



## **IB students experience the magic of Morocco**

Trekking through the Sahara on camels, sleeping out under the stars in the desert and working at an Oasis were just some of the amazing opportunities a group of Havering Sixth Form College students experienced during a trip to Morocco.

The 14 students, who are all studying on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, took part in the trip to fulfil the creativity, action and service unit of the well-respected two-year course.

They spent their first week at Hassi Labier, a small village in the Sahara, where they cleared irrigation channels and dug back the encroaching sands at the Oasis and also helped some of the elderly residents dig their gardens.

The students' personal tutor Nicola Diplock, who accompanied them on the trip, said: "This work was vital as the Oasis is where all the food is grown for the villagers, so without it they wouldn't survive. It was much appreciated by the village chief and all the residents who invited us to a wedding and tried to feed us fresh dates and figs as we worked!"

During the second week, the students went trekking. First they went into the Sahara on camels, staying overnight in a nomad Berber encampment with many sleeping out under the stars.

One student said: "This was an amazing and unreal experience."

The group got up early to watch the sunrise in the desert before trekking back to Hassi Labier and then journeying to Tinehir, where they began a four-day trek through the High Atlas Mountains.

Nicola said: "It was a difficult trek. We were accompanied and guided by nomads and we camped wild near their caves at night.

"The scenery was amazing, as were the people we met along the way, from Nomad families in the mountains who made us tea and tried to teach me how to spin goat wool, to the nomad guides who took us. Many of the students hadn't experienced this sort of trekking before, and to get over and through the mountains - especially the first huge high one - was a fantastic achievement for all!"

She added: "The students were very supportive of each other and very brave. The trip really helped them in their personal development as well as gaining an appreciation of world issues such as global warming and water shortages, and of how other cultures live."