

Art & Culture, A Game Changer for People of Determination

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Abstract

“The medical profession has come a long way in recognizing the healing benefits of art. My hope is that someday the arts will be considered as significant in everyone’s lives as breathing fresh air, eating clean foods, and performing physical exercise.” ~ Renee Phillips

UN Declaration (UDHR) in Article 27 states that “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.” Later children and persons with disabilities were included in the article.

Keywords

Dubai, People of Determination, art, training

The Collaborations

Art and culture function as a catalyst in healing people, especially people of determination. They provide experiences that are decisive in developing an individual’s personality. Culture and artistic developments are interpreted as integral aspects of human social conditions, but limited opportunities for people of determination to contribute as a participant, spectator or creator can make them a marginalized subgroup of the society. The Arts can have a liberating effect on this community, encouraging them from being passive and dependent to being creative and active. People with disabilities often use arts to challenge mainstream representations of disability issues. to portray a more inclusive way of looking at the world.

Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, which was launched on 8th March enables and develops cultural & and creative sectors in Dubai as the custodian entity. Dubai Center for Special Needs is considered one of the leading centers in the UAE, providing a high standard of education and rehabilitation to People of Determination. Dubai Culture along with the Dubai Center for Special Needs (DCSN) aims to support the emirate's people of determination, honing their skills and talents, and enhancing their participation in the local cultural scene. Dubai Culture is committed to its social responsibility in motivating the people of this category and contributes to consolidating Dubai's status as a friendly city for individuals of determination. Their aim together is to enhance the quality of life for them, develop services, and provide them with the best experiences. They strive to help this community to achieve their diverse aspirations and motivate them to participate in enriching the local creative sector, by engaging them in the cultural events and activities taking place in Dubai at regular intervals.

Dubai Culture works to support and enrich the creative scene in Dubai and to unite efforts aimed at creating a sustainable creative environment that leads to the promotion of a culture of active participation in community initiatives. Dubai has become an inspiring model in supporting people of determination through adopting many advanced solutions and providing the means of support, people of determination need. Their aim is to ensure the active participation of people of determination and unleash their varied talents, motivate them to be creative, and ensure challenges turn into opportunities. This collaboration is a significant step towards empowering and enriching people of determination and promoting a more inclusive and diverse society, enhancing the lives of people with disabilities and providing them with new opportunities for creativity, self-expression, and familiarisation of the UAE heritage.

DCSN's goal is to enhance the independence, productivity, and integration of individuals with special needs into society. Dubai Culture is keen to prepare the infrastructure for its facilities, centres, and cultural and heritage assets, to be suitable for the needs of people of determination and to enable them to visit and benefit from those services.

On similar lines, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) and Dubai Club for People of Determination have collaborated to enhance cooperation in cultural, artistic, creative and heritage programs for people of determination. Programs and workshops for people of determination affiliated with the club are offered voluntarily by talents who have obtained a cultural visa. This initiative reflects the keenness of both parties to achieve the vision of the Dubai government in supporting and empowering people of determination and instilling a culture of participation in community initiatives towards developing the services provided to them. This contributes heavily to enhancing the happiness of people of determination, feeling of acceptance and engagement, and improving their quality of life, rehabilitating them, and integrating them into society to be productive, effective, and contributors to the emirate's renaissance and prosperity.

Inspiring Stories

There are many inspirational stories of people of determination who have achieved success in the fields of art and culture and opened avenues for the community. Amongst them is Ms Ameera Al Zaabi, an Emirati who was diagnosed with hearing impairment, and she was able to find her own innate strength to overcome adversity through art which inspired other artists. Her journey is a testament that people of determination can achieve anything they set their minds to. She is keen to empower other artists from the community and therefore curated works from Khalifa Park Library Art Hub exhibit.

Dubai resident, Sharan Anil Budhrani is a wheelchair-bound young artist, also hearing impaired, and is mentored by Gulshan Kavrana. He uses remote-controlled cars, sticks, rollers, ropes, and spoons to paint. He finds art as the best way to express his feelings and displays rich world experiences through his artwork. Gulshan is the founding member of SFS- Special Family Support Group. From 2010 to 2020 she was the creative art teacher at Mawaheb from Beautiful People, an art studio for adults with disabilities, Since 2020 she has been mentoring Emirati artist Abdulla Lutfi who's a Savant on the Autism Spectrum. While Gulshan teaches artists life skills through art, the artists with special needs teach her what life is all about, and she is grateful for life.



Image 1: Gulshan Kavrana



Image 2: Sharan Anil Budhrani

Mawaheb is an art studio that gives people of determination, a voice to demonstrate their own creative work. Mawaheb's mission is to break down the boundaries and stigmas associated with this community, by bringing the individuals with disabilities and the society together and demonstrating that each individual is unique and special. Young adults from 18 years and above can hone their artistic expression, develop life skills, and self-confidence,

and realize their full potential and self-worth. The main goal of Mawaheb is to build a community for everyone and celebrate diversity. They aim at giving people of determination the same rights as everyone else in the community. They have successfully developed the lives of many individuals with disabilities and improved their communication and social skills through the medium of art and training.

Baker Khalid Yousuf Baker is an inspiring multi-talented Emirati artist who loves to explore the use of bold colors and shapes while painting. His latest piece, 'New Journey' is a blend of rhythmic waves and energetic visual textures drawing inspiration from his surrounding environment. Baker, along with myriad talented artists from Mawaheb, continues to show that a disability does not define the limits but explore new horizons and achieve their goals. Emirates exhibited their collaborative artwork for sale at the Emirates Official store.

People of Determination are capable of crossing all hurdles and achieving their goals as long as there is social acceptance and opportunities. Only when there is engagement and integration into society can they be a part of the human diversity system. UAE's vision is to build an integrated community, free from all barriers to empower the people of determination and provide them a right to dignified life.

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About the Author

Ms. Nisha Tandon, currently residing in Dubai is an entrepreneur with an HR, Training Consulting firm, Talentsurf, based in Mumbai. Having versatile experience in hotels,

educational institutions, and corporate entities, Nisha has had multi-dimensional exposure to the different arenas of work. Her exuberance and passion towards children led to a meaningful contribution to the teaching community and she worked for a significant tenure as an accomplished teacher in an elite school in Delhi. Working in hotels and coming across people with different perspectives towards life, got her a lot of experience in life which she has used in her poems very appropriately.

As a bilingual author, she has successfully released compilations of poetry describing her emotional journey of life through "Footprints" and "Chand Ehsaas." In more recent times she has featured as a winner in a number of online blogging portals and has documented her literary journey in her website.

