

Hello BBS Alums!

The Alumni Highlight is a monthly newsletter that aims to highlight the philanthropic, academic, entrepreneurial and professional achievements made by our thriving BBS Alumni community.

Shaikha AlQatami graduated from BBS in 2003 and went on to complete her Bachelor of Arts Degree at The American University of Beirut. Since then, she has volunteered to champion the Girl Rising initiative in the Gulf region. Girl Rising is a film and initiative that raises awareness about the vital role of girl education in the developing world.



Explain your current role at Girl Rising?

Educating girls can break cycles of poverty in just one generation, yet 62 million girls are not in school (UNESCO, UNICEF, 2014). There 33 million girls, less than boys in school. We need to make sure that girls are not left at home. I felt very passionate about the campaign and started working on promoting the initiative in the region. As the Regional Ambassador, a group of us has worked to empower girls through social media and hosting screenings of the film. We came up with a form of expression by using our hands as a symbol to support the Girl Rising initiative and girls around the world. Pictures of the Kuwaiti/ Bahraini community were posted on our social platforms and societies grew interested in giving back and helping educate girls in need. We also worked with Manifesto13, which is an art studio in Kuwait that offers courses to unleash the artistic potential of young students through an interactive study of fine arts and social responsiveness.



What drives you to create positive change?

My inspiration for being a women's rights activist started when, at the young age of 10, I asked my grandfather, Jassim AlQatami, if I could be a policewoman one day. Women in Kuwait did not have their full rights at that time. He looked at me and said, "You could be anything you aspire to be, just believe in yourself and work hard in creating positive change to make this world a better place". And that was the start. I believe every human, girl or boy, deserves the equal right for education and prosperity.

Please share one Girl Rising success story you find inspiring?

Here's a quick glimpse of Suma's story, one of Girl Rising's 9 remarkable stories. Though her brothers went to school, she was forced into bonded labor at age 6, like many other Nepali girls. You can actually watch this chapter of Girl



Rising on YouTube to see how Suma gained her freedom and how she uses her education in the fight to free other girls. All these stories are true stories based on true events.






How can people view the Girl Rising film?

So far we have screened the film in Dubai, Kuwait, on International Women's Day last year at GUST, and Bahrain. The Girl Rising film depicts stories of different girls around the world and how education played a significant role in shaping their brighter future. The film is now available on iTunes. For those interested in taking a step to make a positive change for girl's around the globe, all film proceeds go to educating girls in the developing world. There is still so much more work to be done in the region, and I look forward to continue to be a part of the Girl Rising initiative.



To get in touch with Shaikha and find out more about Girl Rising, follow their Instagram page: @girlrisinggcc Also, checkout the official website www.girlrising.com

We're on social media, tag along!

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