followed: when communities began transitioning from crisis to recovery and rebuilding. Recognizing both our strengths and our limits was key to ensuring that our contribution was appropriate, effective, and sustainable.

With widespread devastation, limited resources, and serious safety concerns, deciding where Volunteers could have the greatest impact required thoughtful deliberation. The earthquake struck a vast and rugged region, where access to the most remote villages—the very places where CorpsAfrica’s model works best—was initially constrained. Our long-standing presence in Al Haouz Province, built through more than a decade of close collaboration with local authorities, proved invaluable. These trusted partnerships helped us navigate logistical and administrative challenges, identify priority communities, and position our Volunteers to integrate quickly and begin supporting locally driven recovery efforts.

Ultimately, the deployment process underscored the importance of strategic planning, local knowledge, and humility. By staying true to our mission and working hand in hand with local partners, CorpsAfrica responded in a way that was both responsible and impactful.

Perhaps most remarkable was the manner in which the Volunteers were deployed. In a virtually unparalleled approach, they lived alongside the people they served—under tents and temporary shelters—sharing the same daily realities and hardships. This deep solidarity resonated profoundly with local communities and leaders, laying the foundation for two years of intense, meaningful, and sustainable work to come.

Geographic Area of Intervention



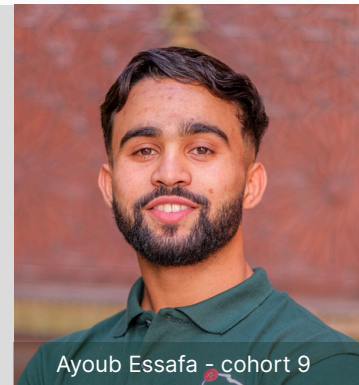
CorpsAfrica Volunteers lived side by side with earthquake survivors in temporary shelters, sharing their daily hardships and hopes. This deep immersion fostered trust, gave Volunteers a true understanding of local realities, and enabled them to co-create practical solutions. Guided by dignity, empathy, and solidarity, CorpsAfrica's response centered on people as well as projects—supporting recovery that was both human-centered and locally led. From the beginning, safe shelter and sanitation emerged as urgent priorities for both Volunteers and the most vulnerable families.





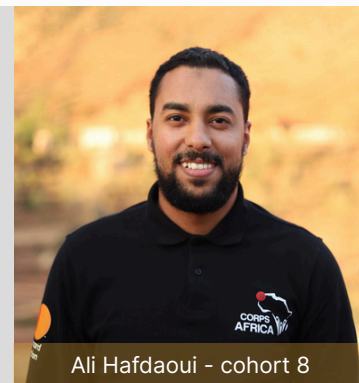
Volunteer Testimonials

"I'm Ayoub Essafa, and my time **as a CorpsAfrica Volunteer** in Targa, Ejoukak, was a journey of courage and purpose. I helped rebuild homes after the earthquake, stood with the villagers in solidarity, and taught English to children whose dreams rose above the ruins. Through sleepless nights and tough moments, I learned that true bravery is continuing with love, even in the face of fear. I leave Targa with deep gratitude and memories etched in my heart — a reminder that service truly matters."



Ayoub Essafa - cohort 9

"**Volunteering with CorpsAfrica** taught me that it's not about being a hero it's about learning, growing, and working alongside others to create real change. The journey brought challenges and doubts, but also deep connections, purpose, and lasting impact. I leave with gratitude, pride, and a heart forever shaped by the people and lessons I've found along the way."



Ali Hafdaoui - cohort 8

"What touched me most during **my time with CorpsAfrica** was the unity of the community. Despite the drought and the earthquake, people never lost faith. Working alongside them reminded me that true development begins with empathy and ends with empowerment. My CorpsAfrica service taught me resilience, teamwork, and how to lead with humility. I learned to listen deeply and work collaboratively to create real, lasting impact. It strengthened my confidence in community leadership and project management."



Soukaina Koumani - cohort 8

Volunteer Activities

Following the Al Haouz earthquake, CorpsAfrica Volunteers launched a series of activities to help restore normalcy, improve community well-being, and promote long-term resilience, benefiting **19,705** individuals from **49** villages and surrounding areas. This included **2,447** men and **3,088** women who directly participated in these activities.

- **Education and Youth Development:** **11,575** beneficiaries through diverse initiatives such as tutoring, literacy classes, arithmetic games, exam preparation workshops focused on mental health, IT/digital literacy, media training sessions, painting and scrabble workshops, and community events including sports activities and school bag distributions.
- **Health and Psychosocial Support** activities benefited **736** people, addressing women's health, post-traumatic stress, hygiene promotion, and stress management.
- **Agriculture and Environment:** **2,459** participants were engaged in practical training sessions on crop farming, seed distribution, tree planting and trimming, water conservation, and beekeeping. Planted **14,073 trees**, including almonds (4,475), olives (4,857), carobs (2,196), walnuts (1,200), figs (535), and aromatic plants (810) to stabilize soil, diversify crops, and create future income opportunities for farmers.





- **Renewable Energy and Infrastructure:** 2,126 people through the installation and training on solar energy systems for homes and irrigation, water pipeline projects, and construction.
- **Economic Empowerment and Livelihoods:** 1,257 beneficiaries took part in activities promoting income generation, including cooperative establishment and management, financial savings groups, cheese production, and more.
- **Community Engagement and Social Cohesion:** Reaching 1,552 people, activities such as social gatherings, cultural events, and support campaigns helped to strengthen local capacity and community solidarity.

Community-led Projects

2,757,311.18 MAD	Total investment
1,068,700.70 MAD	CorpsAfrica co-investment
1,032,730.40 MAD	Community co-investment
655,880.08 MAD	CorpsAfrica's partners' co-investment
14,135	Number of beneficiaries



Community-led projects advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)

Pipeline rehabilitation, wells, reservoirs, and solar-powered water systems restored access to safe water for 2,089+ people, reducing the burden on women and children while boosting agricultural productivity.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Infrastructure (SDG 9)

Road repairs, bridge construction, and wastewater system upgrades improved connectivity, sanitation, and safety for 2,200+ residents, reducing isolation and supporting access to schools and markets.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Education and Youth (SDG 4)

IT classrooms, sports grounds, and multipurpose learning spaces benefited 800+ learners directly and strengthened digital learning, recreation, and community engagement.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Agriculture and Women's Economic Empowerment (SDG 8)

Projects in alternative livestock feed, beekeeping, milling, almond planting, and women-led cooperatives reached 600+ farmers and women, lowering costs, improving food security, and creating new income streams.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Case Study #1: Livestock Program: Re-establishing a central economic activity in the Azzaden Valley

In the aftermath of the earthquake, CorpsAfrica Volunteers joined a livestock recovery initiative in the Azzaden Valley, led by the Idmaj Foundation in partnership with the Zakat Foundation of America. The project distributed 120 high-yield Alpine and Saanen goats to 50 vulnerable families in Tizyane, Tihiliwine, and Id Issa—an effort valued at more than 850,000 MAD. Designed to restore livelihoods, the initiative provided immediate relief and a pathway to sustainable income through milk production and breeding, with the potential to generate over 240,000 MAD annually for participating households. For families like Fatima's, a widow in Id Issa, these goats represent far more than economic support—they are a symbol of renewal, dignity, and resilience.



Case Study #2: Transforming Rural Agriculture with Cutting-Edge Technology



Anebdour is a small village of 145 residents, nestled deep in the High Atlas Mountains and lying at the very heart of the earthquake's devastation. Situated almost exactly between the epicenter and the town of Tlat N'Yaakoub, the community had already been severely affected by years of drought—conditions that the 2023 earthquake made even more dire. With families struggling to feed their livestock, two CorpsAfrica Volunteers, together with local residents, launched the Alternative Feeds Project, introducing azolla cultivation and sprouted barley as sustainable, low-cost livestock feed alternatives.

With a total investment of 130,491 MAD, the project achieved a 50% reduction in feed costs and a 90% decrease in water consumption. It is expected to produce 57,600 kilograms of feed annually—generating 144,000 MAD in revenue against 60,000 MAD in expenses, for a projected annual profit of 84,000 MAD and a two-year payback period. Beyond its economic success, the initiative has created five full-time jobs—three for women and two for men—and laid the groundwork for future livestock restoration and cheese production ventures.



The Power of the Convener: Partnerships



CorpsAfrica/Maroc coordinated with key partners—including **CARE International, High Atlas Foundation, SOS Children's Villages, Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association, Global Diversity Foundation, Nomad Volunteers, Fondation Orient-Occident Marocains Pluriel**, and others to deliver relief, psychosocial support, education, and sustainable recovery.

Partners provided essential resources, technical expertise, and co-funding, amplifying Volunteer efforts and extending reach into remote communities.





Lessons learned

Preparedness must be built in advance

Although the Post-Earthquake Recovery Training equipped Volunteers quickly, the urgency of the situation highlighted the importance of integrating disaster preparedness into all standard Pre-Service Training modules.

Geography and logistics are critical constraints

Mountainous terrain, damaged infrastructure, and aftershocks delayed deployment. Close collaboration with authorities and local communities proved essential in navigating these constraints.

Trust accelerates impact

CorpsAfrica's 10+ years of presence in Al Haouz meant that Volunteers were already welcomed as trusted partners. This familiarity gave legitimacy to their work, allowing recovery projects to be co-designed effectively.

Recovery is more than rebuilding

Communities needed not only physical reconstruction but also psychosocial support, livelihood restoration, and opportunities for youth and women to regain agency in community life.

Community-led approaches ensure ownership

The most successful projects were those co-created with villagers, with strong contributions of labor, resources, and leadership by the communities themselves.

Volunteers demonstrated remarkable resilience

Despite uncertainty, Volunteers adapted quickly, overcame language and cultural barriers, and served with empathy. Their personal resilience reinforced the collective recovery process.

Partnerships multiply impact

Collaboration with government institutions, NGOs, and international donors allowed CorpsAfrica to scale efforts beyond what Volunteers could achieve alone.



The Team

CorpsAfrica/Maroc's dedicated team brings together a rich diversity of professional backgrounds and experiences—including many who previously served as CorpsAfrica Volunteers in Morocco and across Africa. They are dynamic, purpose-driven individuals united by a deep commitment to youth empowerment, community-led development, and the transformative power of service.

Mohamed Mhmmoudi

Country Director

Mostafa Essalai

Training Officer

Lamyaa El Jamiy

Partnerships & Philanthropy Officer

Sara Sitr

Communications Officer

Redwane Hamma

M&E Coordinator

Asmaa Berkia

Alumni Support Officer

Siham El boukhari

Volunteer Liaison

Souhail Boukraa

Volunteer Liaison

Hajar Ait Hammou

Volunteer Liaison

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