

From Ashes to Beauty

Meet Marina Awad



Figure 1: Marina Awad

Initially, Marina Awad (26) and her husband, Rushdie, were able to birth of their second child. With no promotion in sight, Rushdie's eager salary of 3500 pounds/month (\$114) as a car mechanic was insufficient to provide for his growing family. They also depended on donations to survive. They have three children. Selena (8) is in second Grade, Parthenia(6) is in first Grade, and Marcelino (5 months) stays home with Marina.

A Seed Planted in Good Soil

Rushdie needed Marina's help, but according to custom in rural Egypt, a female cannot earn a salary. A seed was planted in Marina's heart when a friend introduced her to the Karma Women Development Center (KWDC or Karma). Karma is recognized as a reputable training center in the El Minya region that offers many vocational training.

At first, Awad was hesitant and did not feel competent due to her lack of skill, knowledge, and experience. However, the instructor assured her that after the successful completion of the course, Awad would have the tools to run her business.

A Right Fit

Awad registered for a 10-day hairdressing course. Kind friends and relatives provided the registration cost of 350 Egyptian pounds.

Marina excelled beyond expectation, and as she applied her newly developed skills, serving her close friends and neighbors and working from home, her reputation spread like wildfire.

Soon Awad had customers not only in her village but also in neighboring towns. She became very popular among the women. Throughout this process, even after completing the training course, her instructor provided guidance, advice, and support as she developed her business.

From seed to dream

As she gained experience and competence, Marina was able to assist her husband in providing for their family's needs.

To top it off, they were able to put some money away in savings, enabling her to acquire tools and equipment. Rushdie encouraged her to open a shop in central Minya: for more people, businesses, and income. With the help of friends, Marina finally found a shop adjacent to a house. Family helped them move, and



Figure 2: Marina Awad's Salon (exterior)



Figure 3: Marina Awad's Salon (interior)

soon she had a clientele providing her family with a constant income stream.

Marina works 50 hours a week and serves 25-30 clients weekly. She earns an average of 50 pounds per client. Her average weekly income amounts to 1300 pounds, about 25% of her monthly rent. During busy seasons or for special occasions, Marina uses help, but primarily she works by herself. Through continued specialized education at the Karma Center, Marina fell in love with gel and acrylic and added manicures and pedicures to her expertise.

Marina acquired the tools of the trade, using profits to plow back into her business. Marina has distinguished herself as an accomplished businesswoman within a short period. She overcame her insecurities and, through the Karma Center, discovered gifts and talents she might not otherwise have developed. Officials from Karma Center recognized her potential and offered assistance in obtaining her dream of running a large beauty center.

Reflections on Marina's Story

Never underestimate the power of encouragement. You don't know to what extent your words may change the course of another person's life.

Words are like seeds. Use encouraging words generously. Also, do not despise small beginnings. Be willing to take one step at a time, moving in the right direction. You may not even know where each step leads, but what if a dream takes shape as you embrace change and challenges? You may discover talents and success that will surprise you!

Encouragement is
free, and beyond
measure in value."

William Defoore