



Salma Karim

Gabriella: "Selma, what is your message for the next generation of women leaders?"

Selma: "Take the lead, do not wait for men to act when something's wrong/need to be changed".

Life is often strewn with stumbling blocks. Those hurdles emerge unexpectedly, like the bad luck that knocks at the door, unwanted. Isn't this unfair? Shouldn't life go as we pre-cautiously planned it?

The answer is yes, in an ideal world surely! However, there is no perfect world.

There is a reason why the process of one's journey should be trusted, no matter the obstacles that emerge along the way. Everything happens for a good reason, as Selma demonstrates through her story.

Selma Karim joined the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) in the fall of 2013. Since then, she discovered a passion for helping others thus becoming extremely active in her community. She later became a student ambassador coordinator and further joined AIESEC where she took several leadership positions in 4 years to finally serve as the president of AIESEC in Ifrane. After her graduation, Selma was ready to kick off her professional career. As a budding entrepreneur, she embraced the outside world with great hopes and was bursting with ideas for her future. Indeed, she was inspired to travel the world. Yet, her path took a different turn.

Selma overcame several arduous challenges throughout her professional experience. "Life wasn't easy" as she said. Heavily influenced by AIESEC and through her network there, Selma made plans to go and work abroad. Therefore, after graduating, she learned Spanish for two months with the hope of getting employed in Mexico. That plan, however, didn't follow through.

Next, she tried to start a business with the same youth development services that AIESEC offered. However, once more that plan didn't work out.

Letting her dreams aside, Selma found herself employed as a project manager for a year. She then got recruited as a market analyst in a real estate agent company. She knew, however, that this was not her calling. Something more was awaiting her elsewhere. She just hadn't found it yet.

A few years later, Selma applied for a French master's program in France but to her dismay, got rejected. However, her rejection did not stop her from enrolling a second time later, for an English master's program which she obtained successfully. Today, she is currently in France studying a master's program in international marketing and business development.

After listening to her story, I asked, "What was your greatest lesson learned?".

"Never give up", she said resolutely.

As the epitome of a resilient leader, Selma insisted that one doesn't need to change one's ultimate goal in life but rather adjust the sails.

"There's always hope in the hard times", as Selma reminded me.

She realized that her experience at the Leadership Development Institute and her various activities on and beyond university were instrumental in shaping the leader that she is.

Today, Selma is driven by the challenges that she witnessed and experienced in her community in Morocco. While her goal is to pursue a PhD, she feels very much attached to her community and the issues faced all over the region of Morocco. As Selma and I discussed, she emphasized on the loopholes that needed to be fixed in the education system. It is important, as she said, to attack the problem from the roots and not from the top. She dreams of a place where everyone, especially women, has access to information and technology.

In fact, the title of her thesis seems to pay tribute to her share of leadership experience and resumes her purpose beautifully in life.

"Designing a leadership ecosystem where social innovations thrive".