

LEBANON: Married at fourteen: Mervat's story



SB OverSeas (17.10.2018)- Mervat is one of the teachers at SB OverSeas, an organisation working to provide education and empowerment programs to refugees in Lebanon. She was also married at a young age, deprived of a childhood. In this story, you will learn about this woman who at the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, found herself in Lebanon where she sought means to find economic independence by learning how to sew leading her to teach classes at SB OverSeas' centres and this platform provided her with a means to help empower other women in her situation.

Mervat was married at the mere age of fourteen. Despite protestations, she found herself married against her will due to her grandfather's wishes. This marriage, along with many other early marriages, signaled an end to her education. Her own dreams were replaced by a child and a life of marriage. Mervat had always enjoyed working with her hands to create

beautiful products but was restricted by the responsibilities she bore and was unable to pursue this dream.

Following the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, she found herself, along with her husband and children seeking refuge in Lebanon. In Beirut, she searched for a way to make a meagre earning by learning how to sew. Ignoring the comments of her family, she started classes with SB OverSeas in 2014. Her warm and welcoming personality, along with her natural talent for creating products meant she was a born teacher. Mervat started leading classes in our centre in Bukhara Ahla. With this, she was able to help other women in similar situations to create products that they could sell in local shops so they could gain a sense of financial independence.

Through this, she found a way to empower herself and use her experiences to empower other women. By teaching classes, she had a platform to talk to many of the young girls about her own experience of being married young. She hopes that she will be able to help those girls who are already married to not feel so alone by always being there to lend a listening ear, and those who are not married, to equip them with the tools to reject marriage.

Read here about SB OverSeas' empowerment programs for refugee women in Lebanon.

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