



أحمد قبيسي

تبدلت أفكاري حول
المساواة بين الجنسين

"My thoughts on gender
equality have changed"

قصة إنسان مؤثر

HUMAN IMPACT STORY



السويد
Sverige



It is what it is!” That’s what Ahmad Koubeissi used to say before he started believing in equality. He was convinced that men and women have different roles in society. But his participation in the “Men and Women for Gender Equality” programme constituted an important milestone in the life of this nineteen-year-old man. “The notions of femininity and masculinity changed for me, and with them, my personality and my relationships with others,” says Koubeissi. He asserts that he has become a fierce advocate for gender equality and seeks to change gender-based stereotypes, especially in Saida, in southern Lebanon, where he resides.

AHMAD SAID:

“My thoughts on gender equality have changed”



AHMAD AJAM

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Through his activity as a volunteer in Abnaa Saida Association, which aims to develop the capacities and promote the rights of children and youth in ancient Saida, and enable them to defend these rights, the third-year psychology student at the Lebanese University tries to raise awareness about positive fatherhood, stereotyped roles and gender-based violence. For example, through the “Tak Braghi” initiative, Koubeissi and his colleagues in the Association advocate for positive fatherhood and highlight gender discrimination in education and how gender roles are assigned since childhood, by performing seven scenes in which they encourage parents to discard these ideas using smooth and simple dialogue.

2021

About a year ago, before he embarked in the Project, Ajam’s work was different. “When I joined Kafa’s Project, which aims to challenge social norms and promote equality, I became more and more convinced of the idea of gender equality”, said Ahmad. “I became aware that it is not limited to domestic work, but also includes women’s participation in politics.” He added, “after becoming aware of women’s role in society, their rights and what they can offer, I no longer believed that working with them is tiring and confusing. I rather realized the importance of working with women.”



IMPROVEMENT

Koubeissy does not deny that he used to believe that housework was a woman's job, but he asserts that he let go of this belief. "I take care of the housework, cook the food, clean up, and encourage other men in my family to do the same," he explains. He also admits that he used to unfairly discriminate against or judge women solely on the grounds of normal things they would do, such as walking at night or living alone. "I came to realize that women have equal and non-negotiable rights, and that women in my family, just like other women, have the same right to education and to leave the house like men, and that they have the right to a safe society that protects them."

In his community, Koubeissi became "a passionate advocate of gender equality", as he put it. Some people are keen to adhere to the roles imposed on them, so the young man tries to hold discussions on gender equality with his peers and with everyone he encounters in Saida. For instance, Ahmad relates how he tries to start conversations with taxi drivers and others to get them to reflect on gender equality and women's rights. He believes that this method will make them think about the matter and accept it, even if they reject it at first.

The young man recounts how he had a ride once with a taxi driver, and while talking to him, he asked him about his opinion on working women: "The driver expressed his firm objection to having his wife working outside the home, justifying this by his need to have someone waiting for him at home upon his return from work, taking care of him and of all the house chores. When I ran into him again, I brought up the issue once more. After several encounters, he became softer, and in the end, he confessed that his conviction shifted and that he accepts the idea of his wife working outside the home, stressing that they could both share domestic responsibilities."



AHMAD'S BEHAVIORS

Based on his experience and the change he experienced on both the personal and behavioral levels, Ahmad attaches great importance to completing the “Men and Women for Gender Equality” programme and the engagement of more young people of his generation in training workshops like the one he attended.

ADMIRABLE LEADER

In support of his opinion, he explains how “engaging young people of my generation in such a programme would lead to having aware and well-informed individuals active in the community, as its effect is not limited to abolishing gender equality stereotypes, but also abolishing all kinds of prejudice and intolerance.”

GENDER EQUALITY

Women's safety

This interview was conducted as part of the “Men and Women for Gender Equality” programme (2019-2021), which aims to challenge social norms regarding discriminatory mentalities on the subject of gender equality, as well as on positive fatherhood and gender-based violence.



MEN AND WOMEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The programme is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). As part of this project, KAFA, in cooperation with UN Women in Lebanon, supported CBOs in designing and implementing community-based solutions, tailored to suit local contexts, in order to challenge social norms and promote gender equality.

THANK YOU!

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