



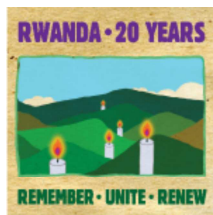
New York

Topics

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Staff Voices: The struggle for Girls' Education

Friday, 21 March 2014, New York | Staff Voices / Fátimazöhra Nouinou

Fátimazöhra Nouinou is the Personal Assistant to the Director of Investigations at the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Fátimazöhra Nouinou joined the United Nations in 2001; she has previously worked in DPI, DPKO, Office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami, UNDP, WHO and DFS.

We in the United Nations are fortunate to work for the world's largest international organization and to live in this wonderful city. We all arrived here by different routes. For some of us, however, it was not an easy road.

I was born into a wealthy environment, but education for girls was not considered a right. I had no family supporting me and no government standing up for my rights. I struggled for my right to attend school and suffered abuse as a result. Most of my schoolmates were forced to quit school by the men in their families.



I was victimized because I wanted to study my own language.

I can now speak and write nine languages.

I was forbidden to ride a bicycle — bikes were for boys not girls!

I eventually learned to fly an airplane.

I was not allowed to have friends in school and in the neighborhood.

I now have friends from all over the world.

QuickLinks - NY

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- Reporting Wrongdoing
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- DM Suggestion Box
- Umoja
- Flex Work
- Careers Portal
- inspira
- it's for real!
- Learning at UNHQ
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Staff Unions

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iSeek ODS

Global Announcements

- Coming Soon - 2014 Language Proficiency Examination!
- DESAlert, 7 - 11 April
- Mine Action Week Events

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New York Announcements

- Volunteers needed for the 2014 UN Inter-Agency Games
- UNSRC Travel Club Washington DC weekend trip 12-13 April 2014
- Join the UN Cares Team for AIDS

UNOG memorial for Kabul victims

- Souk to Aid Syrian Refugees - 31 Jan., North Lobby Secretariat Bldg.
- UNSU 2013 Election Results 17 December 2013
- ESC Letterhead Results

[more](#)

Community - NY

- What is iSeek?
- The Corner / Le Coin
- Social activities
- Activities, Housing
- Bulletin Boards
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- Greening the Blue
- Getting Around
- List of Services
- Map of UN locations in NYC
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- Negotiation & Mediation
- Joint Negotiation Committee
- Ombudsman and Mediation Services

I was prohibited from travelling from one town to another.

I ended up crossing five continents.

According to UNESCO's "Education for All Global Monitoring Report", over 15 million school-age girls — out of school — are never expected to enroll for classes. I could have been one of these statistics if it was not for my faith, my strength and my pride. I have since developed a "PPP" system: Patience, Persistence and Perseverance in order to overcome the obstacles and achieve my goals.

It is not only war and poverty that bar girls from education. Governments allow illiteracy to grow if they do not convict fathers who can afford to send their daughters to school but do not, and brothers who mistreat their sisters for wanting to pursue their studies.

Some governments build night clubs and casinos although the illiteracy rate in their society is high while those nations' funds could be used to build schools and institutions. By strengthening the growth of nightlife venues, governments expose uneducated girls and women to prostitution and make them easy targets for human trafficking.

If we give a little girl access to education, she will become a decent sister, a dignified wife and a competent mother. If we deny her an education, we steal her dignity and her future.

Men can play an important role in achieving equality for women by encouraging girls to receive education, or they can contribute to illiteracy by preventing girls from studying.

To all girls and women around the world, I send a message of "HHH": Honour, Hope and Happiness. Honour because it is an honour to be a woman; Hope because no girl or woman should lose hope; and Happiness because every girl and woman deserves to be happy.

Comments

Amina Benser

Fri, 03/21/2014 - 15:44

Thank you Fatimazohra for

Thank you Fatimazohra for sharing your story. You are such a wonderful woman to carry the message of Honour, Hope and Happiness to all women.

[reply](#)

Morad Blali

Sun, 03/23/2014 - 22:03

nice comments and Voices

WALK NY!

- NYC Drupal Camp 2014 at UNHQ - Sign up now
- Launch of the UNODC Caribbean Programme, 7 April 2014, 10:00AM, CR 5 NLB
- UNITAR NYO: Post-2015 Development Agenda V (Part I and II)
- NEW PRODUCT ! Newspapers from Library PressDirect
- IAG 2014 Fundraising Raffle
- Free introductory Capoeira Class on April
- Language and communications skills courses

[more](#)

Featured Photo



UN Familiarisation Programme conducted at India's National Audit Office, New Delhi (20-25 March)

Monthly Archive

- April 2014 (7)
- March 2014 (41)
- February 2014 (48)
- January 2014 (32)
- December 2013 (51)

Archive of iSeek articles before November 2013

Nice comments and Voices Fatimazohra you give a big happiness to all women thanks. Morad from Morroco.

[reply](#)

Valerie Justin

Mon, 03/24/2014 - 10:51

J'ai eu le plaisir de

J'ai eu le plaisir de travailler avec toi à DPI. Tu venais d'arriver à l'ONU en 2001. Merci Fatima d'avoir eu le courage de partager ton histoire. Elle est belle, riche et nous inspire toutes.

[reply](#)

Enrica Taddei

Mon, 03/24/2014 - 13:35

Dear Fatimazohra, thank you

Dear Fatimazohra, thank you for sharing such an inspiring story -
- keep the good work.

[reply](#)

Falah Sultan

Tue, 03/25/2014 - 15:17

Thank you Fatimazohra for

Thank you Fatimazohra for sharing such a magnificent life experience!! Falah, Kurdistan, Iraq

[reply](#)

Fatimazohra Nouinou

Tue, 03/25/2014 - 16:09

Dear Colleagues,

Dear Colleagues, I am delighted to have inspired you - men and women. There are no barriers when we have a noble mission to accomplish. We need to show to the world that we are humans so that the world deserves us to serve humanity. My highest regards to all of you,

[reply](#)

Naima ABDELLAOUI

Wed, 03/26/2014 - 05:11

Dear FatimaZohra,

Dear FatimaZohra, Thank you so much for sharing your story which truly rings a bell for me. I would like to insist on a point in your article that governments must be held accountable for maintaining their populations in illiteracy. Providing quality education and combating illiteracy must be the top priority in any development agenda because all evils (especially poverty, extremism and terrorism) ensue from ignorance. God bless you!

[reply](#)

Amal Hassani

Wed, 03/26/2014 - 11:16

Dear Fatimazohra,

Dear Fatimazohra, Thank you for sharing your beautiful story and being an inspiration to young women around the world. May

you continue to grow and be successful in what you do. Wish you all the best, Amal

[reply](#)

Diyala Shannak

Thu, 03/27/2014 - 09:28

Fatima,

Fatima, Listening to your stories is always an inspiration and to know a person like you is definitely a true honor. I am proud of the role model you are to young women and to every individual around the world. Young women can look to you and see the possibilities that they couldn't see for themselves living in similar situations you once faced, and for the rest of the world they can see the result (You) and inspire them further to support and help the cause. May all these young women live to have Honour, Hope and Happiness.

[reply](#)

Add new comment

iSeek welcomes your comments, which will appear in your name.

Your name Fatimazohra Nouinou

Comment *

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