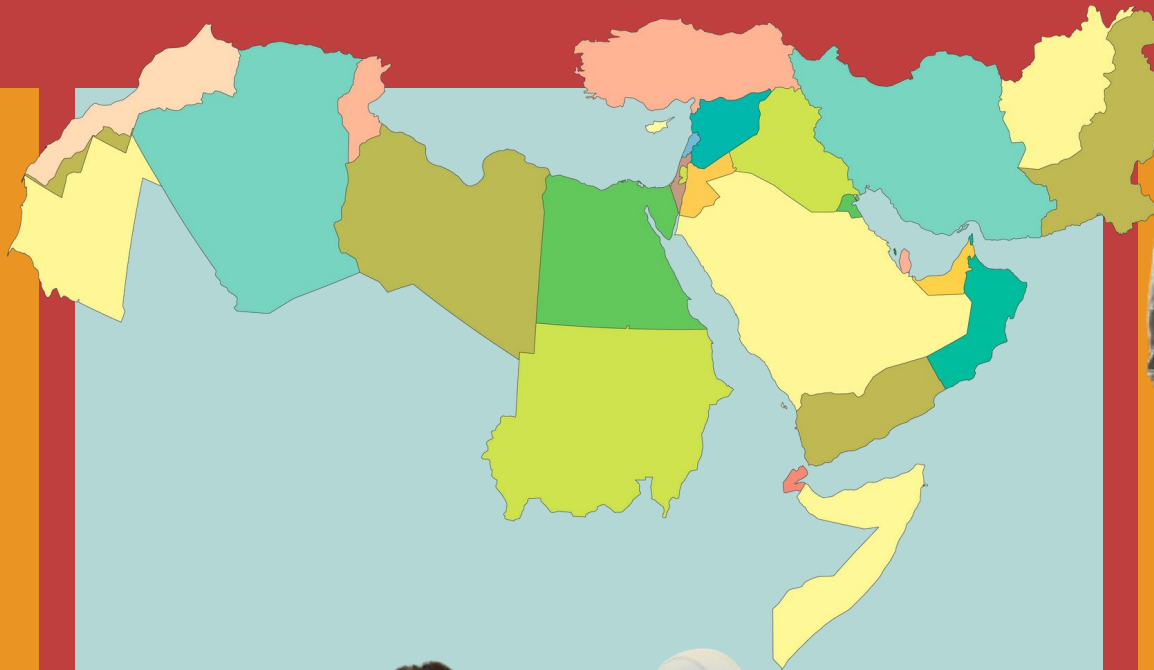


MENA SELF-ADVOCATE NETWORK STRATEGY



ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Inclusion cannot happen without the leadership of self-advocates.

Many more self-advocate leaders take their place alongside families and professionals to advocate for change in MENA.



But there is more to do to make sure that....

All people with intellectual disabilities and their families know their rights


Self-advocates have the skills and support they need to advocate for the change

Organisations understand what they need to do to include self-advocates in their work and decision-making

ABOUT THIS STRATEGY



This strategy is to develop an active network of self-advocate leaders, led by self-advocates and supported by the members of Inclusion MENA



The Strategy team

In March 2023, a group of 12 self-advocates came together over two days in Egypt. Together the team developed a strategy to build a strong network of self-advocate leaders in MENA.



Chaica



Mia



Boutros



Shekhah



Marwan



Arsani



Mounir



Haneen



Salma



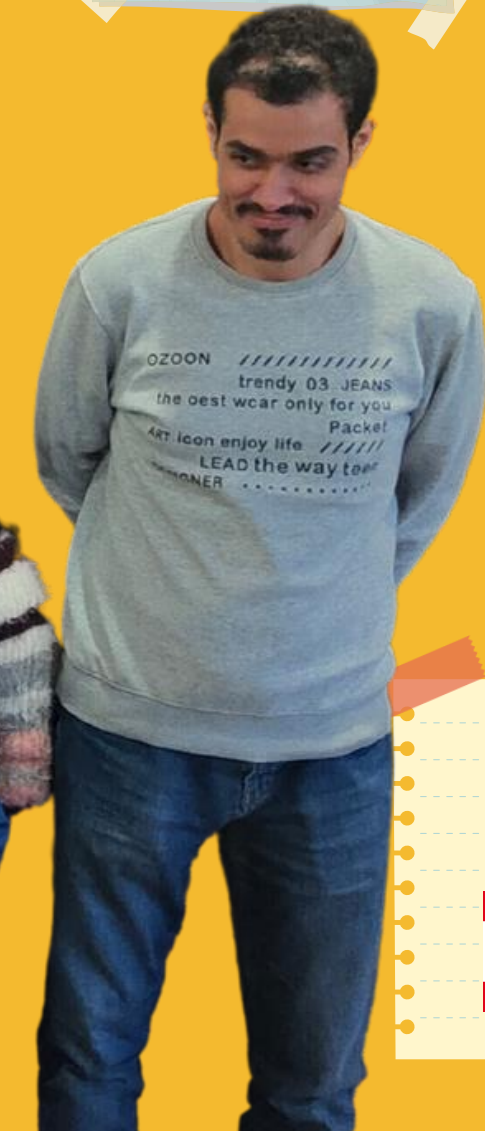
Mariam



Mahaba



Elissa



WHY SHOULD WE WORK AS A NETWORK?

A network gets stronger the more connections and people are part of it.

When we all pull together in the same direction we are strong

We can share and learn from one another.

We can hold each other up when we need help

We can bring our skills and knowledge into one place

Like when a leaf drops from a tree, we are weaker when we are not part of a network

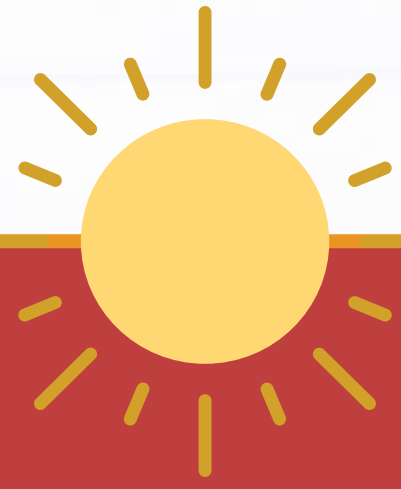




WHO IS A LEADER?

- Wise
- Makes decisions
- Gives direction and support
- Represents underrepresented, minorities, vulnerable groups
- Starts a movement that others can build from
- Can communicate inside and outside their network with everyone
- Listens and gets feedback

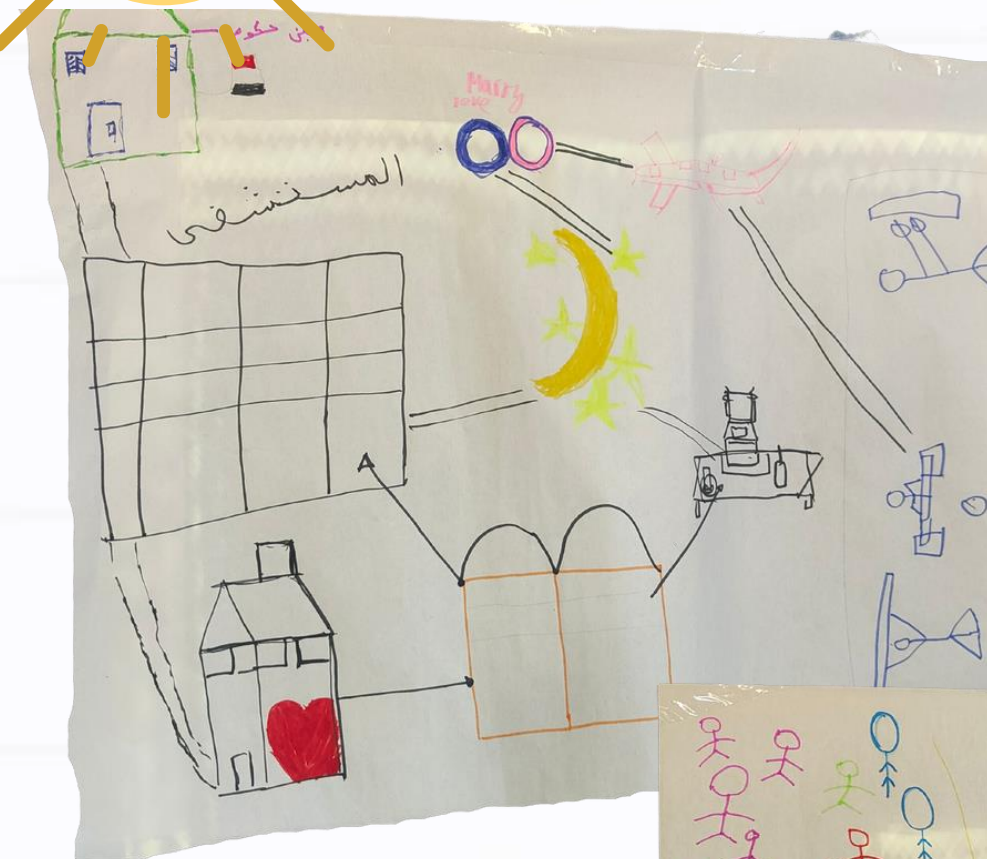
- Persistent
- Fights for rights
- Confident
- Collaborates and shares
- Learns about experiences of others
- Knows their strengths and weaknesses
- Inspires others
- Is powerful but also shares power with others



THE VISION

A strong network of self-advocate leaders would mean that:

- We can learn from each others our good work
- We will heave friends across the region
- There will be more of us
- Our voices will be stronger
- We can make changes happen faster so our rights become real.
- We will have the jobs, relationships, homes and life that we want.



THE GOALS


To achieve the vision we thought about the things we need to do first. These are the goals of our work.




Communicate with self-advocates in the region





Create Easy Information about the network and our aims




Organise training for self-advocate in the region



Organise training for supporters in the region




Hold regular regional meetings online






Have face to face meetings or conferences



Understand about other countries and find new groups to involve



Build awareness of self-advocacy with families





COMMUNICATING IN THE REGION

What is happening now?

- There is very little communication between self-advocacy groups or between countries.
- Different country groups communicate in different ways. For example through social media or through the phone

What do we want to do?

- We want to communicate regularly
- We want to set up a regional WhatsApp Group where we can talk about our regional and national work
- We want to connect with one another through social media like Facebook, Instagram or TikTok

What do we need from our organisations and Inclusion MENA?

- Support to set up and manage the WhatsApp Group or other social media
- Support to connect with one another, for example help to know who other people are on social media
- Support to get new people involved
- Support with organising thoughts and creating social media posts about our work.





REGULAR MEETINGS ONLINE

What is happening now?

- There are no regional meetings of self-advocates
- There is very little communication between self-advocacy groups or between countries.
- Groups do not know about each other or the work that is happening

What do we want to do?

- The group will meet regularly online
- Meetings will be organised by a coordinator
- The aim of the meetings will be for the group to get to know each other well, share experiences of rights, develop knowledge and discuss progress of their work
- Leaders in each group will be responsible for sharing details of the meetings with others

What do we need from our organisations and Inclusion MENA?

- Funding for translation
- Time from a staff person who can help coordinate the meetings
- Support to join the meetings online
- Support to get other people involved





TRAINING FOR SELF-ADVOCATES

What is happening now?


- Our local groups have regular training or meetings and train new self-advocates.
- We do training on confidence building, decision making, sports and games
- Empower Us is a self-advocate leadership training for Inclusion International members

What do we want to do?

- We will bring together a training committee of self-advocates who will plan and lead training
- We can invite Inclusion MENA members who need support with developing self-advocacy groups
- We can use the Empower Us training and our local groups training
- We will develop a train-the-trainer module to encourage more groups nationally and regionally



What do we need from our organisations and Inclusion MENA?

- Funding for training sessions
 - A coordinator who can help with running a committee
 - Time to meet and develop a training package
 - Support for trainers
 - Understanding of Listen Include Respect and how to run inclusive training
- 



FINDING SELF-ADVOCATES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

What is happening now?

- We know there are other groups in MENA. For example in Sudan, Tunisia, Palestine
- But there are many other countries we do not know about

What do we want to do?

- We will communicate with the groups we know about to tell them about our work
- We will send invitations to Inclusion MENA members and ask them if they have self-advocates who can join our network
- We will research to find out about other groups
- We will work with the members who want support to develop new groups of self-advocates

What do we need from our organisations and Inclusion MENA?

- Money for activities
- A coordinator who can help make a workplan
- Time and support to do research and contact members
- Contact information of the members in Inclusion MENA



CREATE EASY INFORMATION

What do we want to do?

- We want to create and share easy information with self-advocates in the region. For example easy read documents or easy videos.
- This will help us all understand our rights and the work that we are doing.



HAVE FACE TO FACE MEETINGS OR CONFERENCES

What do we want to do?

- Online meetings are ok, but In face to face meetings or conferences we can get more done.
- We can get to know each other, this will help us work together.



ORGANISE TRAINING FOR SUPPORTERS

What do we want to do?

- For us to be successful we need good support.
- We can train our supporters to make sure they know how to support us well, respect our rights and help us build new skills.
- It is important that they understand about our work to build a network.



BUILD AWARENESS OF SELF- ADVOCACY WITH FAMILIES

What do we want to do?

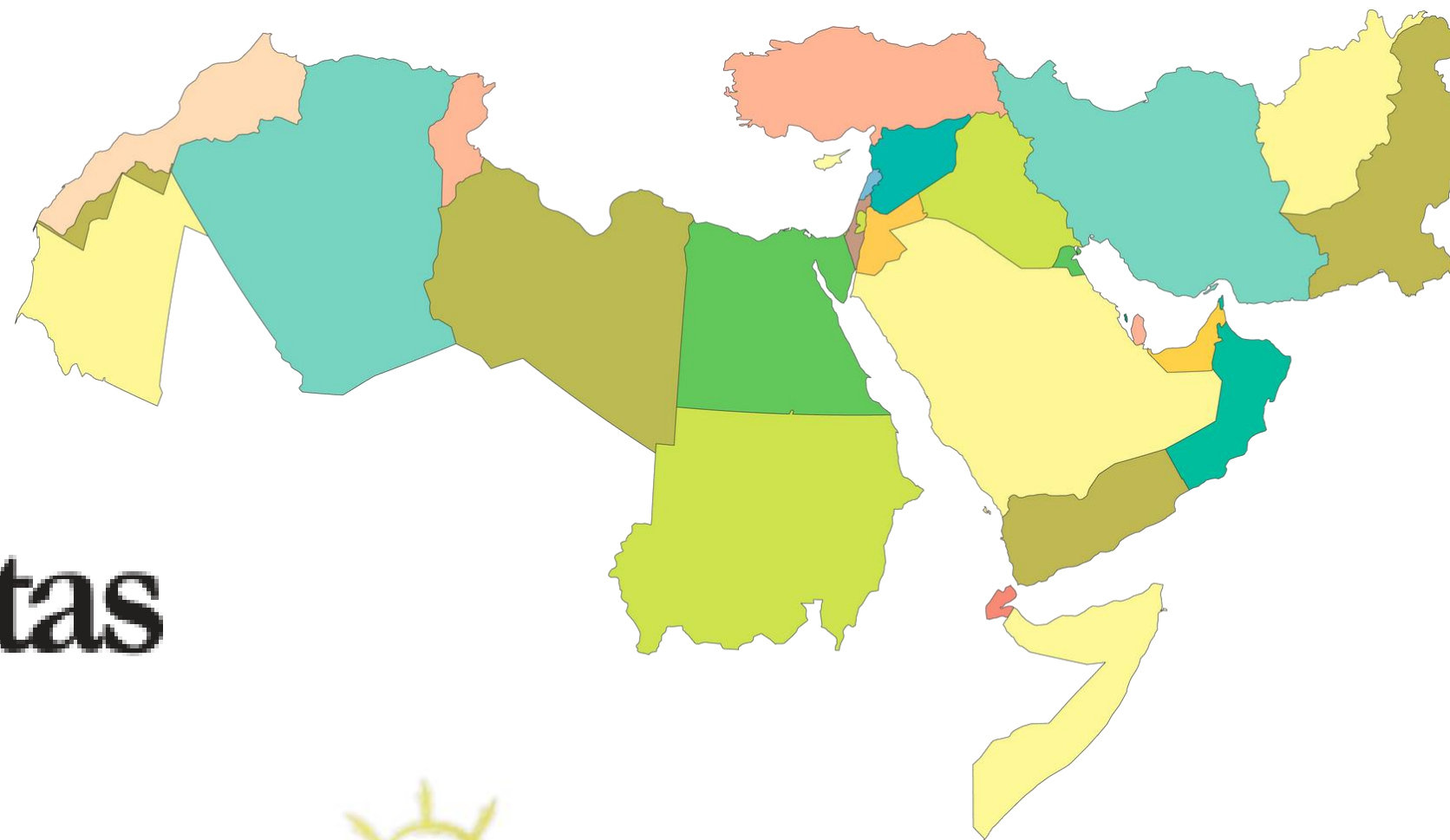
- Families are important in our lives. We need their help to make sure that our rights are respected
- Many families do not know about self-advocacy and the work on inclusion
- We want families to understand about our work and goals so that they can work with us.



Country commitments

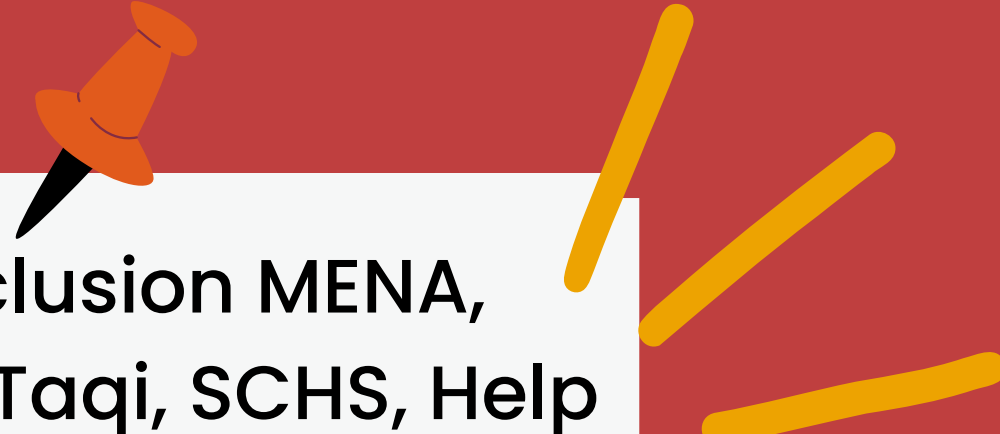
Each country who was represented in the strategy team made commitments on the next steps they would take. These organisations have committed to lead the work on the strategy and help make the network real!

They will update one another and Inclusion MENA as they complete their activities.



THANKS

شكراً



Thank you to Inclusion MENA,
President Hashem Taqi, SCHS, Help
Center and the Koweiti Society for
the Guardians of the Disabled for
the financial support and
contribution

Thank you to the planning team,
Mia, Chaica and Salma and their
support people Fadia, Mahra and
George.



Thank you to Hicham , SCHS and
Aida for organisation and logistics
support.