

**REPORT II** Foreign business managers

# THESE FOREIGNERS WHO SUCCEED IN MOROCCO

THEY ARE ENTREPRENEURS, MANAGERS, INTERIOR DECORATORS OR JUST SIMPLY LOVERS OF MOROCCO. WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT THEY'RE FOREIGNERS. THEY CAME TO SETTLE UNDER THE MOROCCAN SUN, SOME TO ESCAPE THE EUROPEAN GRAYNESS, BUT MOSTLY TO SET UP A BUSINESS, TRY THEIR LUCK, OR TO START FRESH, IN THIS ELDORADO WHERE EVERYTHING SEEMS POSSIBLE, OR AT LEAST EASIER, AND WHERE MANY THINGS HAVE YET TO BE BUILT. BUT EACH PATH DIFFERS FROM THE NEXT. RELOCATION, EXTENSION OF A BUSINESS TO MOROCCO, A NEW START OR THE LAUNCHING OF AN ACTIVITY IN AN EXPANDING MARKET, THEY ALL SHARE THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT, THE TASTE FOR ADVENTURE AND A GREAT SUCCESS. ONE THING IS FOR SURE, ONCE THEY STEPPED FOOT IN MOROCCO, NOT ONE AMONG THEM EVER IMAGINED LEAVING ...

**Jack Rusenko,**

**Director of Global Education and President of George Washington Academy**

**American excellence made accessible to all**

The President of Global Education, an American educational non-profit NGO, and President of the prestigious George Washington Academy, is beholden to a history and career that are atypical at best. Moving from working in oil fields to promoting education in the Arab world is made in one easy step for this pioneer. It all began in the '70s, in the United States, while he was completing his studies in Petroleum Engineering. Being immersed in a field populated with many descendants of oil producing countries, he began to have frequent interactions with students from the Gulf. This first contact with the Arab culture fascinated him, and led him to learn its language and history, both of which he now has a fluent command. After a few years spent working on oil rigs, he chose to pursue activities that were more durable and meaningful, and began to explore his passion for education. This is where his story with Global Education, an American NGO, begins, whose objective is to bring together countries through the promotion of education.

### **What made you decide to move to Morocco?**

In the United States, I knew the founder of Global Education. This man, who had travelled the world, was all too conscious of the negative image that the media in the US has of Arab countries and which was the opposite of the warm reception and kind hospitality he had received from them. This is where his idea was born: to endeavor, through educational projects, to build a bridge between these two cultures. He therefore proposed that I canvass North Africa in search of an ideal location to open an office. I loved my work as an engineer, but the idea of working in education fascinated me. It was not money that drove me, but the idea of coming to Morocco and being able to contribute to its development. I arrived in 1992 under the banner of Global Education. The company gave me the freedom to research the local needs. Thus, Global Education's first project was to help bring and install the internet as a tool in Morocco.

### **How do you explain your success?**

My success comes from perseverance. I believe that the people who succeed are the ones who don't get discouraged when they are faced with obstacles. My motto is this: "obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off the goal". I quickly realized that Morocco had a very big need for primary and secondary education. Morocco is home to some very good foreign schools, but which are not very well adapted to the needs of the country, especially where languages are concerned. The idea of creating a school built on the foundations of American education, yet adapted to the Moroccan context, slowly began to form. The product of which was George Washington Academy, which opened in 1998, as a trilingual school that holds a high standard of quality, while still remaining affordable. Another important key to my success is my faith and my principles. These give me peace and confidence. And of course, my training as an engineer, which helps me to process information, evaluate problems, and find innovative solutions.

### **Do you think it's easier or harder for a foreigner to succeed in Morocco?**

I've been a foreigner my whole life in Morocco, so it's a bit hard for me to answer that! In the field of education, and even more so in the non-profit field, the competition is not as intense as that of the business world. I've had the privilege of working with government officials that were always very welcoming to me. That being said, social work or development projects are always welcomed. I also feel though, that the privileged relations that exist between Morocco and the United States make it easier for Americans to integrate here. Of course, everything also depends on attitude. One of our school values, integrity, is something that I hold very close to my heart. I always try to behave fairly and equally in all circumstances, both public and private. That is what inspires respect.