

أنبارنا

ثقافية - اخبارية - متنوعة

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My disability was a catalyst for my success...

«My disability was a catalyst for my success when there were no other ways to succeed». Those were the words of Amina, a woman from the countryside of Idlib, describing the combination of her sufferings and success in weaving wool.

Amina Hmedi is a 23-year-old woman who was born with a disability: a cerebral palsy that resulted from lack of oxygen. Despite her disability that caused her much suffering, she went for her life and moved forward just like all other people. She enrolled in school, but this didn't last long due to the numerous difficulties that would face her moving to school and back from it. Thus, she dropped out when she was just a sixth grader. Thanks to the support she received from her family and close friends she was able to overcome the negative impact of that phase of her life. Now, she doesn't isolate herself any longer, as she prefers to meet up with her relatives and make friends with new people.

Deep down inside her she always believed: «I mustn't give up to the disable part of me. I have a future to make, and this future shall be based on the creative part of me». At the age of 19, Amina started attending trainings on skill development like nursing, handcrafts, and weaving wool, which was her favorite. She believed that weaving suits her physical condition best as she doesn't need to make an effort or move a lot. Her mother played a great role in supporting and encouraging her, and within a short time Amina was weaving wool perfectly.

Amina made a profession of her skill. She weaves some nice wool clothes and sells them, she supports herself with the money she earns. Her disability turned into creativity, and participating in the weaving display was her greatest achievement.

Amina hopes she can improve herself and her work more. She dreams of being the manager of a center that sponsors the skilled capable, (people with special needs). She also aspires for being a professional trainer who trains this group of women on weaving wool to prove to the whole society that disability lies in the mentality some people have not in the type of body they live within.



Ara.com

What do you think are the challenges that face women in terms of holding leadership position?

We posted this question on our Facebook page with the aim of being familiar with people's views on women's presence in leadership positions at social, administrative, and political levels.

The Syrian society has contradicted views (for vs. against) women's labor and participation in all aspects of life. We received tens of different responses to our question. Some of those responses were aggressive refusing even the idea of directing such a question, while others were concentrated on the challenges that face women's participation due to social customs and traditions, the surrounding circumstances, in addition to women's poor potentials and capabilities.

The followings are some of the responses we received:



«I believe that cultural beliefs and stereotypes are the reasons why women can't hold leadership positions in our society».

Zukaa



«many factors stand against women's participation in leadership positions such as the society itself, abilities, capabilities, and circumstances».

Hiyam



«all you aim at is spoiling our conservative society. Our women mustn't work».

Muhammad



«women's participation in leadership positions means that they will have to meet with men, work with men, and be with men in the same place, and thereby face problems of sexual harassment. So, I believe that women shouldn't be involved in such work».

Hiba



// “The Capable” and Social Marginalization

(An organization is in need of a woman with special needs to be a part of its staff), this was the form of an advertisement that we have never seen before, in spite of the wide spread of many CSOs in north Syria with many specialties: (relief, education, development, psychological support, empowerment, and others). People with special needs of both sexes make an integral part of the society and are citizens, who have the right to enjoy citizenship to the fullest just like other individuals on the same homeland, regardless of the fact that they are destined to live with special physical needs. Yet, the majority of women with special needs preserve their sense of determination and live just like other women. Some of them are married with children, and they do their house chores normally. Some others continued their studies and graduated from the prestigious universities. And some others work on improving their skills in terms of technology, business, culture, etc.

Women with special needs exist everywhere in the world, and very few of them have given up to the reality of being «partially» disable.

I witnessed a great diversity of female trainees in one of the training centers, i.e. some women are physically healthy while others have special needs. In the (Music Section), there was a woman on a wheelchair, and she was a talented violinist. Next to her was a pianist with an amputated leg. Both of those two women were playing magical music. The melody reflected how passionate they were, and I couldn't stop watching how smoothly and perfectly their hands and fingers were moving on the instruments.

I moved to the (Design and Montag Section) where I saw one of the women sitting in front of a computer using one hand to work on it and apply the skills she acquired, and right next to her was her little daughter. That scene was a clear reflection of human's will which can't be obstructed by a wheelchair by an amputee.

Those were women practicing their everyday life just like other humans do. No matter how difficulties and challenges they have to deal with, they will always seek for following their passions, improve themselves, and complete their studies. Compared to physically healthy women, we can see that women with special needs have strong will and determination, and



they are capable of overcoming the difficult situations they have to counter. Those women came to the same training center to acquire the same skills. Women who lost the ability to walk, found themselves other ways of mobility, and thereby gathered in one place with the physically healthy women. It didn't matter how they came to that place. What mattered was that they could make it.

Those women have proved to the society that disability lies in the mentality we have and the behavior we adopt. It's our personalities reflect what we really are, not the kind of body we have.

It's true that people with special needs are spread all over the world

showing great competencies in different specialties. Yet, the society is still treating them with prejudice promoting the stereotype that this component, (especially women), are unable to do anything. At the same time, we see many healthy women with no amputees or disabilities just sitting at home and achieving no success.

We, as individuals and labor institutions, have to work on the promotion for engaging this group of women, (The Capable), in the society and giving them the opportunity to be a part of the labor and production process in order to eliminate the stereotype that picture them as being disabled and in need of constant help. All we have to do is build their capacities and provide proper chances for them, and this in turn will result in a having a society rich with productive and creative ideas.

Written by Su'ad

In the opinion column of our paper, we publish articles that reflects views of authors who wrote them and necessarily views of Women Support Unit.

Women's Initiatives



Athr Alfarasha (Butterfly Impact), sub-center of Women Now Development Organization, implemented a package of trainings and initiatives for the women in Marea, with the result of empowering women's role in teamwork and society development, in addition to helping them share their views and ideas.

Each initiative started with 10 women who underwent several trainings with the aim of preparing them for teamwork, wise management and enjoying the spirit of one team. The trainings were concentrated on: governance, digital security, conflict resolution and community organization. The idea of the first initiative emerged from the dire need of the society and the families for a safe environment within which children can play peacefully. The targeted place was a poorly-equipped park in the city. The floor of the park used to be full of stones and spiny grass, damaged rides,

and old seats. This urged the women to take the initiative and start working on the park by measuring its floor to cover it with industrial grass, repairing the rides, fixing the seats, and planting trees and flower buds. Then, the women hung a sign that read: «Dear people who live in Marea. Please ensure that this park stays clean and proper so that it serves as a safe place for you and your children».

The second initiative was the establishment of a wool workshop named: (A touch of Warmth) in order to train six women with special needs and encourage them to master a profession that can ensure a decent life for them in the future. The initiative team well-equipped the workshop with the necessary machines and logistics. The main goal of this initiative was to empower women with special needs in terms of having a job and being engaged in the society.

Written by:Ebtisma Darweesh



News of the committees

Qabasin Committee:

Women sub-committee held many sessions for its members, like:

- Dialog session entitled: civil status.
- Dialog session entitled: types of real estate and property.
- Case referral management.
- Dialog session entitled: exploitation.
- Training on community-based protection.

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beneficiary

Al-Bab Committee:

Women sub-committee held many trainings for its members, like:

- Digital security training
- Project management training
- Training on common ground methodology
- Training on community dialogue
- Session entitled: the evolution and roles of civil society.

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beneficiary



A local, non-profit civil society organization for women's affairs, launched in 2018 through a conference attended by more than 150 women in rural northern and eastern Aleppo from Afrin to reaching to Jarablus.

The Unit targets women who have difficulty playing their role optimally in society. It also seeks to empower women politically, economically, culturally and socially in the northern and eastern countryside of Aleppo.



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The geographical zone of the WSU's work: northern and eastern countryside of Aleppo