



مؤسسة عبدالله الغرير للتعليم
Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

ANNUAL REPORT



HARMONIZING THE ECOSYSTEM



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Message from our Chairman

When I look back on this year, I am impressed by the youth who, when faced with multiple challenges during a global pandemic, still persevered and accomplished more than many ever thought possible. Through their commitment and tenacity, the youth have done their part. As enablers, we must establish an ecosystem to ensure that youth's drive to succeed is channeled in the most efficient way. We can assure that they have the best pathways through strategic partnerships.

Since my father founded the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, our mission to provide access to high-quality educational opportunities for Emirati and Arab youth through partnerships has remained consistent, and our impact has grown. This year, we expanded our reach, increasing our network of private and public sector partners by 15 and touching the lives of over 60,000 youth.

In 2021, the Foundation focused on developing innovative solutions for some of the core challenges facing Emirati and Arab youth. We launched NOMU, a partnership initiative that empowers Emirati youth through high-quality, market-driven upskilling opportunities and hands-on experience in the private sector.

Building on the Foundation's commitment to strengthening education systems that break barriers to higher education, we worked with our partners to contribute to system-level changes in the education sector. This year, we took a major step to improve access to quality online education for thousands of Arab youth by launching the Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning in partnership with the American University of Beirut at the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture. We amplified our work with the UAE Ministry of Education and nine leading universities in the UAE through the University Consortium for Quality Online Learning with the aim of supporting the development of high-quality online programs and making them more accessible to Emirati and Arab youth.

Through our partnerships, we are committed to contributing to the UAE's vision and national agenda by designing and developing programs that equip young people across the country with in-demand skills.

As we continue our work, my team and I are committed to realizing our mission and we look forward to reaching more milestones in the years ahead.

H.E. Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair
Chairman, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

Message from our CEO

2021 was a year of reflection and growth for us. We purposefully expanded our network with the aim of creating a broader, deeper, and lasting positive impact. We made noteworthy progress towards our mission of supporting Emirati and Arab youth in obtaining high-quality educational opportunities that lead to elevated livelihoods. We worked consistently towards increasing collaboration across sectors to uplift the region's education and talent ecosystems. We know our authentic partnerships, based on shared values, are critical in supporting our youth to achieve their goals and building a sustainable future.

We continued to align our efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, and 17. We integrated sustainability into education by going beyond academic certifications and facilitating pathways to meaningful employment and entrepreneurship. Our vision is shared with the youth, that they develop to become self-sufficient contributing leaders in their communities and beyond. As we continue to promote and support a transformative vision of education in the UAE and the Arab region, our goal is to provide youth with the future skills and experiences needed for success in higher education, the workplace, and entrepreneurship.

The Foundation is committed to building an ecosystem in which all Emirati and Arab youth have access to high-quality education and the opportunity to compete, succeed, and create a knowledge-based economy. This year, the strength of our partnerships bolstered our efforts to encourage educational innovation and promote a culture of learning in the Arab region. We collaborated with the UAE Ministry of Education, the private sector, leading universities in the UAE and abroad to create more sustainable access to high quality education for talented and motivated Emirati and Arab youth. Additionally, we expanded our intentional design to fully embrace lifelong learning support for digital and transferable skills tied directly to industry work through NOMU. NOMU is a multi-sector national youth development initiative whose goal is to equip Emirati youth with in-demand skills and experiences that are directly tied to the future of work.

Our efforts reflect the vision of the UAE leadership and are consistent with national and regional priorities as well as sustainable development goals. As we work with national and regional initiatives, we hope to foster more strategic partnerships that will continue to help us scale our impact and achieve long-term growth. Given the pivotal role of partnerships in achieving collective impact, we invite philanthropists, government ministries, civil societies, and members of the international community to join us on this important journey.

Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar
Chief Executive Officer, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

Our Impact in 2021



Implemented

4 Programs:

- UAE Consortium for Quality Online Learning (UCQOL)
- Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning
- MIT Bootcamp
- Virtual Internships

Reached

18,000+

beneficiaries representing 21 countries across the Arab region.



12% Emiratis



88% Arabs

188

scholarship recipients graduated.

Launched
NOMU,

A National Youth Development Initiative.



Created

13

new multi-sector partnerships.





About Us

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education was established in 2015 with the aim of empowering Emirati and Arab youth through high-quality education. In accordance with our mandate, which is to increase access to high-quality education that leads to better livelihoods, we strive to support the development of a comprehensive educational ecosystem in the Arab region. Our strategy focuses on increasing program cohesion for greater impact through authentic and strategic partnerships, as well as knowledge production and sharing.

Our Strategic Goals for 2025 include



Supporting

50,000

Emirati

learners to become ready for higher education and work



Providing a path to sustainable elevated livelihoods through high-quality educational solutions for

150,000

Arab
youth



Leveraging knowledge and technology

partnerships

for inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning

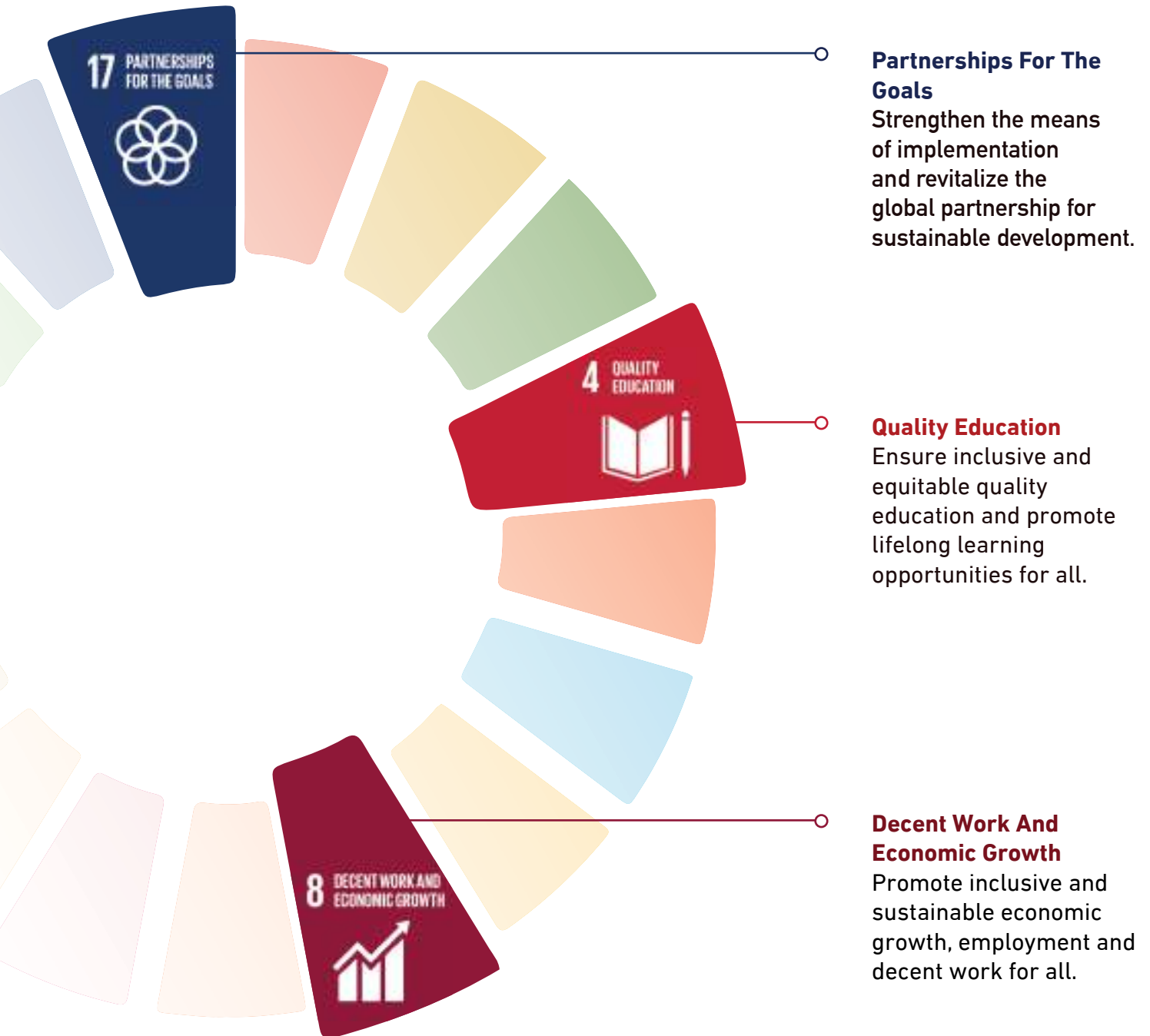


Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

Our dedication to the realization of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 8, and 17 is fueled by our commitment to facilitating greater access to an inclusive, high-quality higher education that leads to improved livelihood, through partnerships.



Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals





NOMU - A National Youth Development Initiative

The Foundation launched NOMU, a multi-sector youth development initiative that provides Emirati youth with high-quality training opportunities. NOMU, which means 'growth' in Arabic, includes transformative learning pathways that will help Emirati youth thrive in the digital economy by equipping them with practitioner-level and transferable skills, as well as the mindset habits that employers seek. NOMU aims to empower 25,000 Emirati youth by 2025 through a variety of programs aligned to UAE national priority areas, including [Projects of the 50](#) and [NAFIS](#).



NOMU - A National Youth Development Initiative

NOMU allied with the Global Councils on Sustainable Development Goals for this Decade in Action to lead impact-driven projects around the world and support education systems that encourage youth's participation in sustainable development. NOMU responds to a call for inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG 4) that leads to improved standards of living (SDG 8), through partnerships (SDG 17).

Through NOMU, the Foundation has committed to:

✓ equipping Emirati youth with future skills needed for career and entrepreneurship

✓ co-developing tailored university and career readiness programs for Emirati youth

✓ collaborating with partners to deliver upskilling and reskilling programs, as well as provide market-driven and industry-recognized certificates

✓ providing hands-on, workplace learning opportunities



Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning was established at the American University of Beirut (AUB); it is based at the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA).

The Hub is responsible for developing and delivering online university degrees and certificates, as well as digitizing existing residential courses. It is the Foundation's first program to employ an outcome-driven impact finance model, assisting AUB in its efforts to improve the quality of online university offerings in the Arab region, providing students with access to high-quality higher education, and enabling lifelong learning.



Maroun Semaan Faculty of
Engineering and Architecture



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Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

By the end of 2021, the Hub successfully

offered

2 online
engineering
degree programs

created and converted

27 online
courses

delivered

1 MOOC
(Massive Open Online Course)

85 students in the two online engineering degree programs



42% **58%**
female male



37% **63%**
outside inside
Lebanon Lebanon



MIT Bootcamp

The Foundation collaborated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) to organize the Arab region's first MIT Innovation Leadership Bootcamp. The Bootcamp tasked participants with developing creative and sustainable ventures to address the challenge of youth unemployment across the Arab region.

Over the course of ten weeks, the participants were guided by 15 MIT faculty and MIT-certified coaches and participated in a mix of in-person team meetings and online expert-led sessions that focused on employment challenges, labor market dynamics, and entrepreneurship ecosystems using region-specific scenarios.

120 participants

69%
women

Divided
into
22
teams

76%
Emiratis

Aged
17
to
35

Participants mentioned that the knowledge and abilities they gained from the Bootcamp would help them in their future jobs. Through the Bootcamp:

 **94%** learned how to successfully identify problems and use methodical ways to produce innovative solutions.

 **98%** enhanced their communication, team collaboration, and leadership skills.



University Consortium for Quality Online Learning (UCQOL)

The University Consortium for Quality Online Learning was founded by the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education in collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) and nine leading universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). UCQOL aims to strengthen existing online programs, develop high-quality online courses, and make them more accessible to Emirati and Arab youth. The consortium is working towards building an expanding network of educational institutions in the region that will incorporate online learning into their operations.

The Consortium designed a four-phased project



The Foundation collaborated with the Instructional Design for E-Learning (IDEL) expert team to conduct a capacity needs assessment, which identified each university's strengths and opportunities for implementing high-quality e-learning, as well as gaps between available and required capacities. Following the needs assessment, IDEL conducted two training sessions for 27 faculty members from the universities to refine each university's program and equip them with the tools and quality standards required to develop effective online programs.





Scholarship Programs

The Foundation launched two scholarship programs with 16 universities. The Al Ghurair STEM Scholars Program (STEM) supports Arab youth between the ages of 17 and 30 who want to pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM). The Al Ghurair Open Learning Scholars Program (OLSP) provides Arab youth with access to accredited online degrees and credentials from leading universities. Both programs provide high achieving, underserved Arab youth with financial assistance as well as academic and nonacademic support.

Scholarship Programs

To date,

418 scholars have graduated with 64% OLSP and 36% STEM graduates. In 2020 and 2021, the Foundation awarded the final set of scholarships for STEM and OLSP, respectively, expecting the last cohort to graduate in 2024.

This year,

189 scholars graduated from both programs. The scholarship team will continue to support the final enrolled cohorts to succeed beyond just academics with:

- **Mentorship**
- **Workplace learning**
- **Community service**

Mentorship

Across five mentorship cycles, the Foundation matched over 300 mentees with over 250 mentors. In 2021:

 Mentors	133
 Mentees	147

Workplace Learning

172 scholars completed internships with prominent local and multinational corporations, including Procter & Gamble, Amazon, and Deloitte.

Being an AGFE scholar was a significant milestone in my life. Not only did the scholarship give me the financial support I needed to pursue my studies, but it also contributed to my personal and career development by providing a full support system and the opportunity to give back to my community.

Najwa El Zini, an AGFE alumni from Lebanon who pursued a BS in Mathematics at the American University of Beirut

Community Service

Our scholars completed 7,400+ hours of community service, broadening the giving for good reach of the Foundation. They also gained leadership experience and developed their skills contributing to organizations such as the [United Nations](#), [Expo 2020](#), [MMKN](#), [Lebanese Impact Association](#), and Emirates Association for the Visually Impaired.

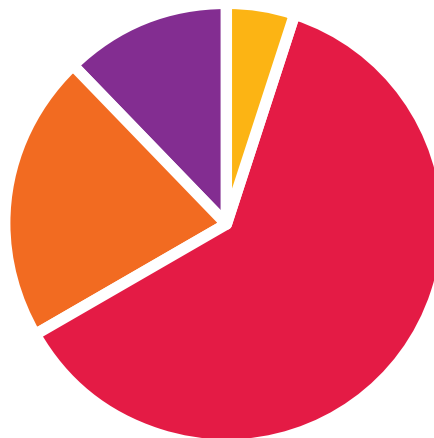
Scholarship Programs

The Al Ghurair Scholars Alumni Network

The Al Ghurair Scholars Alumni Network supports alumni in their transition to the workplace. The network has launched and activated 12 unique chapters and elected their respective leaders to steer their activities.

The alumni newsletter shares a variety of relevant content such as news, updates, job vacancies, skill development opportunities, and alumni accomplishments.

Status of 397 alumni



📍 61% Employed/Pursuing an internship

📍 12% Seeking opportunities

📍 21% Pursuing further studies

📍 5% Other



2021 updates

**First alumni
reunion
(virtually)**

**189 new
alumni
network
members**

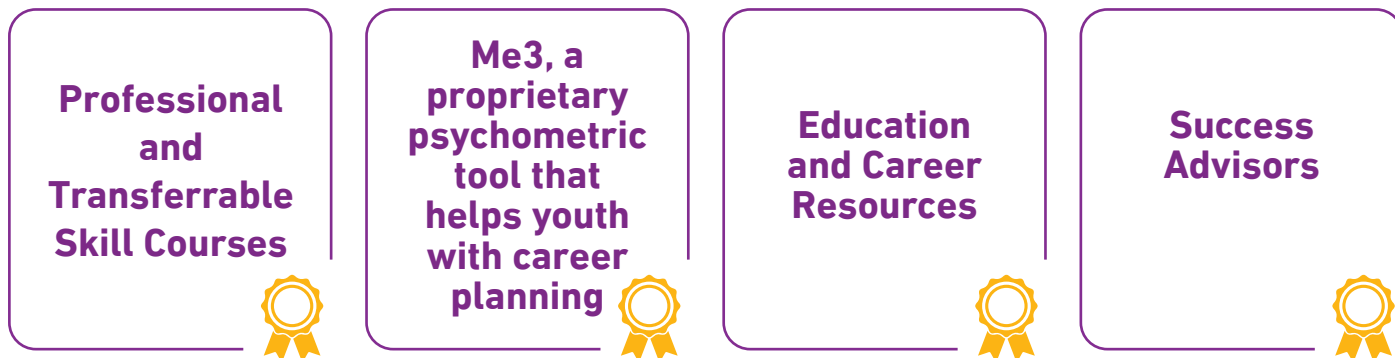
**6 editions of
the alumni
newsletter**



Al Ghurair Young Thinkers Program

The [Al Ghurair Young Thinkers Program](#) (YTP) is the Foundation's award-winning digital platform that provides youth with vital tools for success. These include transferable skill development courses and university preparation and career readiness resources. The program offers free contextualized tools and information in Arabic and English to help youth overcome digital barriers and the unfortunate lack of high-quality Arabic content online.

YTP has four components



The Foundation works with a variety of organizations including NGOs, higher education institutions, and government bodies, to promote YTP. Many of them have fully integrated YTP into their mandates and operations, allowing students to interact with the platform on a regular basis. This year, YTP reached over **18,000** youth, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to just under **50,000**, more than ten times the program's initial five-year target of **5,000**.

YTP Wins Gold Prize at Reimagine Education Awards

In December, YTP was awarded the gold prize in the Best Online Program category of the QS-Wharton Reimagine Education Awards. The Award, which honors organizations that work to improve student learning outcomes, recognizes AGFE's efforts to provide key skill-building resources and tools to youth.



Collaborators in 2021





Virtual Internships

The Foundation implemented a pilot program in the UAE in collaboration with [Virtual Internships](#). The program offers a guaranteed local and international virtual work placement program, a curated student support system through mentor coaching and career planning, and an online professional development hub. The Foundation collaborated with Zayed University to welcome the pilot first cohort of 15 graduating students. After completing a virtual internship, participants reported better job prospects, more career opportunities, and improved digital and professional skills.

**Companies based in 8 countries from
different industries, including**



**Computer Science
and IT**



Finance



**Green
Technology**



**International
Studies**



Business



Knowledge Production

The Foundation shares expertise to help build a regional community of evidence-informed decision-makers. By providing policymakers and other stakeholders with policy-focused and evidence-based support, the Foundation has established itself as a regional thought leader. In 2021, we shared 12 publications.

Mainstream Media

- ✓ [Online learning models are flexible and scalable](#) (Ed Arabia)
- ✓ [Pandemic shockwaves reset the global education landscape](#)
- ✓ [Celebrating the heroes of International Day of Education](#) (Arabian Business; February 7, 2021)
- ✓ [From education-to-employment: transitions matter for Arab youth](#) (Forbes Middle East; May 31, 2021)
- ✓ [Global partnerships are needed to strengthen education for 80 million refugees](#) (Al-Fanar media; June 20, 2021)
- ✓ [Why partnerships are the key to sustainability in education](#)
- ✓ [Why fresh graduates need effective internships](#) (Arabian Business; August 30, 2021)
- ✓ [5 ways multinational corporations can have a greater impact on the SDGs](#) (World Economic Forum; September 13, 2021)
- ✓ [3 Ways the private sector can help upskill Arab youth](#) (Forbes Middle East; November 15, 2021)

Reports

- ✓ [Addressing Youth Unemployment: Training the Arab Region's Next Generation of Entrepreneurs, co-written with MIT Bootcamps](#)
- ✓ [High, Low, or No Tech? A Roundtable Discussion on the Role of Technology in Refugee Education, co-written with Save the Children UK and EdTech Hub](#)
- ✓ [Impact Report 2015 – 2020: Building a Stronger Tomorrow](#)

Spotlights

- ✓ [MIT Bootcamp](#)
- ✓ [Al Ghurair Scholarships Program](#)
- ✓ [AGFE and Zayed University](#)
- ✓ [Internships to Enhance Employability](#)
- ✓ [AGFE's Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- ✓ [Celebrating Three Years of YTP](#)
- ✓ [Supporting the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem](#)
- ✓ [Mentoring Youth: from Education to Employment](#)
- ✓ [Strategic Partnerships for Greater Impact](#)



Thought Leadership Engagements

We drive thought leadership and bring relevant stakeholders together to identify challenges and brainstorm innovative solutions. Our engagements enable us to reach a larger audience while also broadening and deepening our understanding of our beneficiaries and partners. We discuss prominent issues, connect changemakers, and highlight the perspectives of young Arabs.

Thought Leadership Engagements

Refugee Roundtable

Every year, the Foundation hosts a refugee roundtable to hear from and amplify the voices of refugees. This year, we focused on innovative methodologies, best practices, and concerns about edtech adoption and the appropriate use of non- and low-tech methods. The importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in addressing issues related to edtech adoption was emphasized during the roundtable.

Co-organizers

Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education , Save the Children UK, and EdTech Hub

Open Learning in the Arab Region

This event brought together distinguished voices from the higher education ecosystem in the Arab region to discuss challenges, learn from experiences, and lay the foundations for action to promote and facilitate open and inclusive learning across the Arab Region.

Co-organizers

Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, Community Jameel, [American University Beirut](#), and [Jameel World Education Lab \(J-WEL\)](#)

The Foundation launched Youth Talks to amplify the voices of youth and to give them a platform to speak directly to senior leaders in the private sector about their experiences navigating their educational and employment pathways.

Youth Talks 1

Obstacles to Education: Inspiring Stories from Arab Youth Who Rose Above

This event featured the Foundation's scholars as speakers, as well as audience members from the private sector. Our scholars discussed their paths to higher education and employment, as well as the difficulties they encountered, such as escaping conflict zones, navigating university as first-generation students, and dealing with personal issues.

Co-organizers: [Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education](#) and [Accenture](#)

Youth Talks 2

Contributing to Sustainable Development Goals

This youth talk emphasized the voices of the Foundation's scholars who received a high-quality education and are now self-sufficient. Scholars shared their stories about how meaningful opportunities helped them improve their lives during the event.

Organizer: [Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education](#)



Get Involved

To learn more about our work and to stay updated with Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education news:

Visit our website www.alghurairfoundation.org

Connect with us on social media:

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-  Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

Reach out directly

Email: info@alghurairfoundation.org
Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education
P.O Box 6999
Dubai, United Arab Emirates