



WOMEN FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

Driving force for development and stability

UfM Secretariat Progress Report on Women Empowerment

Actors
of change Skills
MOBILITY Environment
PEACE REGIONAL
Equality COOPERATION
Women
Mediterranean
Good practices

Editorial

The Euro-Mediterranean region is nowadays facing an intensification of tensions as well as complex and pressing crisis which threaten its stability and fragilise the “living together”. In view of this situation, the region needs to mobilise all its dynamic forces. Women in the region are still too absent in decision-making, too few in formal jobs, too often victims of violence, but yet, they constitute a major hope for the Mediterranean.

Equality between men and women is a vector for democracy, peace and inclusive growth in a region that aspires to stability and prosperity. It is part of the solutions for building a Euro-Mediterranean region which is more stable and able to confronting its challenges.

As a unique intergovernmental framework driven by the aim to advance the three urgent and connected regional priorities -stability, regional integration and inclusive human development-, the Union for the Mediterranean has put gender equality and women empowerment as one of its major priority.

Investing in the contribution of women as a response to Mediterranean challenges, this is what the third high-level conference of the UfM “Women for the Mediterranean: Driving force for development and stability” will highlight. During two days, ministers, representatives international organizations, civil society, experts, all engaged at policy level or on the ground, will identify practical solutions for strengthening the vital role of women as agents of change. They will address issues such as: sustainable development, fostering employment, fight against extremism and radicalization as well as migration and mobility challenges.

Delphine Borione

Senior Deputy Secretary General -Union for the Mediterranean



Women in the Euro-Mediterranean region: a huge untapped potential to better face the challenges of the region

The Euro-Mediterranean pressing challenges

The Euro-Mediterranean region has represented for many centuries a religious, cultural and academic bridge between civilizations which has experienced a series of changes and evolutions but always a high density of relations. In the last decade and particularly in the last few years, the region has gone through several geopolitical changes as a consequence of many factors: a financial and economic crisis, political transitions, regional conflicts and a raising migration and refugees flux to name a few.

The financial crisis has resulted in a high unemployment, particularly for youth (on average around 25 %, but up to 35 % in some countries of both shores). Employment rates (50-45 %) are very low and female participation is still lower (25 %). The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (the “NEETs”) has increased since the financial crisis, especially among young women. South and East Mediterranean countries have one of the youngest age profiles in the world (70% under 30 years old), and the total of young people will increase in the coming decades, thus increasing the number of people seeking for a job.

The region is also experiencing its worst-ever humanitarian crisis in relation to the existence of conflicts and the related migrations flows coming from or outside the region. The flow of migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean has increased dramatically in the recent years. Over the past four years, 1.4 million migrants and refugees have crossed the Mediterranean; most of them are youth and women. The Mediterranean Sea has experienced frequent and tragically large numbers of migrant deaths. In addition, radicalisation and terrorism, is also challenging the security of the region and threatens young people and women who become more and more vulnerable to the extremist discourse.

But also great opportunities

On the other side, the region has a significant pool of unexploited talents and driving forces and constitutes an untapped source of opportunities. The region has one of the youngest age profiles in the world and use only 25% of the potential of women. In all societies, youth and women have always been considered a catalyst for change, a source of innovation and an engine for growth. The region counts also a variety of engaged civic and social actors, men and women which are increasingly using links, resources, ideas and organizational methods beyond the territory, in order to impulse economic growth and create jobs and to build bridges between peoples of the two shores of the Mediterranean. Private sector, civil society networks, artists, scientists, students, media... a great potential for the Euro-Mediterranean region that should be better valued and mobilized.

The urgency to value and increase women’s contribution in societies

The obvious role of women in development, growth, poverty reduction and societal well-being has been documented and evidenced in many studies (World Bank, OECD, UN-Women and European Union just to name a few). There is growing evidence of the link between women’s empowerment and higher rates of education, better health outcomes, increased economic growth, and improved agricultural production and sustainable development. According to a recent study by the McKinsey Global Institute, if women matched men in terms of work — not only participating in the labor force at the same rate but also working as many hours and in the same sectors — global GDP could increase by an estimated \$28 trillion, or 26 percent, by 2025. Closing the gender gap in labor force participation would deliver 54 percent of those gains.

Another important area where women’s participation has demonstrated a significant impact is in peace and political transition processes. For example, a study by International Alert points out that the representation and increased involvement of women in politics and in the public sphere has been one of the positive results of peace processes and political transitions in some regions in Africa.



Remarkable progress has taken place in the Euro-Mediterranean region in relation to women and girls' rights, and overall, gender issues have gained significant momentum. All countries express commitments to gender equality within their legislative, constitutional, regional and international frameworks – such as gender equality laws, commitments to Beijing action platform and constitutional assertions of equality between men and women.

However, despite the obvious advancements in legislation, policies, programming and planning, the impact on the ground is far behind what it is really expected. The great potential of women as a driving force of social changes and of inclusive growth and development is not fully exploited. Women still confront obstacles, stereotypes and challenges that hinder their full participation. Discriminatory practices, social and cultural barriers, insufficient institutional protections and unequal access to services and resources continue to block women's progress. Statistics on violence against women remain high and women's economic and public participation remains one of the lowest in the world. This has not only an impact on the national level but also at the regional level.

The need to create an environment in which all driven forces in the society can fulfil their full potential and assume responsibilities is not a choice today but an urgent necessity. Youth and women are often the first victims of poverty and crisis situations, but they are also a great source of creativity, innovation and energy. By not using their full potential, the region is wasting significant talents capable of creating prosperity and growth and developing the societies. Considering the pressings challenges faced by the region, it is essential to mobilise the potential of all forces of societies, specifically young men and women in order to exploit their great potential and not to leave them at the margin of society.

A regional agenda for common and shared interests

Comprehensive national policies are important in promoting and fostering the role of women in the society. But an improved and strengthened regional framework of cooperation and partnership is also crucial in collectively addressing the challenges and find the best solutions in the benefit of the peoples of the region. In this regard, the relevance of the UfM framework is most significant than ever, as a key regional policy and operational platform to increase and foster the regional integration around common interests and priorities, including women's empowerment.

Today, the people of the whole region request stability, inclusive and sustainable growth, human development, cultural awareness and the promotion of human rights, which all provide a basis for peace and shared prosperity for all. This objective will not be achieved without the full and equal participation and involvement of all drivers of change, especially youth and women.





The Union for the Mediterranean's response

The focus on human development, in particular through youth and women empowerment, as a main contribution to addressing the root causes of the current challenges is at the heart of the UfM Secretariat strategic activities. The Ministerial Conferences on **Strengthening the Role of Women in Society** (Istanbul 2006, Marrakech 2009 and Paris 2013) as well as the **3rd UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour**, which took place in September 2016, further reinforce the UfMS mandate to promote equality between men and women, both in rights and opportunities, as an essential condition to regional stability and socio-economic development. The UfM pursues this objective through three main strategic activities:

1 Developing a regional platform for cooperation and dialogue between key stakeholders in the Euro-Mediterranean region:

Further to the Paris Ministerial Conference, the UfM started building a regional multi-stakeholder platform of dialogue on women's empowerment with representatives from governments and key regional and international stakeholders, to review the implementation of the Ministerial commitments, start preparing the next Ministerial Conference, and enhance cooperation, partnerships and complementarity between actors within a multi-stakeholder approach. The UfM annual regional Conferences on women empowerment have also become an unmissable platform to strengthen regional and multi-stakeholder synergies in supporting women's empowerment.

2 Concretely supporting the regional agenda on women empowerment with concrete projects and initiatives:

The Secretariat has labelled 8 projects specifically dedicated to gender equality and women empowerment which aim to enhance the access of women to local labour markets and entrepreneurial field, improving access to leadership, fighting against violence as well as access to social and health services. Gender mainstreaming approach is also applied in the other UfM projects and initiatives in the other UfM priority sectors: Business development, Education, environment, water and energy.

3 Advancing the women agenda through partnerships with national and multi-lateral organizations:

To improve its advocacy role and promote public policies that foster women's rights, the Secretariat is working with an open and inclusive approach, building regional networks, and ensuring coherence and complementarity between actors. Partners include the European Commission, UN Women, UNDP, ITO, UNIDO, UNESCO, UfM Parliamentary Assembly, ARLEM, Council of Europe etc... as well as private sector and civil society organizations.

The objective is to better coordinate and mutualize efforts that promote gender equality women empowerment in order to maximize the impact.



UFM Regional Dialogue on women empowerment

TOWARD THE FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Background

The multi-stakeholders Regional Dialogue on women empowerment was launched in May, 2015, as a follow up to the Ministerial declaration on strengthening the role of women in Society adopted in Paris in September 2013. The objectives are:

- i) review with partner countries and stakeholders the progress made in translating the Ministerial commitments into actions and policies and assess the gap to be bridged.**
- ii) propose a follow-up mechanism with indicators.**
- iii) promote the sharing of knowledge, best practices and innovative approaches.**
- iv) reinforce capacities and the coordination between key stakeholders.**

The dialogue process includes UfM countries and the key stakeholders operating in gender equality and women empowerment in the region, including civil society organisations. Four priority areas were identified in line with the Ministerial commitments: Raise women's participation in economic life; Improve women's access to leadership and decision making positions; Change of stereotypes through education and culture; Combat violence against women and gender-based-violence. Stakeholders stressed the importance to take into account the specific issues of women migrants and refugees, women in conflict, post-conflict and political transition context and women with disabilities and those living in rural areas.

4 Thematic working groups were constituted and met respectively on 25-26 April 2016 in Barcelona, 12 July in Paris, 19 July in Amman and the 20-21 September in Rabat. They are gathering on the 10th October in Barcelona, to present the outcomes and findings of their work and to agree on the next steps towards the upcoming ministerial meeting.



The preliminary findings:

All countries express commitments to gender equality within their legislative, constitutional and international frameworks – such as gender equality laws, commitments to Beijing and constitutional assertions of equality between men and women. To support this, countries have introduced departments at different levels of government that address gender and have made national strategic commitments, such as gender and equality strategies.

However, the more pressing identified issues are the effective implementation of these strategies and policies, the persistence of stereotypes and the issue of gender mainstreaming. In addition, the context of conflict, economic austerity and other strong political influences challenges women's ability to further their progress towards empowerment.

More specifically, the following issues have been highlighted as regard the “state of play”:

- **Women in the UfM are strongly affected in their life course, and in all levels of society by the impact of stereotypes; this affects both their own decision-making and the support and opportunities available to them.**
- **Even in countries with higher representation in Parliament, female participation within senior positions in Government and advisory bodies, local government, and the judiciary remain low.**
- **The situation with regards to women's representation in economic decision-making is less optimistic.**
- **Statistics on violence against women and girls (VAWG) remain high despite of policies and measures adopted at this regard by countries; the situation is even worse in conflict contexts which undermine progress towards eliminating VAWG and pose great challenges both for individual countries and the regions as a whole. Finally, there is a lack of programmes that are engaging with women directly, outside of quotas, policies and strategies.**





As recommendations, the working groups' members stressed the importance of a comprehensive approach to tackle the 4 issues and the necessity to improve the coordination and partnership between the key actors concerned, including Media and civil society organisations, both at the national and the regional level. More specifically, they recommended to :

- **Strengthen the understanding of the current situation and the needs of women, through research, information systems and data production as well as monitoring mechanisms against indicators.**
- **Ensure a strong social, political and cultural drive towards supporting change, through advocacy and awareness campaigns;**
- **Develop programmes that support women, promote participation and ensure that changes are implemented.**
- **Take into account the impact of the change of landscape, especially regarding conflicts and post conflicts contexts, migration and refugees, and the impact of radicalization and extremism.**
- **Co-ordinate work with other international and regional frameworks so that work is not overlapped and so that the UfM's work can complement the work of other organisations and networks. In the region, this concerns particularly the OECD framework, the League of Arab States, the Beijing monitoring process, ILO and the Council of Europe mechanisms.**

As conclusion, the Regional Dialogue stressed that UfM countries continue to learn, innovate and promote gender equality and women's empowerment through policies, strategies and specific measures. However, regarding the very limited impact on the ground, countries, both in EU and MENA countries, could do more to ensure implementation through enforcement mechanisms, strategies for implementation and better monitoring of progress and impact.



FACTS & FIGURES

The economic case for gender parity



\$12 trillion

could be added in 2025 if all countries matched their best-in-region country in progress toward gender parity.



\$28 trillion

of additional annual GDP in 2025 in the full-potential of bridging the gender gap.



...equivalent to the combined US and China economies.

Source: McKinsey Global Institute. The power of parity: advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global GDP.

Productive Resources Women make up 43% of the agriculture workforce in developing countries.

Women are the main producers of the world's staple crops providing up to 90% of food for the rural poor and producing 60-80% of the food in most developing countries.

If women had equal access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by as much as 20-30%.

Source: FAO



Since 1st January 2016, woman and children together make up to 46% of the total people who have arrived to 3 main Mediterranean hot spots (Greece, Italy and Spain)



In southern Mediterranean countries, the percentage of women in national Parliaments ranges between 12.0% up to 31.3%

In the EU 37% is the percentage of women in Parliament which is slightly higher than in 2015.

In the world, only 22.8 per cent of all national parliamentarians were women as of June 2016, a slow increase from 11.3 per cent in 1995.



UfM Labelled Projects in Women Empowerment Field

Women's right to health the WoRTH project

OBJECTIVES

The WoRTH Project aims to reduce the incidence and mortality of female cancers (breast and cervical) in Albania, Montenegro and Morocco through:

- The implementation of a comprehensive cervical and breast cancer control strategy in line with national public policies and plans and in close coordination with national health authorities and local health care practitioners.
- Increased capacity of National Health Systems to develop cancer control initiatives driven by ownership, alignment, standardization, mutual accountability and results-focused monitoring.
- Increased cancer awareness and health literacy among women as an important factor in women's empowerment in the broader context of health education.

BENEFICIARIES

- Women: priority will be given to disadvantaged women living in vulnerable situations through free access to systematic cancer screening.
- National ministries, health professionals and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. decision makers), in particular those working in detection/screening programs.
- Civil society and women's associations that are committed to women's health

EXPECTED RESULTS

- National diagnostics on cervical and breast cancer control.
- 45,000 women in the appropriate age range will be offered a test for cervical (25-65 yrs.) and breast (40-65 yrs.) cancer and will be made aware of the risks and the importance of prevention.
- At least 15 training sessions for more than 300 beneficiaries including policy makers, health professionals and other relevant actors as well as 12 tutoring actions and several training activities offered by high quality EU centres dealing with cancer prevention and control.
- National networks of decision makers, health professionals and active community bodies will be created.

PROMOTERS

- Centre for Epidemiology and Prevention of Cancer in Piedmont (CPO) - lead promoter
- World Health Organisation

PARTNERS

- Ministry of Health Albania
- Ministry of Health Montenegro
- Ministry of Health Morocco

Promoting women's empowerment for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the mena region

OBJECTIVES

The project, promoted by UNIDO, is seeking to enhance women's economic inclusion and create favourable conditions for sustainable and inclusive growth by harnessing the great potential of women entrepreneurs in the targeted countries.

To this end, the project will offer technical assistance to the women entrepreneurs to create and grow their businesses, through national business women associations. It will facilitate and accompany an inclusive policy dialogue between the key stakeholders with the objective of producing a set of recommendations and action points endorsed by all parties to promote an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship in the region. Finally, the project will directly promote women-led investments through training, coaching, identification and facilitation of business partnership opportunities and access to finance.

BENEFICIARIES

- 7 national businesswomen's associations.
- 2000 female entrepreneurs.



EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improved knowledge of women’s entrepreneurship in the MENA region to be developed and diffused.
- Strengthened capacities for providing entrepreneurship development services to other women by 400 representatives of the National Businesswomen’s Association including Banks and Women-oriented Business Development Services.
- 2000 female entrepreneurs will be trained and counselled on how to develop entrepreneurship and formulate business plans.
- 500 promising business opportunities will be developed.
- 800 new jobs are expected to be created by the end of the project..

PROMOTERS

- UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization

PARTNERS

- Egypt: Association for Women’s Total Advancement and Development
- Jordan: Business & Professional Women - Amman
- Lebanon: Lebanese League for Women in Business
- Morocco: Association des Femmes Chefs d’Entreprises du Maroc
- Palestine: Businesswomen Forum
- Tunisia: Femme et Leadership

Women of the Mediterranean (WOMED) next generation of leaders

This project aims to reach a double objective: boost the professional careers of young women with high potential and strengthen gender equality through mentoring, networking and spreading of best practices. In particular, it works to:

- Strengthen the capacities of high-potential young women by enhancing their professional and personal skills.
- End the isolation of the target groups and make them visible. The project will strengthen their visibility, their ability to influence, their competencies and their expertise.
- Develop a Euro-Mediterranean network for the promotion of gender equality.

BENEFICIARIES

66 young women (22 per year) from Southern Mediterranean countries, aged between 25 and 35 and selected according to their career excellence and their ambition to bring equality into their field of work.

The beneficiaries will need to have a clear interest and/or an initial experience in issues relating to transparency, good governance and the defense of women’s rights.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 66 young women attained personal and professional self-fulfillment in their area of work and to build a network of “alumni” that will expand year after year.
- Promoted a culture of gender equality in the countries involved.

PROMOTER

- Sciences Po

CEED GROW: growing and scaling small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs)

OBJECTIVES

The project aims to support women-led businesses (small and medium sized) and empower women entrepreneurs and managers as a way to foster job creation in Albania, Morocco and Tunisia. Specifically, the objectives are:

- Enhance the leadership, management and entrepreneurial skills of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) headed by women.
- Increase the number of women entrepreneurs and managers who own/manage SMEs.
- Scale up companies in order to increase the number of jobs created.



BENEFICIARIES

Women entrepreneurs as well as top and middle-level managers of 300 small and medium-sized companies.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- 60 training sessions provided to companies in the three countries over two years (10 training sessions per programme per country each year).
- 50+ networking events hosted for the beneficiaries.
- Over 100 mentoring relationships forged through the project.
- 300 companies trained and connected to mentors and other resources in the CEED network.

PARTNERS

- CEED Morocco
- CEED Tunisia
- CEED Albania

PROMOTER

CEED



Forming responsible citizens. Equal citizenship education to prevent school violence

OBJECTIVES

- Establish schools as a key vehicle for transmitting citizenship and gender equality values by implementing a redesigned civic education curriculum.
- Prevent violence in schools, especially against girls and women.
- Influence policies and legislation to promote gender equality in society in an effort to prevent violence against women and girls through equality education for full citizenship.

A new citizenship education curriculum will be implemented in three pilot schools from each participating country with the involvement of policy-makers, educators, parents and students. Once the project has been successfully implemented and following approval by the national educational authorities, the project results will be applied nationally, involving schools, teachers and students.

BENEFICIARIES

- 3,000 students in nine pilot schools from Morocco and Tunisia .
- 90 teachers from the three countries concerned, who will be trained in up-to-date citizenship contents and methodologies, gender equality and women empowerment skills.
- 30 stakeholders (researchers, policy-makers, curriculum designers, government officials) who are aware of the changes needed in the educational system to correctly instil these values among future generations.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The project will develop a new, widely implemented curriculum including civic concepts, systems, processes of civic life, gender equality, education for human rights and inclusive and sustainable development that will improve basic citizenship and equality skills.

It will also train teachers in citizenship education with new materials and methodologies, in addition to providing practical training in gender equality and conflict management and resolution.

Furthermore, the project will enhance the participation of students and families in the school organisation.

- 300 companies trained and connected to mentors and other resources in the CEED network.

PARTNERS

- The Moroccan Center for Civic Education / (MCCE).
- Social Development and Empowerment / Center (Tunisia).

PROMOTER

- Ideaborn.



Developing women empowerment

OBJECTIVES

The project supports women of the Euro-Mediterranean region in their quest for empowerment and gender equality. It is done via specific actions including:

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The project supports women of the Euro-Mediterranean region in their quest for empowerment and gender equality. It is done via specific actions including:

- the dissemination of gender related information and knowledge;
- the creation of a network of associations and organisations involved in women and gender equality;
- the development of on-the-ground- grassroots projects, focusing on women's socio-economic empowerment in the Southern Mediterranean.

The three mentioned objectives are all interconnected and supported with a trilingual internet platform in French, Arabic and English. Several local projects related to health, education, small business and handicraft development, have already been identified.

BENEFICIARIES

Women and girls from the involved countries, NGOs active in the field of women empowerment and gender equality, governments, local authorities and scientific communities.

RESULTS

The creation of networks and synergies between major stakeholders in the field of gender equality and women

PARTNERS

- European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed).
- Forum Femmes Méditerranée.
- Réseau Universitaire et Scientifique EuroMéditerranéen sur le Genre et les Femmes (RUSEMEG).
- Fédération de la Ligue Démocratique des Droits des Femmes.
- Center for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR).
- Délégation Interministérielle à la Méditerranée (DIMED).

PROMOTER

- Euro-Mediterranean Women Foundation.

Skills for success employability skills for women

OBJECTIVES

Skills for Success is an employability-skills-training programme, addressed at young, economically disadvantaged and unemployed women who have completed their secondary school education.

Its aim is to assist the participants in acquiring the knowledge, skills and tools for entering the job market via English language training, computer and business skills development, and use of job search tools.

BENEFICIARIES

450 (90 in each country) unemployed and economically disadvantaged young women having finished secondary-school.

RESULTS

Secure a pool of trained individuals ready to take up employment in both the private and public sector.

At the end of the project, 450 women will have acquired the knowledge and skills needed to compete successfully for entry-level jobs.

PROMOTER

- AMIDEAST - America- MidEast Educational and Training Services

CONTRIBUTION

- National administrations
- AMIDEAST centres

PARTNERS

- The Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs
- PepsiCo
- Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- AMIDEAST (in kind contribution)
- AMIDEAST Lebanese Advisory Board

Young women as job creators

OBJECTIVES

To promote self-employment and entrepreneurship among young female university students who are interested in starting their own businesses.

Students will participate in Women Entrepreneurship Days, a series of seminars hosted by local universities, faculties and higher education centres offering coaching, advice and tools to set up a company. They will also receive specific business mentoring through programmes provided by national businesswomen associations.

Young Women as Job Creators is promoted under the framework of the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs). Med4Jobs is a cross-sector initiative driven by the need for an integrated regional initiative in the area of job creation. It has been developed by the UfM Secretariat to help increase the employability of youth and women, close the gap between labour demand and supply, and foster a culture of entrepreneurship and private sector development.

BENEFICIARIES

Young female university students who are about to graduate from one of the participating universities, faculties or higher education centres.

RESULTS

- Approximately 2,000 young female students are expected to participate in Women Entrepreneurship Days.
- A minimum of 70 young women are expected to successfully start their business projects by the end of the programme.

PROMOTER

- AFAEMME – Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen.

CONTRIBUTIONS:

- Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Gas Natural Fenosa





Testimonials - Actors for Gender Equality



“I must admit that great efforts have been made during recent years, from the governing authorities, and above all, by the pulse, the involvement and the hard work of civil society, including women themselves who are their best representatives. Women are at the forefront in crises and they are with children, their first victims. Yet, they are those by which the consolidation of democratic values, social and economic development and peace can be achieved. Today, strengthening the role of women must be recognized as a fundamental contributing factor to the economic and social development of all countries. Building synergies between specificities of the UfM and those the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe is a force that will enable us to build the necessary conditions for gender equality, which is the driving force for growth and social cohesion in the whole euromediterranean region.”

PhD. Jean-Marie HEYDT, President of the North-South Center of the Council of Europe

“The Skills for Success program came at the right moment for me. I didn’t expect it would change me this way. I am now a new person with new life perspectives. I first worked on my personality and learned how to gain my confidence, and I can say that I’m very proud of myself now. After completing the program, I had two successful interviews and I was accepted by both companies ... Many thanks for this opportunity that came to me when I really needed it.”

Karima, Skills for Success graduate, Morocco





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