



اللجنة الوطنية لأهداف التنمية المستدامة
National Committee on Sustainable Development Goals

مركز
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ARAB YOUTH CENTER



THE STATE OF ARAB YOUTH ON SDGS



“ARAB YOUTH ARE OUR ADVISORS, & THEY ARE WELL AWARE OF HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR PERSONAL VISIONS & STRATEGIES. WE HAVE GREAT FAITH IN THEM & UNLIMITED CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITIES.

His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan
UAE Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Presidential Affairs, UAE



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HER EXCELLENCY SHAMMA AL MAZRUI FOREWARD

Since 2015, there has been a great awakening of the importance of the SDGs. It is no coincidence that, simultaneously, there is a great awakening to the role of Youth around the world. In the MENA region, over 60 percent of the population is under the age of 30. As the largest proportion of the population, many of the global developmental challenges will affect Youth the most.

Today, Youth represent the country's richest resource with tremendous potential to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. On one hand, Youth bring fresh perspectives to any problem and offer alternative, creative solutions that challenge the status quo. On the other, Youth have the power to lead and drive positive change by "walking the talk" and mobilizing resources for sustainable development.

Harnessing the potential of Youth as agents of change requires providing spaces for them to grow and establish their social businesses; engaging Youth in development issues and investing in their ideas; including Youth in decision-making and ensuring their participation at all levels - from the design to the implementation and monitoring of policies and programs; and, finally, empowering Youth with information and knowledge of their rights, while equipping them with solid leadership skills.

Youth are crucial to achieving the SDGs. Let us work together to empower Youth for a sustainable future.

SHAMMA AL MAZRUI

Vice Chair of the Arab Youth Center



LETTER FROM HIS EXCELLENCY ABDULLAH LOOTAH

No words can describe the importance of youth engagement in shaping today's suitability policies, for the sake of tomorrow's wellbeing and prosperity.

This report is prepared entirely by a group of young leaders in the UAE and sheds a much needed spotlight on promising and inspiring suitability initiatives from around the Middle East.

Whether it is about reducing carbon emissions, generating renewable energy or economically empowering underprivileged communities, this report reaffirms that Sustainability can serve as an empowering opportunity for today's Youth in the Middle East and help shape a tomorrow that is more fulfilling, promising and leaves no one behind.

Abdullah Lootah

Director General of the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority ,
Vice-chair of the UAE's National Committee on SDGs



اللجنة الوطنية لأهداف التنمية المستدامة
National Committee on Sustainable Development Goals

UAE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SDG

We are in an era of unprecedented challenges, and opportunities. From threats posed by climate change, to the societal shifts caused by emerging technologies, the pace of change is truly staggering and overwhelming.

Achieving the global goals or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 as outlined by the UN has never been more important. As we reach the 10-year countdown, the race to zero is clearly underway, and we, the youth have an undeniably important role to play.

Achieving the 2030 targets will no doubt have a positive impact on our lives and we all stand to benefit considerably as the world becomes more equitable for all; however, as the future generation, our responsibility towards the SDGs is not only to support and advocate for them, but also to integrate them within our daily lives.

Guided by the goals, empowered by youth development frameworks and plans, it is clearly the time to shift our world onto a sustainable and resilient path.

The UAE Youth Advisory Council on SDGs was established under the umbrella of the UAE National Committee on Sustainable Development Goals. Intended to act as a bilateral channel between youth and policymakers, the Council was set up to include the perspective of the UAE's youth on their concerns, challenges, opportunities, ideas and future outlook of the SDGs in the country.

This report showcases the opportunities the Council has to achieve greater impact beyond the UAE's borders and recognizes the youth's potential to achieve the SDGs. We are grateful for the privilege to serve on the Council and participate in one of the greatest transitions of all time - as ambitious ideas are implemented to eradicate poverty, protect the planet and ensure that no one is left behind.



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THE ARAB YOUTH CENTER

The Arab Youth Center is a nonprofit organization established in Abu Dhabi under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, and is led by H.E Shamma Al Mazrui, Minister of State for Youth in the United Arab Emirates, Vice-Chairwoman of the Arab Youth Center.

The Arab Youth Center aims to ignite hope in the Arab world through empowering its brightest youth to become the future leaders of the Arab world. The center's vision translates through targeted initiatives and platforms that invest in Arab youth skills across different domains.

In addition to publishing studies about the Arab youth to support policymakers in advancing the Arab youth state.



OVERVIEW ON THE SDGS

THE 2030 AGENDA

A Holistic Approach For A Better Tomorrow

In 2015, world leaders agreed on a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve a better and more sustainable world by 2030. These global goals represent a timely opportunity to end extreme poverty and hunger, fight inequality and address climate change. Guided by this blueprint, it is up to us all to act on this ambitious plan of action for humanity and the planet, and achieve a balanced level of prosperity that leaves no one behind.

The world today faces immense challenges caused by growing disparities of opportunities, wealth and power. Billions of people around the world continue to live below the poverty line. Moreover, the global state of human health is at risk, due to unprecedented levels of inequality, discrimination, conflicts, violence, terrorism and natural disasters. Quality education remains a constant struggle for developing countries, and a puzzle for developed countries trying to anticipate future job market trends, as a consequence of which unemployment, particularly for the youth, is a major concern. Finally, the impact of climate change is gradually unfolding as a global ecological cascading disaster that is now being considered as a direct threat to many ecosystems, animal species and even humanity, given the current rate of rising temperatures, rising sea levels, droughts, freshwater scarcity and loss of biodiversity.

At the same time, it represents an immense opportunity. Nearly 20 years ago, at the turn of the century, the UN Millennium Summit called for a global partnership to achieve international development within a 15-year action plan. The adoption of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 provided a framework for global development efforts and was the first worldwide strategy that outlined quantifiable targets to be agreed upon by all UN member states and the leading development institutions ^[1]. Significant progress was made in meeting a number of these development goals over the 15-year period. Millions of people have emerged from extreme

poverty, gained access to safe water, education, health care and technology. However, the progress was seen as uneven, especially in the least developed nations, landlocked developing nations, and small island developing states, as the MDGs only applied to developing countries. ^[1] ^[2]

As a consequence, world leaders agreed in 2015 on a new Global Agenda for an even better world by 2030. The Global Agenda framework goes far beyond its predecessor in its scope, as it builds on the MDGs and seeks to fill in the gaps identified over the first 15 years, particularly in reaching the most vulnerable. While maintaining the thematic approach followed by the MDGs, the Agenda for Sustainable Development applies equally to developed and developing countries, and reflects a comprehensive perspective on international development by sustaining human life on this planet ^[2], and guiding human development priorities for generations to come.

The 2030 Agenda is an ambitious and comprehensive plan of action set out through the lens of three dimensions of sustainable development: social inclusion, economic growth, and environmental protection. It is articulated around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed around five key principles known as the 5P's: People, Prosperity, Planet, Partnership and Peace. The SDGs translate the core principles underlying the Agenda into measurable results through a framework of 232 indicators and 169 targets set to be achieved by the year 2030 ^[2]. The framework provides the basis for monitoring performance and assessing progress towards



UNIVERSAL

The 2030 Agenda is a universal, transformative and crosscutting call for action, which appeals to the participation of all segments of society.

the goals; it also encourages creativity and action. In essence, the 2030 Agenda presents a holistic approach to understanding and tackling the immense challenges we are facing today, while avoiding the shortcomings of the previous attempt with the MDGs.

The 2030 Agenda is a universal, transformative and crosscutting call for action, which appeals to the participation of all segments of society. It aims to make an economic impact by seeking to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, as well as a societal impact based on balanced opportunities by seeking to achieve universal primary education, and especially to promote gender equality and empower all women and girls. It seeks to address fundamental health challenges by aiming to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and combat major diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. Finally, it targets an economic model that would prioritize environmental and social sustainability, by building economic growth and resilient infrastructures while protecting the environment, conserve our planet's resources and tackle climate change; and by relying on stronger global partnerships to achieve inclusive and peaceful societies. ^[2]

The world reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development through the 2030 Agenda and pledged to take bolder and more disruptive measures to meet the new targets. The SDGs represent an immense opportunity to shift the course of human development onto a sustainable and resilient path. Together, we can build a sustainable, safe, inclusive and more prosperous society that can serve all of humanity and leave no one behind.

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[2] United Nations (2015) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. Online: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

YOUTH AND THE SDGS

A Unique Opportunity and A Profound Challenge

With 1.8 billion young people in the world today ^[1], the largest generation of youth in history, numerous needs, aspirations and opportunities lie ahead for change. As young leaders of tomorrow, it is more important than ever for the youth to be well informed and engaged with the global vision for the future, the 2030 Agenda.

The world today has the largest generation of young people in history, with 1.8 billion young people aged 10 to 24 ^[1] and accounting for nearly 24 percent of the global population. In the Arab world alone, young people represent the fastest growing demographic with over 60 percent of the population under the age of 30 ^[2]. Numerous global challenges to development are especially salient for children and youth. Significant progress was achieved over the last few decades in terms of poverty, human rights and development. However, deep challenges remain, as the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) led to uneven progress. Many young people across the globe are still subject to various forms of discrimination, suffering high levels of poverty and experiencing limited access to basic healthcare or quality education, which has a major negative impact on job opportunities as a consequence.

Building on the achievements of the MDGs and the learnings from their shortfalls, the development of the 2030 Agenda included the participation from private institutions, civil societies, organizations and most importantly, the youth. As a major contributor to the workforce and society in the future, young people play a key role in shaping and developing the 2030 Agenda. Drawing on the inputs and experiences of young people from around the world, is a necessary process to ensure that needs, rights and priorities of young citizens of the world are addressed and integrated across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets.

Adopted in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the world’s response to the most pressing global development challenges. Over one third of the SDG’s targets focus on the needs, priorities, potential and rights of young people, prioritizing empowerment, participation and equality.

There are 20 youth-specific targets spread over six key SDGs:



SDG 2:
ZERO HUNGER



SDG 4:
QUALITY EDUCATION



SDG 5:
GENDER EQUALITY



SDG 8:
DECENT WORK



SDG 10:
REDUCED INEQUALITY



SDG 13:
CLIMATE ACTION

Furthermore, youth participation and engagement is key to achieving SDG 16: peaceful, justice and inclusive societies; and SDG 17: partnerships and implementation for the goals. ^[3]

As the young leaders of tomorrow, it is essential for the youth to be informed, engaged and provided with opportunities to unleash their potential and help achieve this global vision. The 2030 Agenda offers an opportunity to break new grounds. Its success is highly correlated with the advancement and integration of national and international youth development frameworks, plans and policies in the sustainable development context of social, economic and environmental factors. When coupled with mainstreaming of youth issues, a new development landscape offers countless opportunities for young people to thrive and achieve their full potential. ^[4]

In recognition of the youth’s potential in implementing the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations developed in 2018 a Youth Strategy titled ‘Youth 2030’. This ambitious strategy aims to scale up national, regional and global actions towards engaging specifically with the youth to address their needs, realize their rights and harness their energy, talent and potential to ultimately achieve the ambitious goal of a prosperous, inclusive and a sustainable world by 2030. ^[1]

Achieving the SDGs represent as much a unique opportunity as a profound challenge. The role of the youth should be much more than witnessing the outcome of the 2030 Agenda, and instead making them key agents for the successful implementation and review of the Agenda. The youth today is already capable of being critical thinkers and change-makers. By channeling their energy, influence and innovative solutions, the youth can contribute to build the world envisioned by the 2030 Agenda, and take it beyond 2030.

“THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY AND OF OUR PLANET LIES IN OUR HANDS. IT LIES ALSO IN THE HANDS OF TODAY’S YOUNGER GENERATION WHO WILL PASS THE TORCH TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

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[2] United Nations Development Program (2009) Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries. Regional Bureau for Arab States. Online. (https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/arab_human_developmentreport2009.html)
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[4] United Nations (2018) World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations Publication. Online. (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>)

YOUTH AND THE SDGS

Subsiding Existing Challenges to Help Youth Achieve the SDGs

Far from being mere beneficiaries of the 2030 Agenda, the youth have played a fundamental role in designing the agenda and becoming an integral part of its implementation.

With little over 10 years until the deadline set to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Arab youth continue to face numerous challenges affecting their development and well-being. The continuously growing proportion of youth among the region's populations prompts for greater and better investment to tackle or at least significantly minimize the youth's challenges. Education and employment are the two most common challenges facing the Arab youth.

To date, traditional education systems have failed to bridge the gap between the skills needed in the job market and those possessed by job seekers. In a recent survey by ASDA' A BCW, an average of 78 percent of surveyed Arab youth expressed concern over the quality of education they are receiving; in the Levant, this percentage hits 84 percent. ^[1]

Skills training programs provided by governmental, non-governmental or international organizations can be an impactful solution to bridging the skills gaps and providing the youth with opportunities to acquire job-relevant knowledge. These include targeted vocational training programs and increasingly, programs that provide life skills centered around effective communication and negotiation, decision-making and problem solving, leadership, personal finance management, as well as critical thinking.

However, for the poor and vulnerable youth, aggravating circumstances also need to be taken into account in the design and delivery of training programs. The issue here would not be the availability of high-quality programs or institution, but rather their accessibility.

Quite often, they tend to be affordable and geographically accessible only to the high-income segment of society, subsequently leaving behind a large share of the Arab youth population, which needs these training programs all the more.



78% OF SURVEYED ARAB YOUTH EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN OVER THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION THEY ARE RECEIVING

Thankfully, technology has turned into this generation's greatest ally in the quest to bridging the skills gap. Arab youth can now access and benefit from quality education and specific professional training from virtually anywhere. Nevertheless, more efforts are required to reduce their cost and make them more affordable for lower-income populations of society.

Access to quality education is central to the achievement of several SDGs, as it constitutes a core foundation that allows for the successful transition of the youth towards entering the workforce and finding a job. Strengthening this foundation requires that young boys and girls alike have free and equitable access to quality primary and secondary education.

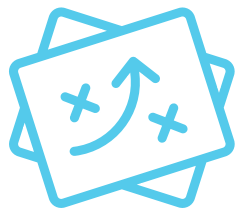
The second major challenge faced by Arab youth is unemployment and the lack of promising job opportunities. In 2017, youth unemployment was highest in Northern Africa (29.5 percent) and in Arab countries (24.9 percent) ^[2]. While high in comparison with other regions, youth unemployment rate in the entire Middle East has not changed significantly over the past couple of decades; for much of the 2000s, it stayed above 25 percent, even during a high-growth period in the mid-2000s. In the Arab Gulf states, which depend heavily on foreign workers, unemployment rates among GCC youth

remain relatively high too. Such outcomes across Northern Africa and the Arab nations are driven in part by the demographic growth of the youth, as well as structural barriers to the economic inclusion of young people ^[2].

While short spells of marginal unemployment may be expected by young job seekers, the growing duration of unemployment is a major concern. Young people who look for job opportunities for months or even years but are unable to secure stable employment, find themselves at a clear disadvantage in the labor market.

Not only are they unable to provide for themselves and their family without a stable income, but they also experience the erosion of important skills that affects their career development. As new entrants to the labor force, young people are more exposed to underemployment than experienced adult counterparts. However, the youth need to understand and accept that starting with part-time jobs in their field or an entry-level job for which they may feel overqualified, can be opportunities to prove themselves that might pave the way for more stable and long-term career development.

Over four years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, more young people continue to be exposed to poor education and suffer from severe unemployment or underemployment, highlighting the need for more actions to be taken in order to realize the vision of the SDGs.



THE 2030 AGENDA PRESENTS UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ARAB REGION, AND IT IS UP TO THE REGION TO SEIZE THESE OPPORTUNITIES AND UNLOCK THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF THE ARAB YOUTH.

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[1] The Arab Youth Survey 2019: A Call for Reform

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FINANCING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Age is the New Guarantee

First and foremost, it is essential to understand that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not intended to address a philanthropic agenda. According to Better Business, Better World, the flagship report from the Business and Sustainable Development Commission, at least US\$12 trillion of market value could be unlocked per year if the SDGs are realized by 2030, creating more than 380 million jobs in the process ^[1].

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the role of young people as “critical agents of change” ^[2]. Providing them with adequate education, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly in the poorest countries and communities, will prove critical to leveraging the demographic dividend and the unique potential of an ever-growing youth demographic to deliver on the SDGs.

The young Arab population is as much a fertile ground for creativity and innovation as in the rest of the world, but without avenues for the acquisition and development of their entrepreneurial skill sets, youth and their communities will fall short behind the ever-changing and hyper-competitive landscape of global economy.

In the Arab region, especially in the GCC countries, youth entrepreneurship has seen a significant boost in terms of enablement. Yet a lot more can be done to allow youth to achieve their true entrepreneurial potential. Youth in the Arab region continue to experience negative social attitudes towards entrepreneurship in the sustainable development field, underdeveloped entrepreneurship networks and insufficient promotion of role models. High business registration costs, complex administrative procedures and limited knowledge of regulatory issues, remain some of the most common challenges for the youth in the entire Arab region ^[2].

Although sustainable development is becoming a mainstream element of the investment landscape, finance is by far the biggest challenge facing the entrepreneurial youth. Lack of access to financial services is an urgent and chronic problem, especially in developing countries, where most start-up capital comes from family savings or similar sources ^[2]. There is an immense shortage of appropriate youth and social venture-focused financial products, as well as low financial literacy levels and high requirements for obtaining loans in terms of age and collaterals.

A variety of activities and interventions can encourage the contribution of youth-led solutions to sustainable development. In fact, the Arab region has already seen some of these interventions come to reality: from mapping tools to connect social ventures with large organizations and funders; to technical assistance for ventures to develop digital infrastructure and plug knowledge gaps; all the way to innovation incubators, acceleration programs and mentorship programs. More importantly, the Arab region has seen the rise of innovation grants, awards and prizes with potential access to investment vehicles, such as the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Business Innovation Awards in the UAE and Arab Innovation Awards.



US\$12 TRILLION

of market value could be unlocked per year if the SDGs are realized by 2030, creating more than **380 million jobs** in the process.

Venture capital and private equity markets are still underdeveloped in the region, pushing entrepreneurs to raise initial funds mostly from family and friends. Simply put, financial institutions in the region are not meeting the needs of young borrowers. Low-income or otherwise vulnerable youth face challenges in accumulating assets due to high interest rates, a low ability to save and small loan amounts. For more far-sighted banks, taking initiatives to tackle these barriers can translate into long-term profit ^[2].

The mobilization of dormant funding sources for young SDG innovators is critical, but it must be complemented by targeted capacity-building provision in order to succeed. Financial institutions do not attribute their lack of involvement to a lack of funding capacity, but instead to the lack of ambitious bankable projects. While the trend over the past few years has been to utilize non-repayable to support youth-led ventures, interest-based loans, convertible equity and guarantees are thought to be better financial products for encouraging long-term financial sustainability and resilience.

Finally, the rise of crowdfunding platforms and other emerging technology-reliant financing vehicles such as financial technology (fin-tech) startups, presents unprecedented opportunities for raising capital for sustainable development focused entrepreneurs. At the same time, young entrepreneurs should always be aware of the equally challenging regulatory and compliance issues arising with these new financing avenues.

“YOUTH-LED SOLUTIONS FACE AN IMMENSE SHORTAGE OF APPROPRIATE YOUTH & SOCIAL VENTURE-FOCUSED FINANCIAL PRODUCTS, LOW FINANCIAL LITERACY LEVELS, & HIGH CREDIT, AGE & COLLATERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING LOANS”

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THE FUTURE OF JOBS

A Structural Reform Awaits

As young Arabs are under increasing pressure to make ends meet, the high rate of unemployment is one of the top five concerns of the youth in the region ^[1].

As young Arabs are under increasing pressure to make ends meet, the high rate of unemployment is one of the top five concerns of the youth in the region ^[1]. Indeed, youth unemployment has been continuously growing to reach 30 percent, while it is estimated that in the Middle East and North Africa region, over 2.8 million youth will be joining the work force every single year over the next decade ^[1].

Until recently, discussions were always focused on job opportunities in traditional economic sectors, and whether innovative and disruptive technologies are changing traditional employment practices within these sectors. Henceforward, the rise of entirely new sectors and subsequent jobs, as a result of innovation and disruptive technology, has made its way into the debate about decent employment, and is being considered as an essential opportunity too.

Disruptive technologies and the rise of digital economies imply structural changes that are expected to impact key industries and labour markets. Changes at such a level bring uncertainty, even fear about a future that seems to go beyond our knowledge and understanding. But the reality is that these changes also bring a wide array of new opportunities, through the creation of new jobs that did not exist in traditional sectors and can lead to better working conditions.

Previous industrial revolutions have also caused major industrial disruptions, but they also brought improvement in the quality of jobs and created new sectors and opportunities that made an impact far greater than before. The current Fourth Industrial Revolution is not different in the impact it will make on society, but unlike any previous one, the pace of change is unprecedented so societies will have to adapt even faster.

Technological innovation introduces new tools and ways of working in order to achieve faster

delivery and higher productivity beyond the limits reached by the traditional industrial models. Quite logically, young professionals are more inclined to learn from scratch, as opposed to experienced professionals who have the comfort of their expertise and are used to capitalizing on it and adapting around it. Qualifications aside, youth are ideologically more open-minded about change than their older peers, compelling the older generations to deal with the development of their skills within the new economy. Nevertheless, a vast portion of the youth are still excluded from the opportunities created by technological innovations, which can be attributed to the digital divide between developed and developing economies, as the youth in developing countries gain further access to technology, while the youth affected by poverty in developing countries face economic exclusion.

Over the past decade, one of the greatest transformations in the work landscape has been the rise of online digital platforms such as Uber, Careem, Deliveroo, who have clearly disrupted existing business and employment models. However, the regulatory landscape in Arab countries has not adapted fast enough to digital employment platforms, and much work is needed to respond to the challenges of adequate income, employment conditions, social benefits and wage protection. Regulation in the Arab world must adapt quickly because all these digital platforms, (and the ones that are yet to arrive), present tremendous opportunities for the future jobs market. On the one hand, the youth rigorously dedicate their efforts to developing new platforms or improving existing ones, triggering the rise of an entrepreneurial generation. On the other hand, these digital platforms provide a viable and flexible employment option for those in need of an ad-hoc job, even though the romantic independent perception of the gig economy - a free market system relying on short-term commitments - often translates into job uncertainty. ^[2]

It is time for regulators to fully embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution and take a leading role in anticipating future disruptions. They can transform economies by reforming the regulatory landscape accordingly, in order to ensure the safety and prosperity of these platforms and their beneficiaries.

At the same time, traditional educational ecosystems fail in bridging the growing gap between the current curriculum and the real job market requirements. In fact, 49 percent of students in the Arab world are unsatisfied with their level of preparation for entering the job market. While this percentage of dissatisfaction is 20 percent in the GCC countries, it reaches as high as 70 percent in the Levant region ^[1].

Considering the speed at which emerging technologies are changing the face of the economy, it is critical for regulatory bodies, policy-makers and society as a whole to not only embrace change, but to lead it. It is also time for the private sector to take on greater responsibilities, and for the public sector to steer away from the notion of “a job for life” by managing job expectations more realistically and adapting to the new reality of the job market dynamics.

“
**49% OF YOUTH IN ARAB
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OF THE FUTURE”**

References:
[1] Arab Youth Survery: A Call for Reform
[2] Digital Labor Platforms and the Future of Work

5 FUTURE MARKET TRENDS

5 SEISMIC CHANGES

Prepare To Win

Disruption requires us to innovate and disrupt our existing ways of operation. To end up on the favorable side of change, we will need to step outside of our comfort zones and prepare for the shifts of the future.

We're in an era, when technological breakthroughs are constantly challenging us. They are introducing new market trends, but the Fourth Industrial Revolution - as identified by the World Economic Forum - is bringing about seismic changes.

As of now, five fundamental factors are expected to change our economies, job markets, interactions and the job skills requirements.

Rapid technological progress

Technology is introducing a paradox of eliminating and creating jobs, but is expected to have a positive impact on the job market. On the one hand, global spend on Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to increase from USD 2 billion in 2018 to USD 7.3 billion in 2022 ^[1]. On the other hand, AI advancements can threaten blue-collar jobs as well as white-collar employees or information workers doing higher-cognitive tasks like salespeople, analysts, HR staff and marketers. AI is already widely used to analyze vast amounts of data in record time to identify patterns, generate insight and recommendations in many sectors including finance, insurance, medicine and education. However, AI still falls short for many complex tasks that still require human skills, and it is expected that jobs related to people interaction and emotional sensitivity will remain relevant in the future.

Meanwhile, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies are expected to revitalize industries, in particular gaming and media. These technologies will facilitate and speed up prototyping, disrupt workplaces positively and enable intelligent collaborations with machines. All these advancements will need the underlying support from the development of Data Sciences. With the world now transforming into a digital haven, a tremendous amount of data is being generated, disseminated, captured and analyzed, enabling data scientists and subsequently AI implementations to improve efficient decisions, accurate predictions and relevant recommendations.

Drive towards sustainability

Global conglomerates are now racing to adapt their business model to address the ever-growing challenges of climate change. It is reported that there will be 24 million 'Clean Economy' jobs by 2030 ^[2]. Global corporations have committed to buying 100 percent clean energy to reduce carbon emissions ^[3]. At the same time, demand for food, water and energy is expected to grow by 35 percent, 40 percent and 50 percent respectively between 2012 and 2030 ^[4].

The 2030 SDGs Agenda and the 2016 Paris Agreement are clear signs that governments around the world have acknowledged human-induced climate change, which is responsible for rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions and decline in agricultural yields. Global binding agreements signal a new wave of "greener" economies. For example, the UAE Energy Strategy 2050 sets a target of 44 percent of clean and renewable energy in the country's energy mix, sending a strong positive signal to renewable energy technology providers and "green" jobs ^[5]. Thanks to the influence of social media, the public is increasingly demanding clear sustainability principles from businesses it relates to. Companies that fail to comply with such expectations will risk a negative impact on their business.

Shifts in socio-demographics

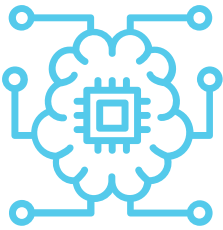
There is currently an unprecedented upward shift in demand for soft skills. Intergenerational skills, leadership management and change management are few of the most common headlines for prominent upskilling courses in the market. Several studies show that employees are three times more likely to contribute their full potential if influenced by inclusive leadership ^[6]. Emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills and communication skills will be fundamental for the success of individuals in the culturally diverse job market of the future.

Rise of personal purpose and responsibility

Unlike previous generations, young people across the world are developing and displaying an extraordinary sense of initiative and civic engagement. Recent surveys showed that 90 percent of executives recognize the necessity of having a business purpose, while 88 percent said that clearly articulated purpose helps increase customer loyalty ^[7]. Day after day, the youth are seeking to attain a fulfilling professional life, with a sense of contribution to the bigger picture. Many established businesses and young startups have already started to retool their business principles to attract, engage and retain top talents.

Shifts in the nature of business and economy

Modern-day markets have instantly made room for the convenience of the freelance workforce, paving the way for the gig economy. Today, it is expected that workers will have eight to ten jobs by the time they turn 38 ^[8], threatening the traditional model of one income, one employer. Furthermore, over 80 percent of large corporations plan to increase retaining the services of flexible workers in the coming years ^[9]. Fortunately, this wave of globalization is allowing developing countries to gain a larger share of global economic growth. The current model of utilizing emerging markets as hubs for technical and sales support will seize to exist, as they will be utilized instead as hubs of innovation, communication, design and production.



US\$2 BILLION

Global spend on Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to increase from USD 2 billion in 2018 to USD 7.3 billion in 2022.

Reference:
[1] AI in Retail: Disruption, Analysis and opportunities 2018 - 2022, Juniper research
[2] World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with Jobs, ILO.
[3] Walmart, Nike, Starbucks commit to 100% clean energy; Fortune magazine article
[4] Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds, USA National Intelligence Agency.
[5] UAE State of Energy Report 2017
[6] Why your diversity and inclusion strategy should consider more than gender and background, EY.
[7] The business case for purpose; Harvard Business Review.
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[9] Intuit 2020 report: Twenty trends that will shape the next decade; Intuit.



CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY: UAE

UAE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SDGS

A Nation Leading the SDGs Agenda Through Youth Empowerment

The United Arab Emirates is proud to have been a key facilitator in the design of the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Contrary to conventional perceptions about oil-rich nations in the Middle East, sustainable development is not a foreign concept for the young federation of seven emirates.

The United Arab Emirates is proud to have been a key facilitator in the design of the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Contrary to conventional perceptions about oil-rich nations in the Middle East, sustainable development is not a foreign concept for the young federation of seven emirates. In fact, the fundamental ideas and principles of sustainable development are at the core of UAE Vision 2021, the country’s national development plan that envisions to give the country the status of one of the best countries in the world by 2021, the nation’s Golden Jubilee Year. UAE Vision 2021 comprises equally challenging targets over an even shorter timeline. Taking this national commitment further, the UAE announced in 2017 a five-decade strategy for long-term development, namely the UAE Centennial 2071, with sustainable development at its core.

In January 2017, the UAE Cabinet issued Decree No. X to form the UAE’s National Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals as the leading government body responsible for the national implementation of the SDGs, including monitoring and reporting of its progress towards the targets and active local stakeholder engagement.

Accounting for 1.8 billion people, the youth represent the largest demographic of the world’s population, and hence should be considered key actors in the journey to achieving the 2030 Agenda ^[1].

Acknowledging their vital contribution to society, the National Committee on SDGs launched the UAE Youth Advisory Council on SDGs in 2018. The announcement was made during the World Data Forum 2018 by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA), which serves as the host of the General Secretariat of the UAE National Committee on SDGs, in the presence of HE Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, HE Shamma bint Suhail Faris Al Mazrouei, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and HE Abdullah Nasser Lootah, Director-

General of the FCSA and Vice-Chair of the National Committee on SDGs.

The Youth Advisory Council for the SDGs is a platform for young people in the UAE to exchange views on a variety of topics related to the SDGs and encourage global ambitions. It is in line with the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations’ Youth Strategy “Youth 2030: Working with and for Youth”, which aims to strengthen United Nations engagements with young people to harness their potential in tackling sustainable development issues. It reflects and builds on the UAE’s efforts in the areas of empowering the youth, improving their skills and harnessing their creative ideas to address future challenges.

In a rigorous selection procedure, young people from across the UAE, both Emirati and non-Emirati, were invited to apply to join the Council by submitting personal statements to identify areas of passion and purpose. 600 applicants were examined on their personal knowledge of the SDGs. Applicants with the highest scores were shortlisted, grouped and tasked with creating and presenting a 100-day action plan for making progress towards the SDGs.

Following a careful evaluation by a specialist committee, members of the Council were officially announced during the SDGs in Action event at the 2019 World Government Summit, in the presence of HE Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations.

Consisting of 12 members, the Youth Advisory Council for the SDGs seeks to enable young people to meet and discuss proposed solutions to the SDGs challenges and opportunities in the UAE, and to develop solutions that can shape national policies. The Council acts as a bilateral channel between youth and policy-makers, to voice concerns, challenges, opportunities, ideas and future plans.



THE COUNCIL HAS ONE VISION: “A NATION LEADING THE SDG AGENDA THROUGH YOUTH EMPOWERMENT”

The Council’s vision is for the nation to lead the SDG Agenda through youth empowerment, and its mission is to recognize the potential of youth in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. Council members have developed a strategy that focuses on four main pillars: raise awareness amongst the youth on the SDGs, issues of today and challenges of the future; engage the youth in the decision making process; empower the youth to take leading roles in the journey towards sustainable development; and connect the youth to all platforms that enable them to voice their opinions and tap into global opportunities.

References:
[1] United Nations (2018) Youth 2030: United Nations Youth Strategy. Online. (https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf)

CASE STUDY: EGYPT

EGYPT’S VISION 2030

20 Million Youth to Pave the Way

With a population nearing 100 million, Egypt has witnessed a decade of radical transformations. In late 2016, the country mobilized around an ambitious economic reform program led by several international financial institutions to return the country to a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economic path.

The most ambitious and notable reform was possibly the Egypt National Energy Strategy that set a renewable energy share target of 42 percent by 2035 ^[1]. In the same year, Egypt introduced its 2030 development strategy entitled “Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt’s Vision 2030”. This strategy aims to serve as a road map to capitalize on Egypt’s potential and competitive advantages and revive its historical role in the regional leadership, to provide a high quality of life for its citizens and achieve economic competitiveness. The development concept adopted by Egypt’s Vision 2030 is based on three main dimensions - Economic, Social and Environmental - and the Vision encompasses 45 strategic goals and 169 performance indicators. The Government’s Action Program 2016-2018 is inclusive of a strategic medium-range implementation program 2030 ^[1].

Although initially launched in 2014, Egypt’s Vision 2030 was reintroduced in 2016 after being fully realigned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt, young people aged 18 to 29 currently account for 21 percent of the country’s population ^[1], justifying the role of the Egyptian youth at the center of the development of the 2030 national strategy. Substantial measures to help tackle key challenges facing youth are integrated at the core of the strategy and were initiated when Egypt hailed 2016 as the Year of Egyptian Youth. Since then, a vast number of initiatives have been, and continue, to be rolled out to provide structural support and guidance to youth across the country, and facilitate financing for youth-led small- and micro-business ventures, which are considered the driving force of economic growth and job creation. In fact, Egypt’s latest voluntary review report in 2018 has highlighted several momentous youth-focused accomplishments, as listed below ^[1]:



200,000 YOUNG PEOPLE

Benefiting from 2.65 billion Egyptian pounds (EGP) worth of loans for their small and medium-sized enterprises;



208 MILLION

EGP were allocated to the National Program for the Development of Livestock, benefiting 1,586 young people;



7.6 MILLION

Students are benefiting from feeding programs in schools;



18,000

Have benefited from awareness campaigns against addiction;



170 SCHOLARSHIPS

Masters and doctorates scholarships were provided within the “Next Generation Scientists” program;



100,000 STUDENTS

Benefited from youth programs offered to students of schools and universities;



1/2 MILLION YOUTH

Benefited from sports development programs and 1,100 young people were registered in the National Youth Project of the Ministry of Youth and Sports;



39,000 JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Were provided through the National Employment Bulletin;



16,000

Direct and indirect job opportunities were provided in communications infrastructure projects;



53,000 EMPLOYMENT

Contracts were secured for youth abroad;



17 TRAINING PROGRAMS

Were implemented to qualify youth for the labor market;



250 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

For youth were organized within the “Culture for All” program;



256 SEMINARS

To introduce entrepreneurship were held, attended by 943 youth entrepreneurs;



1,000 YOUNG APPLICANTS

Participated in local competitions for entrepreneurship, innovation and the arts;



24 PROGRAMS

Were launched to promote citizenship values, with the participation of 135,000 young people; and



14 ACTIVITIES

Were organized to reinforce political engagement with the 116,000 young participants.

Another significant milestone was the World Youth Forum, whose first edition was held in November 2017 in the coastal city of Sharm El-Sheikh. The global forum brought together youth from all over the world, who expressed opinions and formulated recommendations about important issues.

Since then, the forum has become a platform for the youth to communicate with senior decision-makers and connect with other promising youth from Egypt and around the world. Similarly, a group of students from different universities across Egypt came together with the aim of raising awareness around issues of sustainable development and the agenda of the SDGs.

They formed what is now named “The Youth Sustainable Development Initiative”, which acts as an open channel between the country’s youth and the government. Members of the initiative work closely with youth to increase their engagement in the progress review process, as well as building their capacity in leadership and policy reforms. So far, over 4,000 project ideas, tackling 27 different topics, have been proposed through this initiative. Those with solid budgetary and timely requirements will then go through a rigorous Action Plan development process and possibly be included in the country’s national strategy ^[1].

References:
[1] Egypt’s Voluntary National Review 2018

CASE STUDY: KSA

SAUDI YOUTH & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A Vision That Extends Beyond The Borders of The Kingdom

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gives top priority to this endeavor. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is proud to have been a key facilitator in the design of the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gives top priority to this endeavor. Robust mechanisms are in place to ensure that the SDGs and the country’s national priorities set out in the Vision 2030 roadmap go hand-in-hand. To that effect, the Saudi Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP) was mandated to take responsibility for following-up on the progress of the implementation of the SDGs.

The MEP plays a critical role in coordinating the necessary information required by the various stakeholders of the program, such as data, statistics and regulatory support. To keep track of the progress, the General Authority for Statistics (GAS) introduced SDG indicators, which were developed through the expansion of their previous statistical work.

Saudi Arabia launched Vision 2030 in April 2016. This ambitious national blueprint underpins the Kingdom’s efforts to address current regional and international challenges, sustain development gains, diversify and stimulate economic growth and end the Kingdom’s dependence on oil as the main source of national income.

Since then, Saudi Arabia has embarked on a rigorous process to align its national sectorial strategies with the SDGs. The Kingdom’s efforts ranged from bold strategies carried out by the government such as the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, to royal decrees embedding the SDGs within the educational curriculum. In the field of environment, the country rolled out some comprehensive and replicable regulatory and strategic initiatives such as the National Environmental Strategy, the National Strategy for Conservation of Biodiversity, the National Plan for Management of Natural Disasters, the National Marine Disaster Management Plan and the National Chemical and Bacteriological Incidents Management Plan.

Saudi Arabia has notably dedicated significant resources to social and human development. For instance, the Kingdom has modernized its social welfare system to make it far more empowering, efficient and fair. It has also established a range of social protection programs that provide eligible stakeholders with adequate income, childcare, pensions and care for the elderly, support for women and other types of social assistance. Subsidies for fuel, water, food and electricity have been redirected to the less privileged citizens in need, demonstrating a more equitable distribution. Furthermore, the Citizen Account program was established to alleviate the impact of the reforms on affected families.

For its first Voluntary National Review in 2018, the Kingdom conducted a comprehensive review of the status of the SDGs, their alignment with Vision 2030 and all actions taken by national entities to fulfill the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among its findings, the country recognized challenges such as the need to diversify the economy, improve the efficiency of government services, strengthen the participation of youth and women in the labor market, and other priorities that are at the forefront of the government’s reform efforts. Considerable focus is now dedicated to aligning Vision 2030 with the SDGs, especially towards improving youth preparedness to enter the job market.

In recent years, several initiatives have particularly been in the spotlight for developing youth capabilities and participatory roles in shaping the Kingdom’s future. For instance, Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Foundation (MiSK) was founded in 2011 and established to enable youth through initiatives geared to bring about change within four key themes: (1) education and training; (2) innovation and technology; (3) culture and arts; and (4) creative digital media. MiSK was created to serve as a key instrument of support for young men and women in Saudi Arabia and overseas, through MiSK’s centers, initiatives and programs.

Within eight years, the foundation has launched several flagship platforms and initiatives including a number of scholarship, mentorship and fellowship programs. The organization has collaborated with global foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and programmed courses for over 300,000 participants.

Seeking to expand impact well beyond Saudi Arabia, MiSK launched initiatives and platforms that encourage change in order to enable the global youth to become active members in the new economy. Until last year, 7,700 youth leaders took part in MiSK’s global initiatives, along with representatives from over 600 non-government organizations from 75 countries ^[1]. In addition, MiSK provides support to 100 creative talents around the world through a USD 100,000 grant to help develop and translate creative ideas into real marketable products ^[1].

In conclusion, it is encouraging for Saudi youth to see that Saudi decision-makers recognize the critical role they can play in achieving both Vision 2030 and the SDGs, as youth-specific key performance indicators (KPIs) have been embedded into most of the country’s roadmaps.

“
**7,700 YOUTH LEADERS,
PLUS 600 NON-GOVERNMENT
ORGANIZATIONS FROM
75 COUNTRIES TOOK PART IN
MISK’S GLOBAL INITIATIVES”**

References:
[1] TOWARDS SAUDI ARABIA’S SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW: First Voluntary National Review 2018

CASE STUDY: JORDAN

JORDAN'S NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

A Renewed Commitment

Over the past decade, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has witnessed groundbreaking achievements in social and economic development. They are mostly attributed to considerable reforms and investments in infrastructure and human capital that led to improving living standards.

In early 2015, the Jordanian government launched Vision 2025, a strategic roadmap that defines an overall integrated framework for economic and social policies in the Kingdom. The national vision represents a 10-year socio-economic blueprint for the country that spans across all dimensions of sustainable development and aims to elevate the prosperity, resilience and inclusiveness of the country's economy while strengthening reform and inclusion.

The country's efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further entail a number of pivotal strategies, such as the Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights (2016-2025), the National Strategy for Youth (2019-2025), National Policy and Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (2013-2017); and the National Plan for Green Growth, among others.

In 2015, Jordan chaired the UN Security Council (UNSC) open debate on the "Role of Youth in Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Peace", focusing on the importance of engaging youth in peacemaking, countering violence and boosting security in conflict-afflicted areas. The country also hosted the first International Global Forum of Youth, Peace and Security in its capital Amman in August 2015. Later that year, the country's efforts materialized in the unanimous adoption of a resolution on youth, peace and security, that recognized that "young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security". The resolution identifies five key pillars for action: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships and finally disengagement and reintegration. Jordan will continue to lead international and local efforts to strengthen the role of youth in peace-making and peacebuilding ^[1].

In 2016, Jordan organized a consultative meeting at the government and institutional level, to focus on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The meeting helped draw up a

roadmap towards achieving the SDGs and included measures to disseminate and mainstream the 2030 Agenda into national planning frameworks and follow-up and evaluation measures.

According to the latest census, youth make up over a third of Jordan's population ^[1]. The government has shown tremendous commitment to supporting the youth's ambitions and nurturing their energy and aspirations. The census provided help by setting up mechanisms for meaningful engagement in the country's development process and genuine involvement in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national programs that will lead to achieving national goals, including the SDGs.

According to the Department of Statistics, 47.4 percent of youth (aged 15 to 24 years old) earn less than JOD 300 per month, equivalent to USD 424 ^[1]. Meanwhile, unemployment rates reached highs of 35.6 percent in 2016 ^[1]. Jordan has always been renowned for the high standard of its education system and its low illiteracy rate. However, in recent years, educated young men and women find it increasingly difficult to get a job after graduation. In fact, statistics show that over a third of young graduates wait for at least two years before they find gainful employment ^[1].

As a result, more and more youth settle for jobs that are either outside their specialization or below their skill level. More than 50 percent of working Jordanians are part of the informal economy.

To that effect, Jordan launched the National Youth Strategy in mid-2019. With an objective of cultivating the young generation's creative skills and increasing their productivity, the strategy is set up to improve and develop the knowledge, skills and values of Jordan's youth to enable creativity, innovation and productivity. This can also have a positive effect on their participation interest in public policy and public service . The strategy also dedicates vast attention to developing the youth's

capabilities to dealing with current challenges, alongside the necessary skills to anticipate future changes and challenges, and achieving sustainable development through cooperation and coordination between all partners.

The strategy focuses on five thematic priority areas for young people: education, economic empowerment, active citizenship, health and peace and security, with full mainstreaming of the SDGs. This strategy is considered a renewed commitment to ensure the youth are among the government's top priorities in Jordan, with the following objectives:

1. Improve the quality of education and training opportunities for the youth.
2. Increase participation of young people in the economic, social, political, environmental and cultural sectors.
3. Provide specialized programs to integrate young people into the labor market with decent work opportunities.
4. Encourage innovation and implementation of technological initiatives by young people.
5. Expand youth-friendly health services capable of responding to their needs.
6. Support family and community programs aimed at nurturing the positive potential of young people as agents of change in their communities.
7. Expand program outreach offered by youth facilities throughout the country, in line with identified needs and aspirations.
8. Strengthen the role of youth in volunteerism and community service to become active citizens. ^[1]

“
WHILE YOUTH ARE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE PRESENT SITUATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, THEY CAN ALSO HAVE THE STRONGEST IMPACT ON THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE.”

His Royal Highness Crown Prince
Al Hussein Bin Abdullah II

References:
[1] Jordan's Way to Sustainable Development: First National Voluntary review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda



ARAB YOUTH LEADERS



Arab Youth Leader 1

SHEIKHA SHAMMA BINT SULTAN
BIN KHALIFA AL NAHYAN

Sheikha Shamma bint Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan is an accomplished entrepreneur who shares the vision set by her great-grandfather and the UAE's founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Sheikha Shamma bint Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan is CEO of Alliances for Global Sustainability and Founder of the Circle of Hope foundation. A graduate of the University of Cambridge, holding a Master's degree in Sustainability Leadership, Sheikha Shamma is a well-respected industry expert on sustainability thanks to her business and academic endeavours in the field. Alliances for Global Sustainability, the organization she founded and leads as CEO, identifies, develops and invests in high-performing ventures and provides advisory services for global sustainability in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Projects include recycling ventures, renewable energy projects, smart city development and advisory services.

Sheikha Shamma is widely recognized for her contributions in the philanthropic and social responsibility sphere. From a very early age, Sheikha Shamma was socially conscious and has for many years taken an active role in community development, by launching non-profit organizations and initiatives.

Her charitable foundation, Circle of Hope, has spearheaded a substantial number of local and international initiatives; these include 'Wanna Read?', which has placed over 7,000 books for young patients in hospitals across the UAE; 'Beacon of Hope', which has supplied thousands of children in developing countries with an important solar-light resource and was recognised at the 2018 United Nations Solutions Summit; and, the 'Women's Empowerment and Equality Board' initiative, which was created to promote gender equality in the workplace and the boardroom.

In July 2019, Sheikha Shamma was recognized with a personal quote at the prestigious Møller Institute at Churchill College, Cambridge, where many of the world's business leaders have undertaken inspiring leadership development programmes. The quote, which reads "It is our collective duty to lead responsibly to create a better world for future generations", is displayed alongside those from Sir Winston Churchill and Michelle Obama. The quote derives from her long-standing contributions to supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through business, philanthropic and academic endeavors.



Arab Youth Leader 2

MARAM AL QASIMI

Maram is an Arabic teacher at Amna bent Wahab Primary School for Girls, in Bahrain. Maram holds a Bachelor's degree in Education from the Bahrain Teachers Collage. Maram's interest in sustainable development was sparked in 2017, when she was selected to participate in the environmental speech contest, held in Dubai.

In the same year, and with the support of the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Maram launched a country-wide initiative, namely the Sustainable Development Goals Teacher (in-short: The SDG Teacher). The initiative penetrates the traditional education system in multiple ways to ensure maximum impact on youth.

Maram developed several mechanisms to help teachers deliver tailored SDG content to youth across the different educational level, alongside targeted campaigns, events and awards to ensure engagement. Perhaps one the most notable attributes of Maram's works is that she has management to also utilize the power of social media by curating content that easily digested and shared.

Maram has been a part of several international conferences and workshops, where she has shared her experiences and insights with other educators and youth leaders. She is currently working on a book titled 'The SDG Teacher' which is expected to be published in the near future.

Maram is currently a member of the United Nations Youth Group in Bahrain, where she is working on various projects aimed at promoting sustainable development and youth empowerment. She is also a member of the Bahraini Teachers' Association, where she is actively involved in advocating for the rights of teachers and improving the quality of education in Bahrain.

Maram is a passionate advocate for sustainable development and youth empowerment. She believes that education is the key to a better future, and she is committed to using her skills and experiences to make a positive impact on the world. She is currently working on a book titled 'The SDG Teacher' which is expected to be published in the near future.

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Arab Youth Leader 3

SUAAD AL HAMMADI

Suaad is currently a student at Korea University in Seoul, South Korea studying Masters in International Development and Cooperation. She aspires to hold a major role in leading Sustainable Development in the UAE and promoting her country and its culture to the world in its finest images.

Suaad was the Ambassador of the Youth Assembly in New York 2017-2019. She was awarded as one of the Most Outstanding Ambassadors Globally. She won the 1st Prize Award for the Most innovative Social Enterprise Idea at the Youth Assembly in New York which was focusing on supporting young refugees education in the Middle East through the development of an online platform that links all educational opportunities to supports their future.

Suaad Al-Hammadi is the Co-founder of the "Bridge of Hope" initiative, which focuses on supporting young orphans and refugees all over the world through renovating orphans and improving the quality of life and education. The project first started in 2018 in cooperation with the UAE Embassy in Amman. It took place at one of the orphanages in Amman to develop the quality of the life and education for the orphans. They have worked on many parts in the place with the support of many young Emiratis who contributed with items and products that could be used there. They are currently in process of taking it somewhere else.

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Arab Youth Leader 4

SAMAR SAMIR MEZGHANNI

Samar Samir Mezghanni is a Tunisian-Iraqi writer with two entries in the Guinness Book of World Records, as “youngest writer in the world” in 2000 and “youngest most prolific writer in the world” in 2002. She has written over 100 short stories for children, published 14 books, and leverages her talent to advocate for youth empowerment in Tunisia and around the world.

She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Tunis El Manar University and a Master’s degree from the University of Birmingham, UK. In 2018, she became the first Tunisian woman to ever receive a PhD from the University of Cambridge, UK, as she earned a doctorate in Middle Eastern Studies.

Samar claimed the world record for youngest creative published writer. At the age of 10, she wrote her first short story and utilized it to advocate for a new narrative, where children become producers of culture and knowledge.

Samar uses her stories and speeches to promote women leadership, Sustainable Development Goals, youth empowerment, arts and culture. Her work and activism have earned her several awards from world-renowned organizations including an appointment from the United Nations as a Young Leader for the Sustainable Development Goals.

She is currently a Young Leader for the Sustainable Development Goals at the United Nations.

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Arab Youth Leader 5

LUJAIN AL UBAID

Lujain Al Ubaid is co-founder and CEO of Tasamy for Social Entrepreneurship, a Saudi non-profit organization dedicated to establishing an ecosystem for social entrepreneurs in the region. She was previously honored by HRH King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia for her various volunteering activities conducted during her tenure at AlGhad forum, focused on the development of national youth, in which she was a founding member of the strategic planning team.

Lujain graduated from the Al Yamama University in Riyadh with a degree in Business Administration, with a specialization in Finance.

Born and raised in the Saudi capital Riyadh, she diversified her background in Finance by participating in Harvard Business School’s Women Executive Leadership Program, as well as Columbia Business School’s Executive Education Program for Non-profit Organizations.

Lujain believes that social entrepreneurship can bridge many gaps in society by bringing up innovative solutions capable of tackling modern day challenges. Furthermore, she believes Saudi youth have great energy, motivation and ideas that need to be invested in and considered as a national capital of infinite resources.



Arab Youth Leader 6

AHMED BADR

Ahmed is a writer, social entrepreneur, poet, and former Iraqi refugee working at the intersection of creativity, displacement, and youth empowerment. On July 25th, 2006, Ahmed's home in Baghdad was bombed by militia troops. He and his family relocated to Syria as refugees for two and a half years before receiving approval to move to the United States.

Ahmed is a senior at Wesleyan University, where he is a Fellow at the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life. Ahmed is the former host of the "A Way Home Together" podcast, which he created for the UN Migration Agency and seeks to catalogue the stories and experiences of migrants and refugees across the U.S. His newest podcast project is "Resettled" which he will be co-hosting for Virginia Public Media in the Spring of 2020.

Together with the Syrian artist and architect Mohamad Hafez, Ahmed co-created UNPACKED: Refugee Baggage, a multi-media installation that remodels the homes of refugees inside a series of suitcases in an effort to humanize and give voice to a demographic that is often viewed in the abstract. UNPACKED has been exhibited at UNICEF House, Harvard University, Yale University, Juilliard, Iowa State University, University of Chicago, Mississippi State University, and World Bank headquarters.

Ahmed is currently working on his debut book which focuses on the creative expression of refugee youth across the world, to be published by Andrews McMeel in 2020. Having spoken at the United Nations on more than ten occasions before the age of 20, his work has been featured and supported by SAP, OECD, BuzzFeed Tasty, TEDxTeen, Instagram, NPR, Global Citizen, and others. Ahmed serves as one of 17 UN Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals in the Office of the UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth.

YOUTH-LED SOLUTIONS

BEKIA

Founder	Alaa Afifi
Location	Egypt
Main Activity	Exchange people’s segregated food waste
Organization Type	For Profit organization
Place(s) of Operation	Egypt
Budget	USD 200,000
Website	https://www.bekia-egypt.com



The Challenge:

Egypt is one of the world’s leading generators of rubbish, racking up to an estimated 100 million tons annually. An alarming figure that adds to mountains of trash that have already accumulated without solutions.

The Solution and Outcome:

Bekia is an online marketplace where people can exchange their households waste for daily essential consumers good. Customers log into a special mobile app and get a certain amount of points, depending on how much recycling they have. They can then redeem their points for a wide array of products, which will then be delivered to their door. Alternatively, clients can donate points to charity, so that Bekia can bring essentials to needy communities. The company aims to change Egyptians attitudes towards recycling. At the moment, Bekia does not have sufficient manpower to sift through unsorted rubbish at its headquarters. That’s where this model comes in handy, customers kick-start the recycling process themselves, allowing Bekia to concentrate on providing raw materials for sale to factories.



Alignment with SDGs:

Sustainable waste management helps the environment because it saves space in landfill sites, and it can reduce pollution substantially, along with innumerable other benefits. We also know that recycling saves energy and raw materials. Additionally, this solution provides an income alternative for Egyptians by monetizing their waste, an untapped resource. Furthermore, and if not to gain income, points redeemed through this solution can be donated, helping elevate poverty and feed those in need.

Contributing to Goal(s):



ZAHA EXPERIENCE

Founder	Asma Ahmad
Location	United Arab Emirates
Main Activity	Cultural experiences that explore the human and emotional elements of cultures, in two forms, where people express the individual cultures within, or they come together to co-create.
Organization Type	Social Enterprise
Place(s) of Operation	United Arab Emirates
Budget	USD 120,000
Website	https://www.zahaexperience.com/



The Challenge:

Nowadays, people from diverse cultures converge and live in fast-moving metropolitan areas. They travel domestically or across borders to progress in their career and improve their living conditions. According to UN statistics, the number of international migrants reached an estimated 258 million persons in 2017, a 49 percent increase since 2000. In such cosmopolitan cities, we end up focusing more on working than living, without realizing the social richness and cultural beauty around us. Zaha platform aims to tackle problems such as social judgement, isolation, and especially the lack of capacity to relate and collaborate caused by cultural and demographic gaps.

The Solution and Outcome:

Zaha is a platform that explores the intangible heritage of humanity and cultures, where people re-examine the usefulness of their assumptions about themselves and others. In Arabic, zaha means ‘growth journey’, which is exactly what this cultural movement is trying to achieve through tackling the sense of isolation within individuals from all walks of life, and providing a platform for sharing experiences across various mediums. People across the globe are increasingly on the move, each of them with a unique individual culture derived from their wealth of personal experiences, interactions with family and loved ones, cultural and religious background and upbringing, making each of them exceptional. The idea behind Zaha is to tap into these individual cultures to create a cohesive and inclusive community built on our three core



values: (1) empathy towards other people, be it cognitive empathy (perspectives) and emotional empathy (emotions), by exploring individual cultures; (2) social inclusion by gathering people from different cultural, social and economic backgrounds to share and co-create; (3) cultural intelligence, through the meaningful application of knowledge from other cultures to break down and move beyond stereotypes. Focusing on the emotional and human aspects of cultures enables the curation of one universal culture: the culture of humanity.

Alignment with SDGs:

Users of the Zaha Experiences could be searching for a sense of belonging through exploration, or they could be simply interested in learning about others. These experiences are delivered by trained experience leaders or Maestros. Zaha Experiences enable people from different cultural and economic backgrounds to come together and explore the individual cultures within or co-create. The experiences stimulate cross-cultural learning and enable people to acquire new knowledge to better manage their life experiences. The inclusiveness at Zaha Experiences reduces the sense of isolation and contributes to well-being; allowing better understanding and encouraging empathy contributes to create a more peaceful society. The Zaha model leverages documented experiences and will eventually make them available through a digital platform to ensure financial and learning sustainability. The content will provide insights to inclusion policy-makers and cultural guardians in communities.

Contributing to Goal(s):



TUMOOH

Founder	Mohamed Ali
Location	Bahrain
Main Activity	Education Design
Organization Type	Start-up
Place(s) of Operation	Bahrain
Budget	BD 15,000
Website	http://www.tumooh.org



The Challenge:

Tumooh seeks to provide a fun and interactive learning platform for the youth in the MENA region. To spark their interest and make learning enjoyable, Tumooh uses online methodologies to attract and engage young people while creating a unique learning experience which speaks the language of the region’s youth: Arabic. Tumooh also provides interactive workshops and programs which appeal to the youth. The aim is to provide consultations on how to build engaging learning systems.

The Solution and Outcome:

Tumooh is an online learning platform using multiple social media platforms and channels to reach out to the youth, seeking to create thought-provoking, engaging and entertaining learning journeys. Tumooh seeks to bridge the gap between the labor market’s needs and young job-seekers, by consulting with employers on how to attract, develop and manage the ambitions of the youth, while engaging them in the development of any organization.

Alignment with SDGs:

Tumooh aims to provide a platform that reaches out to young people in a cost-effective way. Tumooh engages with governments and private institutions through creative initiatives that speak the language of young people and empowers them to do well for their communities. Tumooh constantly builds partnerships with the government, private sector and even charities to engage with society and invest in the development of future generations.

Contributing to Goal(s):



BIOGAS FOR ALL

Founder	Omer Badokhon
Location	Yemen
Main Activity	Development, production and distribution of small-scale Biogas plants
Organization Type	NGO
Place(s) of Operation	Yemen
Budget	USD 20,000 (for the first phase)
Website	https://tri-s.org/en/



The Challenge:

Biogas for All seeks to solve two major problems: (1) household organic waste, which degrades by emitting significant amounts of methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas which contributes to climate change; (2) indoor air pollution as over 3 million people in Yemen still cook over open fire and many exposed people die every year from smoke inhalation. In May 2017, the World Health Organization registered 23,500 cases of cholera in Yemen, mainly attributed to organic waste dumped out in the open and their subsequent emissions.

The Solution and Outcome:

Biogas for All is an Arab youth initiative that won the Top UN Environmental prize “Young Champions of the Earth 2017”. This project seeks to provide a better life for 1,500 rural households in Yemen through the implementation of small-scale biogas plants for homes and farms. The team has recently completed the development of an efficient model of small bio digester that effectively turns bio waste into clean sustainable energy (Biogas) and fertilizer. This latest model, which was developed by a team of Arab chemical engineers in Yemen, is recognized for its ease of operation and superior efficiency. In 2018, Biogas for All was able to secure strong partnerships with other UN organizations as part of the Young Champions of the Earth program. The team rolled out rigorous plans to scale up the Biogas over the next two years, in cooperation with local partners

including the government and the Social Fund for Development (SFD), which will help in conducting the necessary assessment study across the whole country.

Alignment with SDGs:

Biogas for All contributes directly to achieving many objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. This solution is aligned with the Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), as biogas is less harmful to the environment and replaces the widespread kerosene and wood-based cooking in rural areas. It is also aligned with the Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), as the project can help develop rural communities by providing clean and sustainable energy. Food and farm waste represent an inexhaustible source of combustible substance for the digesters. At the same time, the system also helps in the production of good quality fertilizer for farmers, extracted mainly from the remnants of fermentation that contributes to the reclamation of agricultural land. Finally, Biogas is aligned with Goal 13 (Climate Action), as it effectively contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, especially methane. Instead of allowing organic waste to ferment in the open and release methane into the atmosphere, it can be used as a sustainable source of fuel.

Contributing to Goal(s):



CITIZENUP

Founder	Yassine Bentaleb
Location	Morocco
Main Activity	An intelligent platform that engage citizens and organizations into social actions, challenges and missions based on their interests and availability.
Organization Type	Social Enterprise
Place(s) of Operation	Global
Budget	N/A
Website	https://citizenup.co/



The Challenge:

Around 30% of Moroccan youth (aged 15 to 24) are NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). In major developing countries, it is estimated that citizens spend 5% of their free time in volunteering. Often, people shy away from volunteering due to lack of trust and transparency, and a lack of overview of the impact of their contributions.

The Solution and Outcome:

CitizenUp is an intelligent online platform that engages citizens and organizations by matching them with volunteering actions, challenges and missions based on their interests and availability. This start-up aims to transform philanthropy, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Corporate Social Responsibility actions into SMART Social Impact. CitizenUp takes a citizen-centric, community-based and impact-oriented approach to achieving its objectives, allowing volunteers to help at their own pace and to the best of their abilities. Through gamification, the platform encourages people to be engaged volunteer citizens, or as the platform names them, "Citizen Heroes".

Alignment with SDGs:

CitizenUp alignment to the SDGs is total as the start-up enables contribution to all goals by engaging citizens and organizations into related social and societal volunteering actions.



Contributing to Goal(s):



PEACE OF ART

Founder	Mehdi Yehya
Location	Lebanon
Main Activity	Peace building through Art
Organization Type	Non-Governmental Organization
Place(s) of Operation	Lebanon
Budget	USD 60,000
Website	http://www.peaceofartlb.com



The Challenge:

Baalbek Hermel is one of the largest governates in Lebanon, yet it has no academic institute specialized in fine arts. Meanwhile, the country's political tensions over the past few decades and the lack of platforms for the youth to share their dreams and aspirations, have frustrated and distracted a fringe of the youth away from learning and building a career project, into violent and resistance-oriented initiatives.

The Solution and Outcome:

Peace of Art is a Lebanese NGO founded by Mehdi Yehya in 2016. It is the first unique arts academy in the North Bekaa area in Lebanon. Its main objective is to create a community where artistic and non-violent means of expression are employed to serve society and enhance living conditions in neglected areas such as North Bekaa. Peace of Art targets Lebanese and Syrian youth, children and women from different backgrounds, religions, villages and sectors, who have no access to art, in order to create a community with strong values based on peace and social cohesion. It seeks to reduce tensions between the Lebanese host society and Syrian refugees, to end discrimination and to promote a culture of peace based on the acceptance of the other. Peace of Art uses fine arts as a method to bring youth together. Its programs provide a creative platform and a safe space for young

people and children to interact and steer away from the continuous conflicts, violence and crisis in their troubled area. Peace of Art work focuses on building awareness, fighting discrimination and empowering the local community. The programs' activities include professional training in music, photography, movie production, drawing, solfeggio, with a focus on reviving and preserving the national cultural heritage, as well as civil training and creative skills that help youth and children become leaders and agents of peace to contribute to a non-violent generation.

Alignment with SDGs:

Peace of Art aims to build a young generation that believes in art and education as a way to resolve community issues, and to contribute to establishing an open and tolerant society, where young voices engage with each other in the social transformation in the region. Peace of Art seeks to create a safe space for youth, women and children in marginalized areas of conflict through art, education and culture, and enables them to meet with intellectuals, artists and civil society organizations to contribute in peace building and promoting for the acceptance of the others. It aims to fight discrimination, racism and tribal mentality, and to break stereotypes about people such as refugees, people from rural areas, or marginalized groups. Peace of Art aims to play an active role in contributing to gender equality and ending hate speech,

Contributing to Goal(s):



LIVE LOVE RECYCLE

Founder	Georges Bitar
Location	Lebanon
Main Activity	An instant mobile app solution that collects recyclables from households and businesses
Organization Type	Governmental Organization
Place(s) of Operation	Lebanon
Budget	USD 190,000
Website	http://www.liveloverecycle.com



The Challenge:

In Lebanon, less than 5% of the population practices recycling despite having access to various sorting facilities that run below 30% of their capacity. Many residents, especially in Beirut, are interested in recycling, but they don't know how to proceed and whom to contact. The lack of knowledge about how to recycle demonstrates a lack of awareness and interest about how much can be recycled, both at home and at work. And yet, the capital Beirut has been facing a huge garbage crisis.

The Solution and Outcome:

Live Love Recycle is a social and environmental project to help counter the garbage crisis in Lebanon and particularly its capital Beirut. It is a simple and easy-to-use recyclables collection service based on a mobile application whereby users can request on-demand pick-ups for recyclables at no cost. The collectors use eco-friendly electric-powered motorcycles to collect the recyclable material from the user's location and deliver to the nearest recycling facility. Live Love Recycle acts as an intermediate between residents and the recycling firms. The project also aims to raise awareness in Lebanese society on the importance of recycling by constant engagement through local events and on social media and conducting educational workshops on how to reduce consumption at home and at work, to become more mindful about the planet. Since

March 2018, Live Love Recycle registered over 5,000 active users who made 48,000 requests and saved 100 tons of recyclable waste from being dumped into landfills or the sea. More than 10,000 people subscribed and are waiting for the service to be expanded into their areas.

Alignment with SDGs:

Live Love Recycle impacts eight Sustainable Development Goals. Over 436 drivers have now access to decent jobs and are able to feed themselves and their families. Furthermore, it has created jobs for a number of women, who have been brought on to cook meals for the collectors, and are able to earn additional income for their families.

Contributing to Goal(s):



KHOYOOT

Founder	Basma Nazer
Location	Jordan
Main Activity	Embroidery and Tailoring Classes
Organization Type	Non-profit Initiative
Place(s) of Operation	Global
Budget	USD 10,000
Website	http://www.khoyoot.org



The Challenge:

Jordan is host to the largest number of Palestinian refugees in the region. As of 2014, there were 10 official Palestinian refugee camps throughout the country, accommodating nearly 370,000 registered Palestinian refugees, and representing over 4 percent of the country's total population. Inside these camps, the majority of refugees lives in extreme poverty due to their precarious legal status, with the female population being the most vulnerable to the harsh living conditions, as they are deprived of education and lack basic life skills. Families force their daughters to marry early, leading to an increase in child brides among the refugees. Although these women could work, they are mostly forced to stay at home and take care of the household according to social traditions. Many barriers prevent living conditions in refugee camps from improving, such as low morale due to the feeling of injustice, and a sense of despair and powerlessness that would cloud any hope for a brighter future.

The Solution and Outcome:

Khoyoot is a local initiative created by Basma Nazer, that aims to empower women in Palestinian refugee camps to produce handcrafted products and sell them worldwide. To that effect, Khoyoot offers these women embroidery courses so they can learn the different techniques of creating hand-embroidered products, preserve their culture and participate in the social fabric of the community. The revenue from the sales of the products is used to fund more workshops as well as other initiatives, in order to feed a virtuous circle that

should help creating a sense of contribution inside the camps and spark hope for the future generations. Khoyoot currently has four product lines made in Baqa'a, Jordan's largest Palestinian refugee camp, which supports various causes. The first collection, "Kashkashet Biladi", targeted little girls; every set made, comprising an embroidered shirt and a matching tulle tutu skirt, is sold for a price that covers the cost of another set for a girl in the camp. Another product line called "Tatreez" includes mobile phone covers with traditional embroidery; the proceedings from the sales are allocated to support three months of embroidery training. The "Zagroota" collection, based on the Palestinian wedding tapestry, supports couples in the camp who want to get married and need financial assistance for their house rent, wedding cost or bride expenses. Finally, the "Hatta Tie" product line supports education programs and field trips for school children at the camp.

Alignment with SDGs:

The Khoyoot initiative targets vulnerable women and girls who have mobility limitations in refugee camps due to early marriage. It enables their economic, social and cultural empowerment. Khoyoot teaches women how to preserve their culture and generates income through embroidery and tailoring, while staying in the comfort of their homes. Revenues from the sales fund the compensation of workers as well as the training of more women and girls, and additional profits are reinvested into extra supporting classes such as math, English and reading.

Contributing to Goal(s):



ENTREPIONEERS 2030

Founder	Mhd Bassel Al-Madani
Location	Syria
Main Activity	Seminars to raise awareness and bring together entrepreneurs in a storytelling platform
Organization Type	Youth-led initiative
Place(s) of Operation	Syria
Budget	USD 10,000
Website	https://sdgactionawards.org/initiative/2176



The Challenge:

Syria's youth are its largest demographic group and have been paying one of the highest prices since the beginning of the civil conflict in 2011. In addition to suffering from poverty, displacement, and lack of opportunities, the Syrian youth are now less empowered than ever. In the absence of convenient platforms to communicate on their ideas and future projects, they are limited in their ability to channel their ambitions.

The Solution and Outcome:

"ENTREPIONEERS 2030", the first Syrian platform dedicated to their youth. The platform sheds light on young Syrian entrepreneurs, pioneers, inventors, social workers, athletes, researchers, and active community members, who are working towards achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The core of the initiative is to drive action by young people to create a better world and move beyond the traditional role of advocacy. EntrePioneers 2030 engages youth at three stages: Awareness, Understanding and Action. A simple framework allows public and private organizations to easily identify opportunities to collaborate with Syrian youth on projects related to the SDGs. Since its launch last year, more than 1,200 youth have participated in workshops and training sessions designed by EntrePioneers 2030 founders and focusing on Social and Business entrepreneurship, life skills, as well as SDGs education. On 25 September 2018, EntrePioneers 2030 participated in the UN's Global Day to Act4SDGs as the first Syrian partner of the UN SDGs Action Campaign.

Following the participation, the team launched a special SDGs mentorship program to support Syrian youth inside and outside Syria; through the provision of guidance tools and connection with SDGs experts, the Syrian youth can link their own startups and projects with SDGs indicators, which helps them identify the extent of their contribution towards achieving the SDGs. These seemingly small first steps successfully created a positive impact within the Syrian community. EntrePioneers 2030 is currently supported by UNDP Syria as SYSA platform, and the community partner is MBC AL AMAL.

Alignment with SDGs:

EntrePioneers 2030 is committed to help achieving all the SDGs by playing an important role in showcasing the true entrepreneurial potential of the Syrian youth. The platform contributes to enriching useful media content for young people and serves as a real catalyst for young people to participate in community development and sustainable development. The platform also encourages capacity building in leadership, entrepreneurship and social work, thereby reducing inequality and knowledge gaps. For a country that is still hurt by a long and critical conflict, this platform supports peace building efforts, promotes gender equality in society, and empowers young people with new knowledge and skills to think outside of the box.

Contributing to Goal(s):



ENLIGHTEN BLIND

Founder	Imad Abbas
Location	Sudan
Main Activity	Improving the quality of blind education through digital solutions
Organization Type	Educational Tech Startup
Place(s) of Operation	Sudan
Budget	USD 10,000
Website	https://www.enlightenblind.com



The Challenge:

Globally, the number of blind Braille readers is plummeting drastically. According to the Lancet Global Health, 89 percent of visually impaired people live in low and middle-income countries, lacking access to Braille printers that can cost up to USD 5,000. In Sudan, there is only one public school for the visually impaired, and there are no Braille press centers anywhere in the country. This situation is unfortunately quite common in countries that share similar economic conditions with Sudan. As it stands, the educational system has failed in incorporating Braille language in its school material offering, but a greater challenge that faces the visually impaired seeking education is the inaccessibility to Internet. In 2008, Business Disability Forum published that 70 percent of online sites are considered inaccessible for the visually impaired. Actions and policies towards accessible Internet are very slow to implement, and blind students pay a heavy price in the form of being mostly excluded from the biggest source of information on the planet.

The Solution and Outcome:

For any nation, quality education is key to achieving the prosperity and success of its people. Every person who is visually impaired deserves an equal opportunity of quality education through adequate learning resources. Enlighten Blind is a Sudanese educational tech start-up founded by Imad Abbas, that seeks to offer an inclusive educational experience through three main features : Book Snacks, Equality Net and Universal

Document Reader. Book Snacks is a service that adjusts education courses to be simple and readable for automated vocal engines; the team behind it defined a set of protocols that re-edits school courses in an innovative way, for example by replacing pictures with descriptive text and reformatting tables. EqualityNet is an Artificial Intelligence-powered browser that constructs, formulates, and summarizes web pages by identifying the most important pieces of content in a cluttered web page and removing blindness' verbosity such as images, popups and advertisements. This process helps blind students access inaccessible websites easily. Finally, Universal Document Reader reads a variety of document types from one place, so that blind students can avoid the hassle of matching the format of the file to the appropriate application.

Alignment with SDGs:

In recent years, an estimated 70 percent of blind adults are unemployed, and as many as 50 percent of blind high school students eventually drop out. Inclusive quality education has the power to enable individuals to function in their families, thrive in the community, succeed in jobs, and contribute to their society. Inclusive accessible education can help blind student become independent and achieve their goals.

Contributing to Goal(s):



EDLAL

Founder	Qais and Haitham Altobi
Location	Oman
Main Activity	E-learning, Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing
Organization Type	Social-Innovation Enterprise
Place(s) of Operation	MENA Region
Budget	USD 200,000 yearly
Website	https://edlal.org



The Challenge:

According to international reports, graduates in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) fall short in topic-specific technical verticals and soft skills in general. Moreover, since the economic downturn caused by the drop in oil prices in November 2014, many governments and private sector companies in the MENA region have cut training and capacity-building budgets and spending. The e-learning industry in the MENA region faces two main challenges: first, it is not as widely spread as traditional training methods because of broadband access issues and perception of lower efficiency; and second, it must propose fulfilling programs that rely on proper identification of the skills gap in the labor market and the needs of future jobs.

The Solution and Outcome:

Edlal is a social-innovation enterprise founded by Qais Altoubi that proposes an online e-learning and knowledge-sharing platform for lifelong learners. The platform provides high-quality educational video courses in Arabic and focuses on current and future skills required in the regional job market, as identified by local and international experts. Edlal provides an innovative learning experience for more than 90,000 users from 40 countries (as of August 2019) in various specializations such as entrepreneurship, leadership and technology, for free. The platform can be accessed via various devices, such as

personal computers, tablets and smartphones, allowing users to access content anytime and from anywhere in the world. Edlal targets the 15-35 years age group, across four types of audience: students enrolled in universities; job seekers looking for additional skills; employees looking for training opportunities; and entrepreneurs and small business owners who are often looking to increase their experiences and skills in fields relevant to their businesses. Edlal aims to contribute to the future of education in the MENA region by establishing strategic partnerships with local and international education organizations, and aspires to be the leading e-learning platform in the GCC.

Alignment with SDGs:

The aim is to equip students, job seekers, entrepreneurs and employees in all Arab countries with the necessary skills to keep up with the changing landscape of today's job market. Edlal provides training opportunities that are accessible, flexible, and economical, and hence directly contributing to two main SDGs: Quality Education and Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Contributing to Goal(s):



FEMALE CHIMERAS

Founder	Tala Al-Sharif
Location	Palestine
Main Activity	Filming
Organization Type	Media
Place(s) of Operation	Palestine
Budget	USD 2,000
Website	http://femalechimeras.com



The Challenge:

Many women in Palestine who face various social pressures, especially in the conservative societies in Hebron, are afraid of speaking out about their stories, for fear of being the subject of even more pressure and limitations. These women care deeply about the image they and their families project in society, and often choose to remain silent at the expense of their personal legal or even human rights. In addition to the safety issues in Hebron and the West Bank, women have to deal with poverty, physical abuse, deprivation from inheritance and systematic sexism at home and in the workplace. At the same time, some of them manage to overcome all forms of pressure and rebuild their own life successfully, but such stories of strong inspiring women breaking free from their ordeals remain mostly untold.

The Solution and Outcome:

Female Chimeras, launched in 2018 by Tala Al-Sharif, is a media company proposing a transformative experience for Palestinian women that reflects another side of their life through visual stories. The Female Chimeras project gives women the chance to speak up about their challenges and accomplishments, showcasing the inspirational voices of Palestine through visual stories. It aims to show stories of independent, powerful, strong women, who usually don't have

the opportunity to be covered in mainstream media such as TV or radio. Female Chimeras aims to raise awareness about the importance of images of strong women in the media, empower them, transform the culture by enforcing laws to protect women's right and resist violence against women by enabling them to speak about their lives without fear. It is essential for women to have the opportunity to share their experience, in the hope of inspiring each other to be independent. Female Chimera's work is an attempt to change stereotypes about Palestinian women by allowing them to take control of the narrative.

Contributing to Goal(s):



EDUYEMEN

Founder	Abdullah Al-Ghurabi
Location	Yemen
Main Activity	E-learning, Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing
Organization Type	Social-Innovation Enterprise
Place(s) of Operation	Yemen, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Canada
Budget	USD 6,000
Website	http://www.eduyemen.org



The Challenge:

Due to the on-going conflict across Yemen in the past several years, the education system and its infrastructure have suffered critical damage. Currently, there is a desperate need to help students continue their education by facilitating access to educational opportunities and scholarships around the world. In the long run, and for the country to be able to thrive again and rebuild itself into a modern society, it is essential to rebuild an educational system that guarantees quality and affordable education for everyone.

The Solution and Outcome:

Edu-Yemen is an educational platform founded by Abdullah Al-Ghurabi, which includes unique educational content that will help students either prepare for the current market needs or pursue further education at institutions across the world. Edu-Yemen seeks to solve one of the biggest global challenges: providing everyone in the country with universal access to quality education. In essence, Edu-Yemen aims to provide free elementary and high school education for all students in Yemen by 2030. The platform does not stop here and goes further, by seeking to facilitates access to scholarship opportunities across the globe and assists students with their scholarship application process. Edu-Yemen challenges traditional educational tools through stimulating content and by widening the reach of students beyond their physical location. The

platform fosters an environment of collaboration with partners from all sectors, in the hope of securing a better future for all youth.

Alignment with SDGs:

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is heavily reliant on ensuring public’s access to quality education. More importantly, it is a core foundation in the process of transition to the work force and securing decent jobs. Edu-Yemen is an example of a platform that strengthens this foundation by dedicating efforts to ensure that young men and women have access to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.

Contributing to Goal(s):



PRAXILABS

Founder	Khadija Elbedweihiy
Location	Egypt
Main Activity	Art Interactive 3D Virtual Science Lab Simulations
Organization Type	Limited Liability Company LLC
Place(s) of Operation	Egypt and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Budget	USD 200,000
Website	https://www.praxilabs.com/



The Challenge:

Traditional science labs are becoming an increasingly expensive educational experience. They must comply with stricter safety guidelines, bear higher costs of equipment in line with technological advancements. They also have to propose limited access to students, in line with the supervising staff, as a greater audience could impact negatively the safety in the premises or the efficiency of the teaching, leading to lower student engagement.

The Solution and Outcome:

PraxiLabs, founded by Khadija Elbedweihiy, aims to provide equal opportunity for an enhanced STEM education for university students everywhere by providing 3D interactive virtual simulations of science labs that are accessible, usable, and affordable for educational institutions and students alike. PraxiLabs not only provides an immersive virtual lab experience but adds enriched content that provides students with more understanding and knowledge according to their own pace and learning style. Immersive and 3D interactive virtual science labs that are safe, affordable and accessible anytime anywhere allowing continuous practice.

Alignment with SDGs:

Through the use of simulations, the 3D interactive virtual lab provides students with a chance to participate in STEM learning without compromising on the lab experience. From lowering the operational costs of traditional labs and addressing safety concerns, the online experience addresses the dropout rates of students from the sciences, by creating an equal opportunity for STEM education for students, who lack access to quality labs.

Contributing to Goal(s):



Disclaimer:

In this publication, unless otherwise indicated, the term “youth” refers to all those between the ages of 15 and 35, as defined in the UAE Youth Strategy. The term “young people” may be used interchangeably with the word “youth”.

For the context of this report, “Arab Region”, unless otherwise indicated, refers to countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Levant Region. Therefore, consequently, “Arab Youth” refers to those “youth” from these regions.

The solutions highlighted in the report were selected amongst all initiatives submitted through the campaign, specific to this report, that was launched by the Arab Youth Center in August of 2019. The selection was done in consultation between the SDGs Team at The UAE Federal Competitiveness Authority and the editors of this report. The opinions, figures and facts conveyed in the pages of the solutions do not represent the opinions of the team behind the report.

This Report has been prepared with extensive advice and consultation of Members of the UAE Youth Advisory Council on the SDGs and the Arab Youth Center. These individuals serve in their personal capacities, so the opinions expressed in this Report may not reflect the opinions of their host institutions. They are also not necessarily in agreement with every detail of this Report.

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Acknowledgements:

The State of Arab Youth & SDGs is aimed at bridging the gap in awareness and bringing closer the SDGs ambitions to the reality of Arab Youth. The report will be an annual review on the current status, future goals and foreseen obstacles within the youth context of the SDGs within the Arab Region. The report provides full coverage through data-centric and expert analysis to shed light on young citizens’ dreams and aspirations in the timeline of the 2030 Agenda. The report also acts as a platform for Arab Youth to share innovative solutions that have the potential to accelerate the progress on the SDGs, bringing together decision makers, industry experts and youth under one umbrella.

In the making of this report, several consultations have been made with decision makers and key-industry experts to formulate the general framework and structure of the report. We would like to specially acknowledge the UAE SDGs Team at the UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, for all their insightful guidance and constructive effort in the build-up of this report.





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