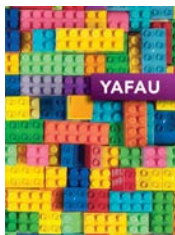
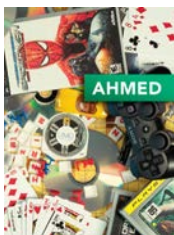
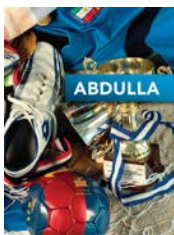


A top-down view of a wooden basket overflowing with a chaotic assortment of tools and debris. The items include a red power drill, a green spray bottle, a yellow measuring tape, a pair of pliers, a metal wrench, a blue bucket, a white fan, and a large pile of white, fibrous material. The background is filled with tangled wires and shavings. A bright yellow banner is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the word 'MUSSAD' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**MUSSAD**

Books in this series.....



**MUSSAD**

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

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I ask what Mussad wants to do when he gets older, if he has the opportunity to do anything. Mussad points to his mother and gestures that he will do whatever his mother tells him to do. Such is Mussad's ambition in life. To be faithful to his mother. To make sure that he always does what she tells him, perhaps because his mother is the person he trusts with all his life. Or maybe because he prefers to be quite dependent on her as his father passed away when he was very small.

Mussad is a twenty year old living in Kulhuduffushi. He is partially deaf. He likes to do all sorts of work, whatever his elders ask him to do, just so he can keep himself busy. His mother Fathimath Ahmed explains that Mussad has been a cleaner at the island hospital for about 8 years now. She says he likes to keep his day full, he is always on time, and never missed a day at work. Apart from his cleaning job at the hospital, he helps around with all sorts manual labour jobs required by people around him, even helping out with construction of houses. His mother thinks this kind of work is good for him because it keeps him occupied and he learns some skills that are worthwhile, even though he does most of such work for free. She proudly tells about one such time when Mussad painted all the walls of one new house all on his own.

When he was a little boy, Mussad's family did try different things in the hope of helping him. When he was about 14, he tried on hearing aids that were bought from Sri Lanka for 8,000 Maldivian Rufiyaas. He did hear with it to some level, but Mussad did not like it,

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understandably since the hearing aid was not fitted on him properly as it was imported without proper testing. To add to this fact, Mussad did not like wearing such a thing for fear of being ridiculed by children around him for wearing something on his ear that must have been quite an alien item at that time.

Fathimath Ahmed and the rest of Mussad's family had been left helpless in helping him out any further, mostly due to financial reasons. They are still waiting for a day when Mussad can be properly screened and tried for a new pair of hearing aids. The high cost of travelling and staying in Male' for a simple screening is keeping them away from their goal for the time being.

But the desperation of these matters does not hide the proud feelings Fathimath holds for her dearly loved son. She fondly recalls how much Mussad had wanted to go to school like any other boy of his age. "Mussad would ask me to get books, school bag and things for him. He would sit at the table with his bundle of books. Everyday at dusk he will in his own way recite the Surat Yaaseen from Quran."

Mussad enjoys living the simple life and being part of the island community. He is a young boy with much potential. But just as any young person in his situation, he needs a chance to reach his full potential. Anyone who has met him would recognise that he has got what it takes to become whatever he wants in the future.



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## 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



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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

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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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