

AUB helps neighborhood eateries develop menus in Braille

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Soon the visually impaired will no longer depend on their sighted companions when perusing menus in Beirut cafés and restaurants. On September 24, 2010, Café Younes in Hamra offered the first Braille version of their menu, as a result of a project launched by AUB's Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) in partnership with Lebanon's Youth Association of the Blind (YAB).



This unique project, which also includes training staff and waiters to deal with visually impaired customers, will eventually include many cafés and restaurants throughout Lebanon.

Amin Younes, owner of Café Younes, was extremely enthusiastic about the project: “Café Younes's cooperation with YAB would hopefully be the first step towards something bigger. I sincerely hope that more institutions will follow Café Younes in their quest to be part of a community system where people with challenging needs are fully integrated into society... I would like to thank YAB for giving us the opportunity to do so. We consider ourselves very lucky.”

Fatme Masalkhi, YAB member and coordinator of YAB Projects at CCECS said, “The participation of cafés and restaurants in this project helps the visually impaired become more included in society. If a café provides a menu in Braille, this means that the staff have been trained to deal with the visually impaired and it makes me feel more motivated to go out by myself.”

The cooperation between AUB and YAB goes back more than one year, when AUB took five YAB interns to work in various departments, one of which was CCECS. Since then, the center has actively supported various YAB activities, such as the Inclusive Cafés and Restaurants project, which encourages cafés and restaurants to print their menus in Braille to cater to the visually impaired clientele.

Any interested cafés and restaurants may get more information or join the project by calling CCECS at 01-350000, ext. 4430, or by emailing ccecs@aub.edu.lb or YAB at 01-364259, or by emailing zeina-ayoub@yablb.org