

Female Academic Role Model Empowerment, Equality and Sustainability at Universities in Mediterranean Region: towards 2030 Agenda – FREE - Damascus University

THE CASE OF PROF. DR. YUSRA HADDEH



BIOGRAPHY

Prof. Dr. Haddeh was born in 1960 in Alexandria-Egypt to diligent parents. Her father devoted his life to serve his country and had an eminent role in Syrian History as Colonel former Ambassador as well as a founder of the association of Arab expatriates. Due to her father's occupations and missions she spent her childhood, beside Syria, in several countries (Egypt, China, South Africa), discovered, from an early age many cultures and civilizations and acquired eagerness to get on with her life. Along with her passion for classical music (she studied piano at the Conservatory of Damascus) her main academic interest in high school was science and biology. She loved science because of her older sister who was at this period of her life a PhD candidate in the school of pharmacy (Paris V Descartes) in France. Dr. Haddeh always considered her older sister a symbol of a brilliant scientist Syrian woman in her quest of success.

Achievements

- First female Professor at the Department of Ophthalmology in Damascus University in 1991
- Supervisor of the first PhD dissertation in the Faculty of Medicine in Damascus University.
- Head of Department of Ophthalmology in Damascus University for several years
- Director of the Medical Center for Development and Learning in Damascus University
- Vice-President of the scientific council of the Arab Board exam.
- President of the ophthalmological research council of the Syrian Board exam
- President of the council of Trustees in Al Jazeera Private University in Syria
- Founder and Developer of a new operating room in the Hospital of Damascus University (Muassat), and an ophthalmological clinic for outpatients in the same hospital
- Author of many scientific papers on glaucoma, anterior segment/ cornea diseases and cataract surgery
- Honored as one of the Distinguished Academic Professors and Researchers for international publications in Damascus University in May 2022

Dilemmas

Concerned about the challenge of being a female physician in a conservative patriarchal society she got enrolled in the School of Medicine Program and got her diploma with distinction. Not only she aimed to be a doctor but she pursued her goal to become a surgeon. She traveled to Belgium, got a PhD in Ophthalmology and came back to Damascus to work as a full time Professor in Damascus University. Being an ophthalmologist obliged her to deal with patients of all ages and perform some of the most challenging of surgical procedures ranging from microsurgery (around and inside the eye) to a facial surgery involving reconstructive surgery.

The major Dilemma in her life was the tragic loss of her husband Prof. Dr. Hakam Abdul Mawla (54 years-old) who was a Professor of Neurosurgery and Head of Department of surgery in Damascus University for several years. As widow, mother of three children, living in a conservative patriarchal society life forced her to face many difficulties and to handle multiple social and academic tasks simultaneously.

But she had always prided herself on her self-sufficiency and had been self-supporting and over the years learned to get along with sorrow: she works hardly on medical awareness social activities especially in the field of Pediatric Ophthalmology in order to provide wide range of services for Syrian children who suffer from strabismus and pediatric glaucoma. As matter of fact, she proved to be a wonderful diligent mother and an effective academic woman role model.

Prof. Dr. Yusra Haddeh

Supervisor of
112 Masters

Supervisor of
4 Phds

Examinator of
60 doctors in
ophthalmological
Syrian Board
Exam per year

Specific Eye
Surgeries
more
than 120 per year

Books
and
Papers
22 papers
3 books

Contributors /Authors

Prof. Dr. Mayssa Sioufi, Vice-President for Scientific Affairs
Damascus University

Prof. Dr. Abdul Salam Zidan, Faculty of civil engineering
Damascus University

Dr. Maya Hadeh, Director of Digital Center for skills development

Dr. Maiasa Mlhem, Faculty of civil Engineering

Dr. Hala Chahine, Faculty of pharmacy