



مؤسسة عبدالله الغرير للتعليم  
Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education



**WORLD BANK GROUP**

## **Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, World Bank Group Announce New Partnership to Improve Opportunities for Arab Youth**

**DUBAI, February 14, 2017** - The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education and the World Bank Group announced today a new strategic partnership focused on improving the quality and relevance of education for Arab children and youth.

The partnership will be guided by the Education for Competitiveness initiative, or E4C, developed jointly by the World Bank Group and the Islamic Development Bank Group, with the support of regional and international partners. E4C offers transformative interventions to improve education systems. These include expanding early childhood development, strengthening early grade learning; promoting information for accountability, enhancing career guidance and opportunities, and boosting 21st century skills and values.

*“With the support of our Chairman, Abdulaziz Al Ghurair, a renowned business leader, we are well positioned to develop programs that respond to the needs of the job market. Through this partnership, we hope to encourage more Foundations to take part in strategic efforts with governmental, multilateral, and civil society sectors to promote education innovation and achieve scale,”* said **Maysa Jalbout, Chief Executive Officer of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education.**

Youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) stands at 25 percent for males and 47 percent for females—the highest of all regions across the world. While graduates cannot find jobs, more than one-third of employers in MENA identify skills shortages as a major constraint to business operation and firm growth. One of the main reasons for the skills mismatch is the quality of education. Learning outcomes in the region are among the lowest in the world as demonstrated in international assessments. For example, in the recent 2015 Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), all MENA countries ranked below the international average, with only Dubai scoring above the average.

*“This partnership will bolster our regional efforts to achieve a high quality education and brighter future for all. Realizing the promise of education for development is within our reach and our youth deserve nothing less,”* said **Hafez Ghanem, World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa.**

The partnership follows the launch of a new Platform for Education announced by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim earlier this week, which will be hosted annually at the World Government Summit in Dubai. The Platform will serve as a space to share global experience on education, launch new initiatives, and spark high-level debate and exchange among leaders, experts, and policymakers.

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education and the World Bank Group will leverage their expertise and partnerships, and focus their E4C partnership on improving school to work transition by enhancing career guidance and opportunities, and boosting 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to Arab youth. Some concrete examples include:

- Supporting a school counseling graduate program that will train school counselors in college preparation and career guidance.
- Providing access to career guidance materials and resources online that are customized to the needs of students in the region.

- Offering educational opportunities for Arab youth, including skills development programs, bootcamps, internships, mentoring, and research to better prepare them for jobs demanded in the region.

**Note to editors:**

The **Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education**, founded in 2015 and based in Dubai, is the largest privately funded foundation in the Arab world focused exclusively on education. It aims to improve access to quality education for high-achieving, underserved Emirati and Arab youth. Abdulla Al Ghurair pledged one third of his wealth to the Foundation and set out a target of reaching 15,000 youth over the next 10 years via secondary and higher education programs and scholarships valued at over US\$1 billion.

[www.alghurairfoundation.org](http://www.alghurairfoundation.org)

The **World Bank Group's** (WBG) mission is to fight poverty and improve living standards for people in the developing world. The Bank Group is the world's largest external financier of education in developing countries, from pre-primary and primary education all the way to higher education. Since 2000, the Bank Group has invested US\$46 billion in education.

[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

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