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A Portrait

Her Determination Was the Key for Her Success

«The dead who came back to life again»

this is the expression that some people use to address Khadija who suffered from illness for years.

Khadija, usually known as Um Salim, is an IDP who came from the countryside of Idlib and is now working as the administrator of Alkurdi Camp,

northwest Syria. She has been equipped with a strong will that enabled her to confront and challenge whoever stood against assigning the Camp administration to her.

Khadija has been doing a great job in the camp, and is always encouraged by her husband, who is well aware of her abilities and potentials. She has also worked on providing many services to residents of the camp in addition to following up some illness and humanitarian cases.

The way she masters her work and cares on meeting needs of residents of the camp has made people who used to discourage her turn into supporters of her outstanding performance.

She has also worked on establishing a women empowerment center which provides vocational trainings and aims at improving women's abilities and encouraging them to continue their life. Khadija is also seeking support of all forms for the center, be it material support, awareness-raising programs or trainings, because it is an educational space for women and it needs to be invested in ways that ensure benefit for them.

It's worth mentioning that Khadija had a carcinoma that accompanied her for five years. She went for different kinds of treatment including medications, chemotherapy, and four surgeries of tumor excision. It was at that time that she realized the importance of success and strong will as they helped her out of that ordeal and she could prove that strong women could survive everywhere and in all circumstances.



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There has been a dramatic increase in the violations and killings practiced against women and female minors inside Syria under the inhumane and non-religious pretexts known as the «honor crimes/killings»; the name used by the society to cover the horrible crimes of causing hurt and damage to women and putting an end to their lives. So, you would see committers boast about their misdeeds because no laws or principles of humanity can To highlight this issue and gain people's views, we posted a survey on the Facebook page of the Women Support Unit, and we asked the following question:

What do you think is the solution for eliminating the so-called honor crime» which is increasing dramatically? «

Views varied between the issuing and applying strict laws and raising awareness of all the different components in the society. Other views were as follows:

Women must enjoy their rights and full freedom, and societies must get rid of the various outdated traditions inherited from their ancestors.



It's really important to persuade people that honor lies in the upper part of the body (within the heart and the mind), and that it's not limited to the stereotypes spread all over the society. Honor is humanity, mercy, and good morals, and it's shameful to lose any of them because this represents a real honor crime. In brief, we need to change the social concepts, traditions, and ideologies then the laws.



I'm against using the term «honor crime/killings» because of the negative meaning it refers to. In my opinion, the solution lies in setting pressure on those in charge of issuing laws and rules to deal with this crime just as the other crimes where perpetrators are held accountable for committing them. This is not a family issue and perpetrators must be prosecuted and spend years in prison.

The culture of non-violent communication must be promoted in the society so that women's needs are identified and understood instead of simply killing them. Such crimes must be fought and perpetrators must be exposed to deter whoever thinks of killing women this way.



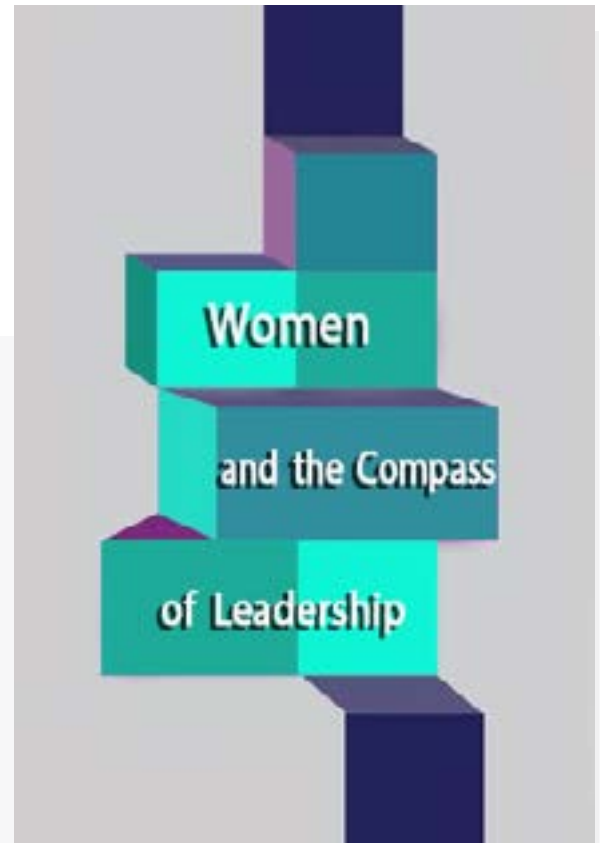
// Women and the Compass of Leadership

Our society has recently witnessed significant progress in women's participation, which is simple, yet represents an important step made towards highlighting the effective role of women in the civil society. Some of the women who used to be marginalized and absent from the public life are now able of playing effective and influential leadership roles, which in spite of being rare, have made good impression on other women and encouraged them to work hard and be in important decision-making positions.

The overall level of women in any society reflects the level of progress and development of the same society, and when women have higher educational, social and cultural levels, the societies will be more knowledgeable and more advanced.

Women's main role in life is having birth and bringing up their children well, and if mothers are educated, they will make sure that their children are so as well. Such mothers will make their children well aware of the importance of education and learning, and this in turn, will help in raising the level of education and decrease the levels of ignorance and crimes in the whole society.

Thus, women's education shows amazing results on individuals, and if women's role in



civil society organizations is fully activated, good results will not only involve a small group of individuals but will be gradually passed to the whole society.

The followings are some of the reasons for the absence of women's roles:

The general absence of women's role is due, among other reasons, to the media role, which serves as an essential means of influencing public opinion, thus developing the society and seeking to end gender-based discrimination. Local means of media have not been able to reach the core of the problems experienced by women in civil society organizations, as they have not highlighted the important is-



sues that concern women, but only referred to general and political problems.

Women's poor participation is also attributed to their poor abilities and low level of education which is the result of the social customs and traditions in addition to the social restrictions imposed on women in particular.

Women's access to the business field is very poor and doesn't go in accordance with the

percentage of women's presence in the whole society. This is also the result of the restricting and outdated social customs which, in most of the communities, consider women's labor/work as an unacceptable thing. However, women who could overcome the obstacles related to social customs and traditions are only assigned traditional jobs away from holding leadership positions, so you'd see more women in the education and health field than in the other fields.

A large percentage of women live an instable life due to the imposed reality of displacement, having to deal with family responsibilities completely, and seeking to improve their economic status. This has had a direct impact on women's performance and presence in leadership positions, but also contributed to the emergence of women's effective role in the society.

During the course of the ten years of war, all the Syrians including women suffered a lot, but also witnessed remarkable improvements in the role played by women in the society. Hence, women have developed themselves and attended various trainings at all levels to engage themselves in civil society organizations and to play their role fully.

These are the most significant obstacles that stand in the way of women's participation in the society. And in order to achieve their actual existence fully, women must work hard to prove how capable they are of doing any work and under any circumstances, then the society will reconsider women's role and help in promoting it.

Written by: Thanaa Tu'ma

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

Guide for the Empowerment of Women's Role in Society



North Syria has witnessed the spread of a large number of civil society organizations which have various roles, including relief, development, education, health, etc., due to the urgent need for many services in the region, in addition the need of the society in general and women in particular for controls and rules to ensure their participation in the local institutions.

Women Support Unit (WSU) has recently launched a guide for “Empowerment of Women’s Role in Society”, which is one of the tools that will advance women’s roles in society, thereby contributing to improving their participation in public life. This guide can help the civil society organizations, public institutions and the society as a whole to increase women’s participation in public life and assign social roles to them or provide legal, organizational, practical and skill facilities that pave the way for access to those roles.

The idea of this guide came as a response to the need of public organizations and institutions to give women more effective roles in society and to invest an enormous

human resource that makes more than half of the society.

Five dialog sessions were held in addition to social discussions and need surveys on “women’s economic and political participation in the society”. 50 individual interviews were made with people working in local organizations and public institutions. The guide is divided into two sections the first of which includes a definition of gender-based concepts related to just equality, harassment, bullying and gender-based violence.

The second section deals with the conceptual framework and contains practical steps for beneficiaries to further develop policies and actions in support of a better role for women within public organizations, local institutions and the society in general. It should be noted that the guide was drafted by a specialist and carefully checked. To see the guide and learn more about its content please click on the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XRnk6UFunEjAOYY6UFE4kTTxGy3H3MjL/view?usp=drivesdk>



News of the sub-committees:

Azaz Committee

Women Support Unit has signed a memorandum of understanding with Bousla for Development and Innovation, with the aim of supporting women members with advisory services and providing capacity development programs through free training for women members and administrative staff.

Al-Bab Committee

The committee held two trainings for its members: A training on facilitating skills.
A training on communication skills.

15
beneficiary

Qabbasin Committee

The committee held many dialog sessions the most important of which was: How to maintain your health. Beliefs and values at the age for puberty for girls. The importance of birth registration. Worry.

150
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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Syria, Aleppo - Azaz

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