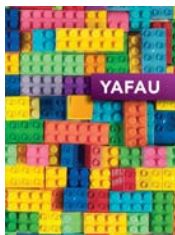
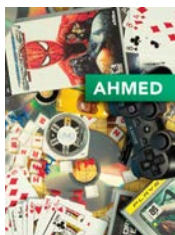


A vibrant collage of various fabrics and sewing supplies. The image features a mix of patterns including polka dots in yellow, purple, orange, and blue, stripes, floral prints, and checkered designs. Several spools of thread in colors like pink, orange, green, and blue are scattered throughout. The fabrics are layered and crumpled, creating a rich, textured background.

AISHATH

Books in this series.....



AISHATH

Written by Ifham Niyaz for Handicap International
Concept, Design, Photography & Layout
by mooinc. [www.mooinc.com]

THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR SALE

Introduction

Welcome to this series of inspiring stories of Maldivian children and adults. With each story you can see part of a new world, and meet a person with a different experience of life. Through the stories you are privileged to gain an insight into what each person values, and what they aspire to. You will realise that each character has another aspect to his or her life as well - either a hearing, visual, intellectual, mental or physical impairment. But as you read, you will understand that all people, whether with or without an impairment, have skills, talents and dreams, as well as challenges in life.

These are true stories, using real names, and were written during 2008 / 2009. Each person is trying to help you understand more about his or her life, so that you can realise that we are all equal, and deserve equality. Through your understanding you can help to make a more welcoming environment for all on your island.

Handicap International would like to say a big 'Thank you' to the stars of the stories, for taking the time to share them with us.

It is after 9 pm in the evening and Aishath sits behind her sewing machine at the white counter surrounded by all sorts of colours. Colours that come from different textures of fabric and shelves full of large sized, neatly stacked reels of thread. She is still engrossed in her work. She is at home, right at the spot where she spends the most hours of each day. This is what she loves to do most. This is where she feels most comfortable and most secure, surrounded by her close ones who live together as one big extended family, like most Maldivian families do.

Aishath is a Maldivian tailor. She can make all kinds of pretty things with all the fabric and thread she buys. But her favourite thing to make is children's dresses, which are smaller and easier to handle. Customers come to her from all over the island, asking for customised birthday dresses and delicate newborn's dresses with intricate little details that she makes with much passion and care.

Aishath has taken up sewing as a job since she was 17 years old. But she had started playing around with her mother's sewing machine when she was just 13 years of age. Since then she has been learning about the art of sewing from her older sister and making dresses for family members and herself.

When Aishath was just one and half years old, she fell down one day and developed a bad fever. Later she was diagnosed with polio, leaving her body with no muscle strength. Her parents tried everything that was available, including Maldivian oil massage therapy. She can recall the trips she made to the islands when she was a bit older, where all available traditional treatments given to her brought some relief to her bodily aches.

But it did not revive her full strength and she had to use her parents' support to move around, because wheelchairs were not used back then. Aishath can still recall what it felt like when people looked at her whenever she got out of the house. People were simply not used to seeing a big child being carried around. The questions people asked made her and her parents feel very uncomfortable. She remembers her father telling her to go inside the house on many occasions, because he simply did not want to see his much loved daughter being hurt due to remarks made by visitors.

And so, Aishath spent most of her childhood and her grown up days inside her family house. She did not lead a life as other kids her age would normally do. But she feels very lucky to be blessed with such loving, caring parents and close knit family members. "My parents always made sure that I did not miss out on anything. I have always been blessed with much love and encouragement from my family. My parents have always taught me to believe in myself and be confident in whatever I wanted to do by myself. That's how I gained my confidence to work this way."

She first took up sewing as a pastime, because she was simply bored of hanging around inside her house with nothing to do. Though she started

it as a hobby, she has now become one of the best in her profession. She recalled being very happy when she won first and second places in pillow case making and dress making in a national competition in 1982. Recently, she also received the prestigious National Award for her creative line of work. She is now an independent working woman who spends her days doing what she loves most. The only difference from other working women in her profession is that she works from a wheelchair customised specially for her needs.

Though she has more work than she can accommodate in her full working day, Aishath still finds more ways to improve her work and keeps up to date with latest trends through fashion magazines that her relatives send over from Europe. She employs two assistants to help her around, especially in buying her working accessories because she still does not like to go out. “Society in general has changed a lot. I don’t get many stares now because most are used to seeing people in wheelchairs. But I still don’t like to go out. Maybe because I remember what it felt like as a child. I am happier inside my home. Though I don’t like to go out and about in Male’, I love it if I am travelling abroad.” What she would really like to do now is learn more about her art from experts abroad. “One day I would love to see how fashion design experts do it in a more developed industry abroad, somewhere in Europe or the USA. I’d like to spend some time abroad to experience and learn from the best so that I can continue developing my skills’.



Glossary of terms used in this series;

Brain Injury – this could be due to a mechanical or infectious cause, and could result in one or more of the following; Attention impairment, cognition (understanding) impairment, language impairment, memory impairment, conduct disorder (different behaviour), motor (physical movement) disorder, any other neurological dysfunction.

Cerebral Palsy (CP) – Caused in the womb or at birth by lack of oxygen, meningitis encephalitis, German measles (rubella) or other unknown causes. The child's muscles may be weak, with tremors and uncoordinated speech, hearing and sight. The child's body may not grow the same as other children. Some children with CP have an intellectual impairment, while others may be extremely intelligent. Spasms may cause particular problems, and speech and facial expression are often affected.

Early intervention – applies to children of school age or younger who are discovered to have or be at risk of developing a disabling condition or other special need that may affect their development. Early intervention consists of the provision of services such children and their families need, for the purpose of lessening the effects of the condition.

Impairments – all the impairments defined can range from mild to severe;

Hearing impairment – Four categories are generally used to

describe hearing loss: mild, moderate, severe and profound. Some people with a significant loss, communicate through sign instead of, or as well as, speech. People with a hearing impairment may require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular strategies in order to access concepts and language. Hearing loss may be because of conductive or sensori-neural problems and can be measured on a decibel scale.

Visual impairment – this refers to a range of difficulties from partial sight through to blindness. People with a visual impairment may be able to use spectacles or low vision aids (such as magnifiers) as well as training in mobility skills to be able to move independently. Adaptations to the environment may be necessary depending on the individual. Some people who cannot see to read large print may learn Braille, a tactile language read with the fingers.

Intellectual impairment – this means an impairment in paying attention, in thinking, understanding, or in memory. People may require support, both for their learning needs and also for personal care. They could need tasks broken down into very small steps. Some people with an intellectual impairment which makes speech difficult may communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols.

Mental impairment – this can include people with depression, schizophrenia, paranoia and can result in behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, from mild to severe. A person may be withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration, lack social skills or present challenging behaviours.

Physical impairment – This could mean a different shaped arm or leg, hand or foot. It could impact on mobility. Or, people with a

physical impairment may be mobile but may have significant fine motor difficulties, like holding a pen and writing, which require support.

People with a disability – includes those who have long-term impairments as described, and who experience discrimination or barriers in society, such as steps, language and laws, which prevent people with disabilities from being included equally.

Polio (poliomyelitis) – causes muscle paralysis. The virus may affect the nerves governing the muscles in the limbs and the muscles necessary for breathing, causing respiratory difficulty and paralysis of the arms and legs.

Sign Language – a language of communication through hand and arm movements and facial expressions which is completely visual. Sign languages commonly develop in deaf communities, which can include interpreters and friends and families of deaf people as well as people who are deaf or hard of hearing themselves.

Special classes – classes in schools for children with needs which are not met in the mainstream classes.

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سوسوگي قريگور



دُرُ شَمْعُ

