

CI MAG

11th edition

October 18, 2016

Check out our best
Moments

2016 Alumni

Once a Connect
Institute member

Always a Connect
Institute member!



EMY
Empowering Moroccan Youth

Connect
Institute



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The “It’s not mine” rule

The other day, I was walking down the street along with my mom when suddenly a little boy, around 7 years old, run past us and stopped in front of a high school’s building; he pulled the zipper of his pants and peed right then and there. I was both outraged and disgusted by that act. I turned to my mother and asked: Mom, did you see what that boy did? And to my surprise she answered: «I saw it. It was his mom who told him to do that. I saw her talking to him and pointing towards the school’s building».

Whether you go to a primary school, a university, a public institution, or even wonder in the streets, you will definitely encounter a similar situation to the one I have described or come across one of these sights-if not all of them- : trash, lack of cleanliness, destroyed material, dirty walls, and the list goes on and on.

The reason behind all of this is the lack of what the Oxford dictionary defines as “a duty to deal with or take care of sb/ smth, so that you may be blamed if sth goes wrong” or what we simply call: responsibility, one of those words that look simple yet carry a lot of complex meanings underneath them. The duty part is not the only one though, according to the same dictionary, it should be done “without being told to and being willing to take the blame if it had gone wrong”.

Responsibility, in this case, is not just a set of actions performed to protect public properties and belongings, it is way more than that. Being responsible is what gives you that sense of belonging and makes you a productive individual that craves not only protecting what he considers his, but also works towards improving it and making it better.



Fatima Zahra El Hafa

The journey

When I think about the highlight of the year 2016, I automatically think of Connect Institute. This unique school that shifted me to the next level and made me change my perception of life 180 degrees.

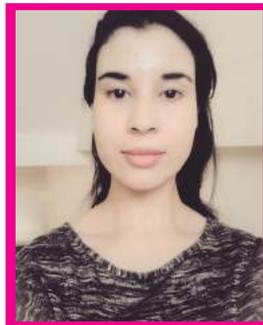
When I applied for Connect Institute, I thought that it was a school like all the other schools out there with their big promises of teaching you the skills you need to get the job of your dreams. But when I went there for the acceptance interview something changed; I felt that Connect Institute is different like nothing I have ever seen or experienced before. My feelings did not let me down. I ended up learning things nobody has ever taught me before. I learned to think freely and keep my mind open instead of locking it up with undeniable truths. Of course the process was not easy and it took me quite a while to step outside of my comfort zone. Well I am the kind of person who takes baby steps rather than giant leaps. That is just me.

Now once I got outside of my little bubble I immediately fell into the agitation zone. That is when I started changing and adopting a new attitude but my old habits like procrastination and self-discouragement in addition to my not so encouraging entourage kept hunting me. I felt like I was on the top of a high-rise building but I was way too scared to jump. Not that great of a feeling trust me.

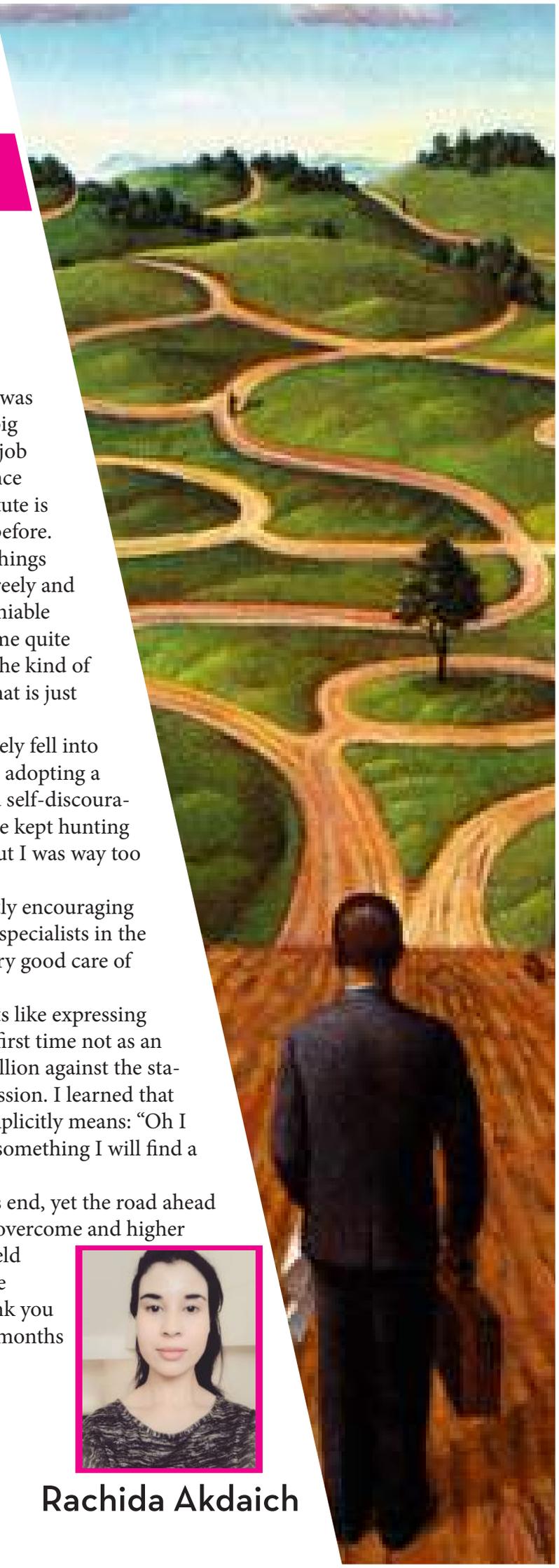
This is when Connect Institute interfered by constantly encouraging me to make that jump. Mr. Taha, Fatima and Sanaa are specialists in the art of pushing people to their limits and they took a very good care of me. I ended up making that jump and I am glad I did.

Many things changed afterwards. I acquired new habits like expressing myself with no fears. I said “No” to my parents for the first time not as an act of disrespect and disobedience but as an act of rebellion against the status quo. I fell in love with writing and it became my passion. I learned that each time I tell myself that I cannot do something it implicitly means: “Oh I am just hiding behind excuses because if I really want something I will find a way to get it”.

My journey at Connect Institute has almost come to its end, yet the road ahead of me is way long and difficult. I still have struggles to overcome and higher edges to jump from, but I know that I acquired the shield and the sword to cut through them. And since we value gratitude in Connect Institute, I want to say this: “Thank you Connect Institute, you changed me within numbered months and for that I am eternally grateful”.



Rachida Akdaich





WE ARE ALL WONDER WOMEN!



Girl power in Connect Institute

For many Moroccan young women, such as me, it is hard to find strong and independent female role models in our entourage while growing up. However, a year ago, that changed when I joined connect institute as a participant in the EMY program. Fatima Matousse and Sanaa Belabbes, the staff members in Connect Institute, are two beautiful, smart, and kind women who have been a great support to me as well as to the rest of the participants. Watching their brilliance at work and their thirst for learning was a big inspiration to me. It encouraged me to set higher goals for myself. I was also blessed to have Mss. Rosalia as the ACTING and LIFE sessions' facilitator. She taught all of us how to act and write, but most importantly she taught us to embrace our imperfections and to always stay true to who we are. Apart from the facilitators and staff, the female FEED guests who had successful non-

traditional career paths were a great motivation and inspiration to me. Whether it's Ahlem B, who left her job as a manager to pursue her passion as a writer, Or Monique Quesada, who went from being a flight attendant to becoming the U.S. general consulate in Marseille, these women are a living proof that females are capable to lead and make real change beyond what's traditionally done. I also have to mention the other female participants in Connect Institute. They are a talented group of young women who are never scared to express their thoughts, take initiative and lead. Having the chance to work on different projects with them allowed me to boost my creativity and challenge myself by constantly trying new things. Mentors can make real impact on young adults' lives by allowing them to see first-hand what the fruits of hard work and determination are.



Maria Joudani

Be a warrior, not a king

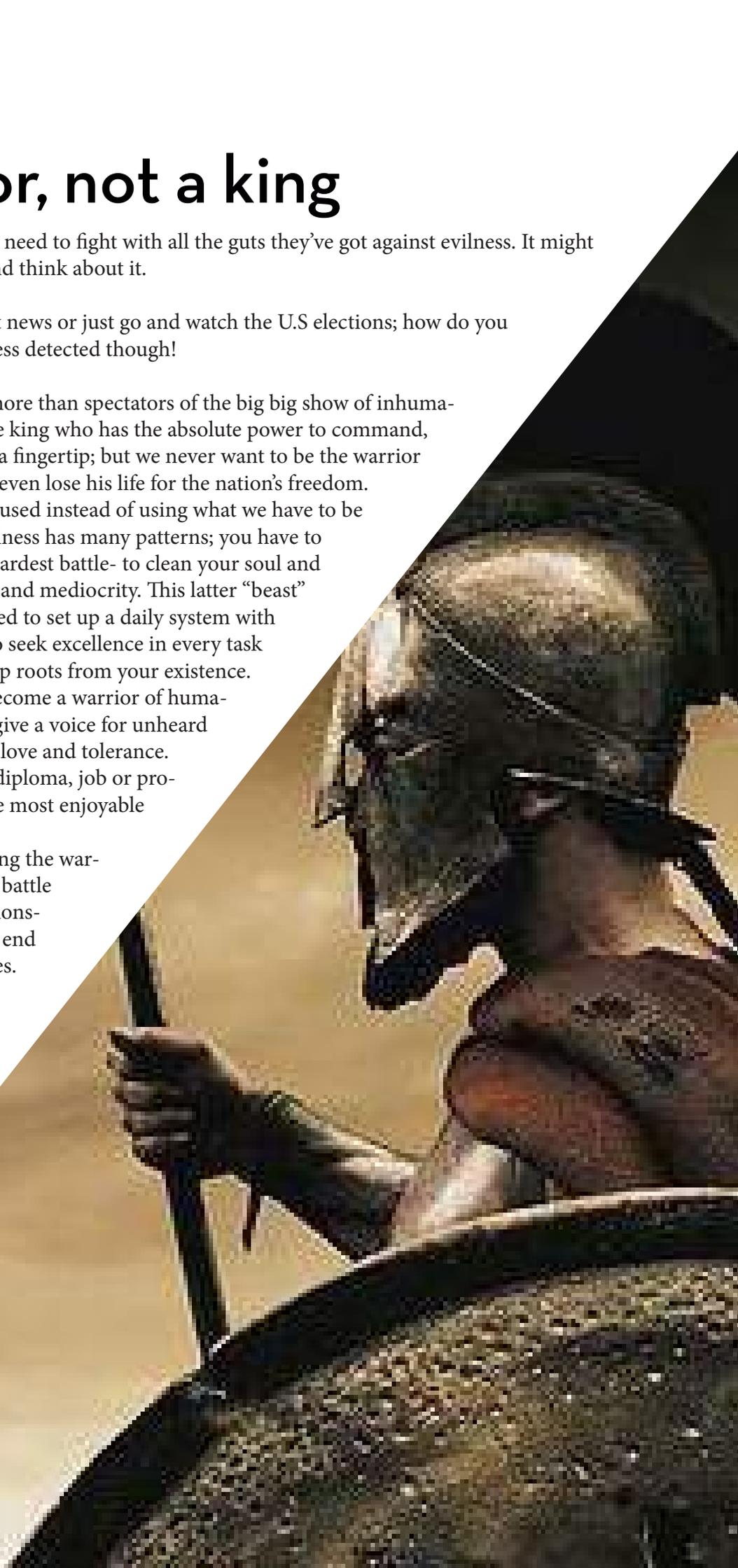
Life is a hefty battle where humans need to fight with all the guts they've got against evilness. It might sound boring, but take a second and think about it.

Turn on your TV, read Syria's latest news or just go and watch the U.S elections; how do you feel? Happy? Optimistic? No evilness detected though!

Most of the time, we are nothing more than spectators of the big big show of inhumanity. We love playing the role of the king who has the absolute power to command, who can get whatever he wants by a fingertip; but we never want to be the warrior who fights dangerously and might even lose his life for the nation's freedom. In fact, we're getting used to being used instead of using what we have to be useful beings. The fight against evilness has many patterns; you have to beat the monster within yourself-hardest battle- to clean your soul and heart from stereotypes, judgments and mediocrity. This latter "beast" is powerful and dangerous; you need to set up a daily system with robust "weapons" to deal with it, to seek excellence in every task you do as a way to shove off its deep roots from your existence. When the inner battle ends, you become a warrior of humanity, you can help others, you can give a voice for unheard hearts, and you are a chandelier of love and tolerance. Hence, the other battles: getting a diploma, job or promotion, become the easiest and the most enjoyable moments to live. You're the king of your life, but being the warrior is the ultimate path to win the battle of LIFE. The war- clash of civilizations- outside is constantly on, it'll surely end when we win our battles, inner ones. May we live as warriors until last breath. AMEN!



Oumaima Fathi





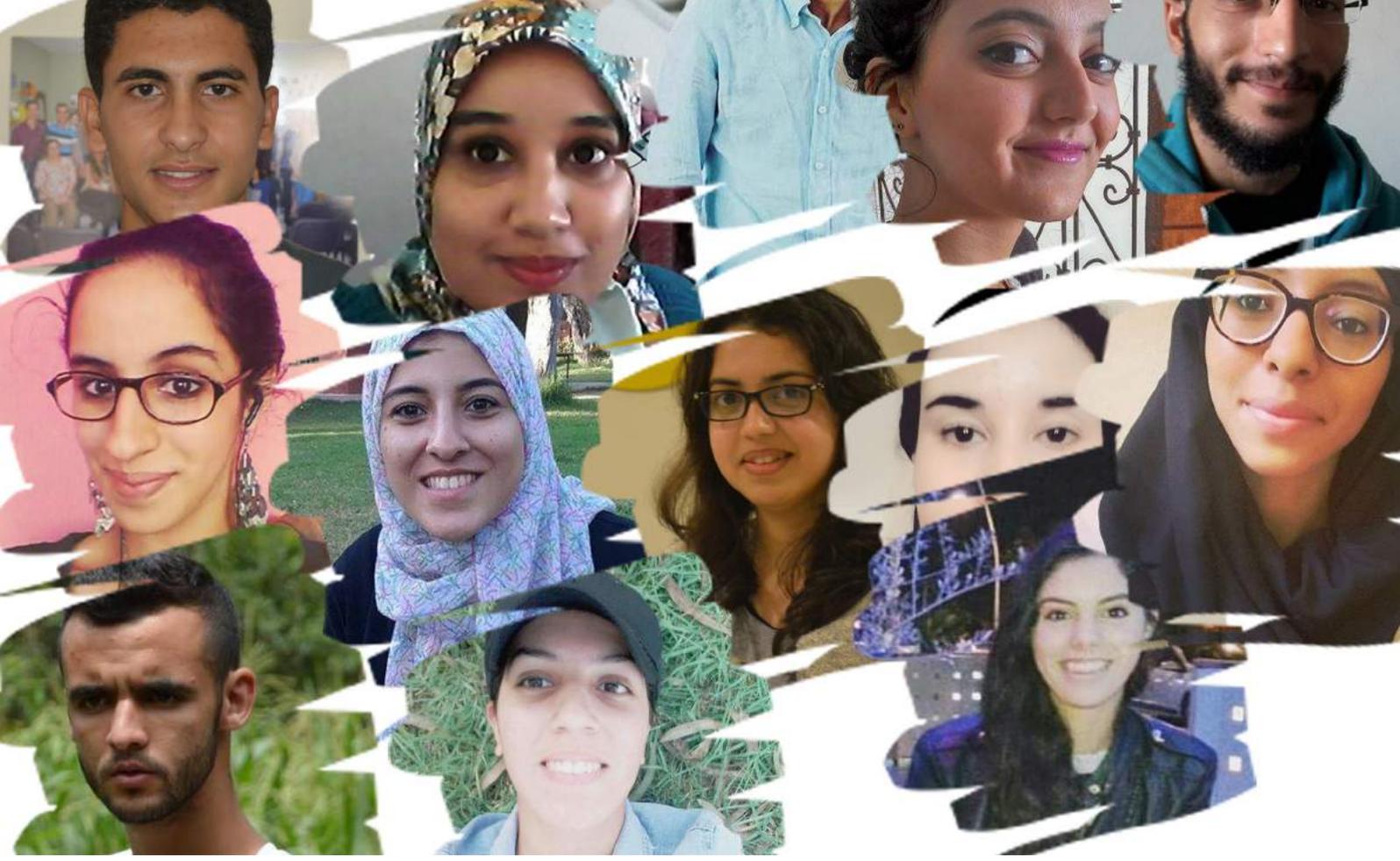
Des copies

De nos jours, je sens que notre société reflète une vérité unie, unique, tout le monde se ressemble, tout le monde réfléchit de la même façon, tout le monde a les mêmes ambitions, les mêmes tendances, les mêmes habits, le même style ... Des copies qui répètent les mêmes idées conçues à l'avance par des gens qu'on ignore et dont on ignore les motifs. «Tu dois faire ceci, de cette façon, à ce rythme, ayant cette vision ...» «Non, mais pousse-toi un peu, laisse-moi respirer.» Voyons un peu !! Si cela donnait des résultats positifs, c'est bien. Des résultats sur le bien-être de l'être humain, de la nature, des animaux? Je n'ai encore rien senti. Regardons autour de nous !! Oui, cela ne marche pas, cela n'a abouti en rien à créer un dynamisme au sein de la société, à permettre une société saine, avec des éléments sains qui vivent leur vie selon leurs envies et leurs principes. Il est temps d'avoir un peu plus de courage et de sortir de la pensée unique qui tue l'être humain.

No one wants to be just another brick in the wall.



Latifa Bella



Once a Connect Institute member, Always a Connect Institute member!

13 months and 15 days: that's how long most of us have been in Connect Institute. During that period, we made new friends, we built teams and managed them, we met national and international figures, we worked on projects, we delivered presentations, we had debates during which we practiced our critical thinking and problem solving skills, we planned and managed events, we spoke in front of large groups, we pitched our ideas, we learnt the true value of hard work, and the list goes on and on. Today, we want to share with you, dear reader, some of our best moments and experiences that led us to learn the skills mentioned above as well as unleash our potentials and trust in our abilities.



Ayoub El Mouden



It was a Monday evening during one of DARDACHA's sessions, the subject was about Mozilla's Open Badges, a new system that offers a better solution for skills and achievements' recognition and that is aimed to replace the traditional paper certificates. By the end of the discussion, the brightness and originality of the Open Badges idea has already drew our attention and therefore I, along with other friends, proposed to take in charge the implementation of this new system at Connect Institute. And to respect our naming tradition within the CI, we called it the "ciBadges".

Our first attempts are still fresh in my memory. At the beginning

we had to model the whole activities running inside the institute in order to set up a badging constellation. Also, back then, no one of us was familiar with the technical aspects of the project so we had to wear the self-taught cap and learn how to make a website all by ourselves. Of course we had other services as an alternative to the coding headaches but our willingness to set the bar high made us pick the hard path.

Sure life was never a straight line, and ciBadges wasn't either. That takes me to the day when we found out that our website was shut down due to some server infections, an incident that pushed us to rebuild the platform all over again. Frankly, I can only be proud of the experience so far. It was as fun as it was challenging and more importantly it was an opportunity for us to learn while doing and to live the process of developing a project with purpose.

Ikbale Bouziane



Attending Farida Belyazid's master class on how to write a good scenario is one of the best memories that will stick with me until the end of my life. After learning more about her life, the different types of scenarios that exist, and the importance of communicating one's ideas through a cinematographic product, we were asked to write a synopsis for a story that we would like to turn into a movie. I had this unique chance of writing a synopsis, for the first time in my life and discussing it individually with one of the most prominent, feminist, and leading figures in the Moroccan cinema industry.



Fatima Zahra A. Haba



If you used to know the "me" from before Connect Institute, then you would surely know that I wasn't a teamwork kind of person. I couldn't bear to work in a team, let alone manage one! So you can probably imagine how freaked out I was when I had to manage the ciMAG team; the group who's responsible for creating our institute's monthly e-magazine.

The first edition took us around two months to work on it: we couldn't choose which pieces to publish, which ones to edit, and we were having countless unfruitful meetings. Who am I kidding? I couldn't even bring my teammates to agree on a meeting date and I was struggling to make everyone accomplish their tasks before the deadline. But now, after succeeding into publishing 10 editions, I can proudly and confidently say that this experience helped me awaken and explore the true leader in me, a discovery for which I will forever and always be thankful



Nahla A. Baqia

LET GIRLS LEARN, une initiative du gouvernement américain, lancée par la Première Dame Michelle Obama, pour promouvoir l'éducation des jeunes filles dans le monde en leur offrant un environnement favorable et de qualité pour qu'elles arrivent à réaliser leurs rêves et leurs aspirations.

En juin dernier, et grâce à Connect Institute, j'ai eu l'occasion de faire partie des 24 filles sélectionnées pour participer à ce programme et vivre une expérience hors pair. C'était une occasion pour mettre en œuvre toutes les compétences que j'ai acquises à Connect Institute qui m'a aidé à me libérer de plusieurs handicaps et d'être plus épanouie. J'y ai appris comment écouter les autres, les respecter et être à la hauteur de leurs attentes.

Pendant les 3 jours, j'ai eu l'opportunité de faire des rencontres merveilleuses et extraordinaires. J'ai rencontré the first lady of USA Michelle Obama accompagnée des deux actrices : la diva Meryl Streep et la merveilleuse Freida Pinto. Une conversation riche et motivante qui restera pour toujours une source d'inspiration pour moi.



Anouar Nait Elhaj- Ali

What better example to the concept of "Connecting" than having two people from two continents and two different backgrounds playing a musical piece called "Blue Bossa" once written by "Kenny Dorham"? AGORA, the biannual conference event organized by Connect Institute succeeded in doing so.

"Blue Bossa?" I asked. "Oh yes!" He replied. Then words were to be no more and musical notes were brought to life.

Philip Holzapfel, the political adviser of the European Union in Morocco, was one of the best trumpet players I have ever jammed with. His improvisation and solos were from another world.

I believe everybody has something to say musically, consequently, playing with him was not a struggle but more of a natural act of sharing.

This has been one of the best experiences I have had at Connect Institute so far.



Yasmine Boujebaoui

Pouvoir exprimer mes idées librement et avoir un échange direct avec Mme Marie Françoise Marie-Nelly - Directrice du Département Maghreb et Malte, Moyen-Orient et Afrique du Nord de la banque mondiale, ainsi que Mme Joumana Cobein - Responsable de la Société financière internationale pour le Maghreb , je me permet de dire que ce ne m'a été permis qu'à Connect Institute ! C'était dans une ambiance conviviale et positive ornée d'une écoute active, que j'ai pu échanger avec ces deux intéressantes dames qui nous ont visitées le 29 janvier 2016. Concernant mon expérience à Connecte Institute, je leur ai parlé du fait d'un nouveau concept auquel j'ai adhéré durant le FEED de M. Marouane Hermach : l'entreprenariat. Et comme quoi j'avais une vision limitée de mon future : postuler à un emploi et travailler pour le compte d'une entreprise. Attentives au moindre détail que j'ai dit, elles m'ont posé des questions pour ainsi entretenir un enrichissant échange avec moi. De cet échange je remémore une question qui m'était très cruciale : « Et tu comptes travailler après ou entreprendre ? »



Latita Bella



My world used to be so small, full of barriers, unnecessary rules, and preconceived paths. I needed someone to show me that it's okay to be different, to be brave, to speak up, to refuse given ideas, and to be me. For me, Connect Institute isn't just a school, or a youth center, or an institution; Connect Institute is hope. I needed strength and power, I needed to know how big the world is and how many options life can give me, and I needed to have the tools to face life and to embrace life.

Now, I'm starting to have all this. Now, I'm getting ready to live. I worked on so many different projects, videos, scenario writing, song writing, and theater. I managed teams, I worked respecting deadlines, I spoke on public, I pitched ideas, I sung in front of people... Looking back at all this makes me acknowledge the advancement I'm making and be aware of the amount of work I should keep doing to always surpass myself and achieve things. One of the things I really learned in Connect Institute, being surrounded by strong, ambitious, accomplished people, is to always surpass your limits, always surpass yourself.

Rachida Akdaich



When I think of my favorite activity to do in Connect Institute, I immediately think of the famous weekly exercise [p+100+20]. The "p" refers to the number of pages we have read during the week. As for the 100, the staff of Connect Institute sends us an article, a quote or a picture to talk about in no more than 100 words. And finally the 20, which is a video each one of us films where he or she expresses her thoughts, feelings about something, anything really.

The exercise is unique because it combines reading, writing and oral expression. Thanks to it, my communication skills have known a drastic change in both written and spoken form. I now can express myself with more freedom and clarity which I couldn't do before.



Mohamed Douhate

Je suis membre du programme EMY à Connect Institute depuis une année, riche en apprentissage, rencontre, et découverte, mais si je devais vous parler d'une expérience qui m'a vraiment plus et durant laquelle j'ai beaucoup appris, je choisirais : L'organisation de l'événement d'Agora 5.

J'ai été chargé de m'occuper des invités, mais ce qu'il faut savoir, c'est que je n'étais pas préparée en termes d'organisation et que c'était ma première fois. Je devais distribuer les invitations, passer des coups de fils, proposer aux invités de faire du covoiturage, leur expliquer le programme, tout en répétant mon rôle dans la pièce de théâtre que nous devons présenter.

Enfin bref, j'ai appris à mieux m'organiser, à mieux gérer mon temps de travail et grâce à tout ce que j'avais déjà appris avec Connect Institute, ça m'a aidé à me sentir à l'aise même dans les moments stressant, donc à être apte à faire de mon mieux pour gérer la situation.

Agora 5 a été un événement réussi.

Maria Joudani



When I first joined ciPLAY, our theatre troupe, it was out of curiosity and I didn't think I would ever enjoy it as much as I did.

When we started meeting weekly to rehearse for our first show, I was slowly appreciating the bonds we began to build among us as team members and I admired each one's determination to put the group's best interest above theirs. All this had pushed me to sign in to participate in the second ciPLAY show, not just as an actress, but also as a co-writer and co-director. An experience that allowed me to put my creativity into test and to apply the things I've learned during ACTING classes with Rosalia and the screenplay writing masterclass with Farida Benlyazid.

There is nothing more rewarding than being on stage with your teammates after months of practice and finally being able to present your product to an audience. Those moments with ciPLAY are memories I will always be proud of.



Majda Nouri



When I first discovered Connect Institute, I knew that my missing part was there; the space was unique and my Connect Institute's mates were different from the people I used to know. All these circumstances motivated me to create something unusual in my daily life, or at least, try to. It pushed me to use my brain more, to think seriously, and to change my lifestyle. Yoga was one of the things I discovered since I joined Connect Institute.

Before, I used to believe that Yoga was only beneficial for old people. It took me about 2 months and a half to become conscious about its importance. I didn't hesitate to share, verbally, my new interest with my colleagues and their reaction really surprised me. Everyone encouraged me to concretize my ideas and to make them real.

At the very beginning, I was so afraid of failure and not being up to their expectations. I remember very well the day I dared and performed. It was on my birthday, I had double energy. We were outside of the institute's local; on one of those trips we do every month, where we meet the nature and fresh air. And guess what? That day we were about 20 persons, at 400m height from the surface of the sea. The sun was shining and we were looking at an amazing view of the whole city, even if the tray was not really comfortable for practicing the Yoga postures and meditating, this first experience was very motivating to me. I felt a pure energy circulating in me and positive vibes all around. Yoga simply touched my soul and connected it with my body, emotions, and consciousness. It is a gift I offer to myself whenever I want. I cannot ask for better than a community who brings out what is best in me and an atmosphere that always pushes me to go forward.

Oumaima Faith



I'm a participant of the EMY program. It's been almost a year since I joined Connect Institute, the place where I had plenty of great experiences and enduring moments. I was honored to meet Mr. the ambassador Dwight Bush twice. We had a very special discussion with him about our daily life and problems as youth. Mr. the Ambassador was happy to be with us; he gave us much advice and encouraged us to work harder to achieve our dreams whatever the obstacles are

Najat Ayaou

I have always been a nature lover; I loved to be around mountains and landscapes. With the creation of ciAIR at Connect Institute, I had the opportunity to share my experience by planning and organizing one day trips into wild nature with the help of another participant at the institute.

Before announcing the date of the trip, my friend and I tended to go to the unknown and find a way to a landscape for the trip, making sure the place is safe and having all the possible information that we need to make it easy for us and for the others.

I loved the interaction that was between me and my partner, the trust and love of nature that we both share, because these things were very essential to me. All the trips that I've experienced with the other members made me recognize a lot of things, like the sense of cooperation, the interaction and the harmony between us, the love and the mixed feelings of happiness and tiredness. It was really a blessing for me to be among such people. It made me learn and experience teamwork, leadership and also to love what I do.

I really appreciate the opportunity Connect Institute offered me; it's something that I will always be thankful for.

Tithan Nini

During the past months at Connect Institute, my personality improved a lot, and the same goes for my guitar skills. I had the chance to perform in front of the U.S ambassador and I was so happy and proud.

I think this experience helped me discover who I am and what I need. It pushed me to work on being a better person, be more responsible, and more honest. I still haven't got to the final point which is the point of satisfaction, but I know what I need, and I think for a young person this is what matters most. I know that I need to read more, write more, open up to the world, learn new things, discover new places, meet different people, and make mistakes.

Rachid Akdim

كونكت انستتوت كانت بالنسبة ليا واحد المتنفس فين نشارك التجربة ديالي فالبرمجة، ملي كتوفر ليك الاجواء والضرور الملائمة والتشجيع الكافي انك دير واحد الحاجة معمرك فكرتي انك قادر ديرها. ملي فهمت الفلسفة ديال المؤسسة ذات الثقة ديالي فراسي ودرنا ساعة ديال البرمجة مع الزملاء، واحد الحدث فين تعلموا اساسيات البرمجة، وكانت فرصة ليا نتعلم كيفاش ندوز واحد المعرفة عندي لناس خرين باغين اتعلموا ليها

