

New UNHCR Supported Community Centre Opens in Aleppo



On 15 October in Al Riyadeh (Al Hamdaniah) in Aleppo, the official opening of the UNHCR supported Namaa community center took place. Thousands of IDP women and children living in the vicinity, many in unfinished buildings, will benefit from this center in the areas of handicrafts, sewing and knitting, Psycho-Social Support sessions, life skills and outdoor activities organized by outreach volunteers.



HIGHLIGHTS

- New community centre in Aleppo to assist thousands of women and children
- UNHCR Community based initiatives helping educate children
- Vocational training in Qamishly changing lives



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In addition the center organizes back to school courses for children who have dropped out due to displacement and literacy courses for women. In order to promote participation of women with children in the center there is also a crèche where they can drop off the kids when they attend courses and other activities. All services are free and this center is already having a positive impact on the area.



Women's Sewing Class
©UNHCR /M.Akassam



Smiling Children at the Crèche
©UNHCR /B.Diab

'Hope' brings Hope to Children in Aleppo

Amal, which means hope in Arabic, is a 24 year college graduate who was displaced to the Tisreen area of Aleppo. Whilst there she noticed the large amount of children who had dropped out of school and decided to help them. Initially she found a completely bare room in an unfinished building and began teaching a small circle of children, with no equipment sitting on the hard concrete floor. With the help of a UNHCR Community Based Initiative (CBI) she has transformed this bare room into a functioning classroom, now catering for 45 children. Local tradesmen volunteered to smooth the floor and organize bathrooms, while UNHCR provided plastic sheeting to insulate the walls, chairs, tables, a whiteboard and paints so the children themselves could decorate the walls. In addition each child receives a full stationary pack to ensure this cost is not a barrier for attendance.



The Door of Amal's School
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Amal teaching the kids
©UNHCR /D.Mc Sweeney

Mubien's Voice will always be heard

'Disability does not mean weakness, with strong will I can always make my voice heard'

Mubien

Mubien is a young Iraqi refugee from Baghdad who fled war in Iraq along with his two brothers Moazar and Moathal to Syria in 2005. Despite being deaf Mubien challenges his disability on a daily basis by his tireless insistence on continuous learning. *"Just because I cannot talk does not mean that I cannot express myself and be a valuable member of society. God has gifted me with ambition to learn and express myself in many ways other than talking"* he says through sign language.



Mubien putting his knowledge into practice
©UNHCR /E.Khajo

In 2003 Mubien graduated from the technical institute of the deaf and mute in Iraq but due to the war, he could not pursue his higher education there. However, in Qamishly in the Hassakeh Governorate over the past few years, Mubien has successfully completed a number of language and computer courses and is currently completing a mobile phone maintenance course which is a part of the vocational training UNHCR supports to enable refugees and displaced people to learn new skills and be more self-reliant.

To make sure that he understands all the information delivered by the instructor, Mubien takes his brother, Moazar, to the class every day to help him in sign language communication.

His passion towards learning has inspired everyone in the class, including the course instructor who says *"Mubien is one of the best students in the course, he does not like to miss any point; when he does not get any information, and he raises his hand and asks questions through his brother"*. As a result of his hard work and perseverance, Mubien is now an expert in all kinds of smart phones and has been offered the opportunity by the instructor to work as an assistant during the next training course.

With a little assistance from UNHCR, Mubien's motivation and determination proves that disability never affects his love for life or his ambition. He hopes in the future to get the opportunity to pursue third level education abroad in one of the specialized institutes for the deaf..... A goal because of his determination he is sure to achieve.

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