



WHAT DO WE DO?

AGFE'S IMPACT



What Do We Do? AGFE's Impact

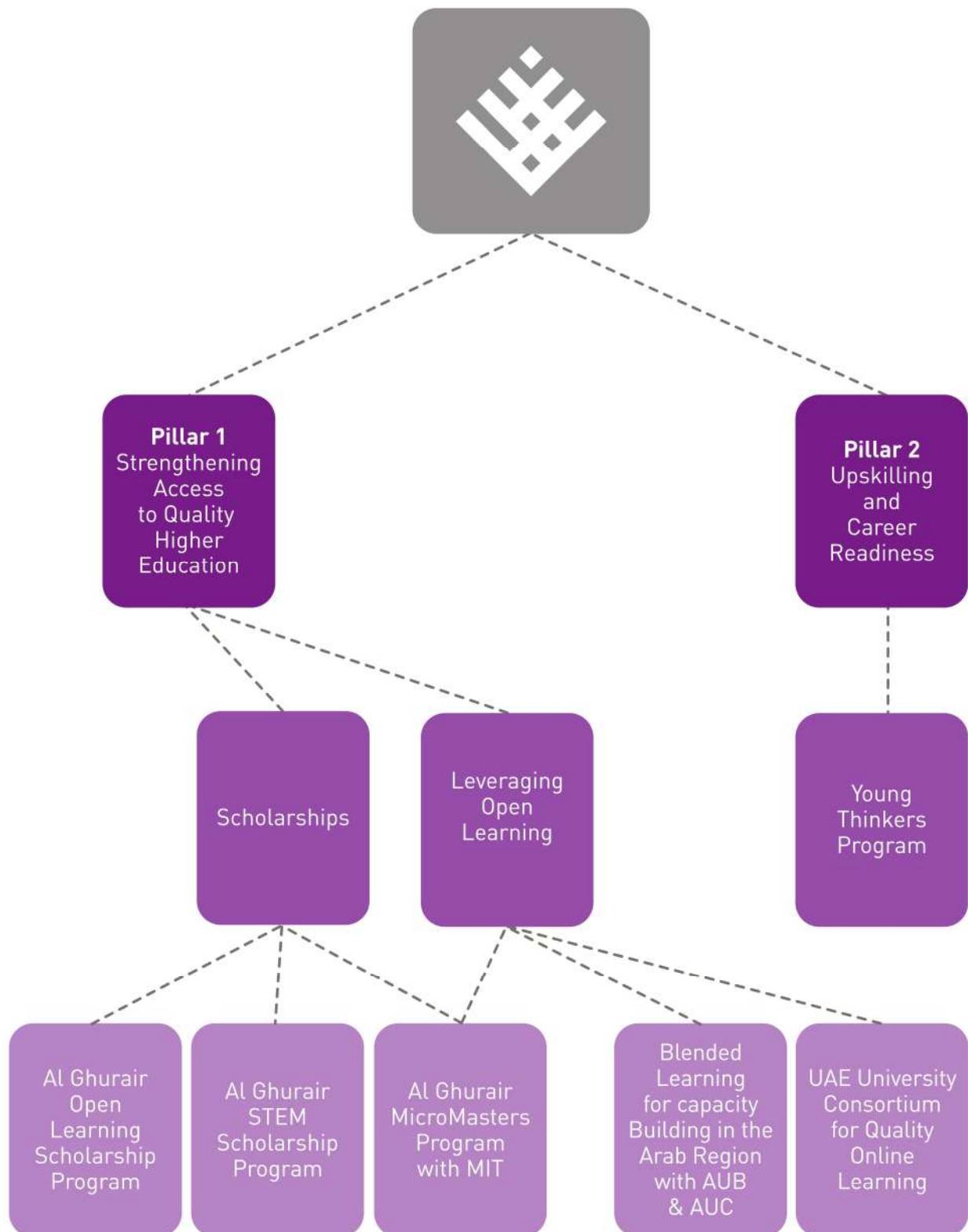
Over the past five years, AGFE has created multiple opportunities to activate the untapped potential of Emirati and Arab youth by providing scholarships, support, and skills training to underserved, high-achieving students. Moreover, AGFE has created strategic partnerships to provide and advance innovative educational solutions that respond to an underserved need through programs such as YTP. As we plan our way forward and prepare to create more partnerships to positively impact the educational ecosystem in the UAE and the Arab region, we take the opportunity to reflect on our most notable

achievements over the past five years.

In this impact report, we focus on the two main pillars of AGFE's work: **Strengthening Access to Quality Higher Education** and **Upskilling and Career Readiness** and present the programs that have been implemented from the inception of the Foundation until the end of 2020. The report dissects the outcomes of the programs and partnerships and lays the foundation for AGFE's vision of furthering our impact in the next five years.



AGFE's Work Under the Two Main Pillars 2015-2020



PILLAR 1: STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



In keeping with SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) 4, whose objective is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promote lifelong learning by 2030, the Al Ghurair scholarship programs aim to provide high-achieving underserved Arab youth with access to relevant and high-quality higher education opportunities in top-quality universities.

- Target 4.3: Equal access to affordable technical, vocational, and higher education
- Target 4.5: Eliminate all discrimination in education
- Target 4.b: Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries

By focusing on career preparedness, the Al Ghurair scholarship programs also contribute to the realization of SDG 8, which is to achieve

full and productive employment and decent work for all by 2030. The programs are designed to equip scholars with the knowledge, skills, and experiences they need to secure gainful employment and contribute to their communities. Moreover, upon graduating, scholars become part of a larger alumni network that lives beyond the scholarship program and supports their pathways to elevated livelihoods.

- Target 8.6: Promote youth employment, education, and training

Finally, in line with SDG 17, AGFE collaborates with over 15 universities to facilitate higher education opportunities for over 1000 students.

- Target 17.16: Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development

1. Al Ghurair Scholarships Programs

Program Overview

In 2016, AGFE launched the **Al Ghurair STEM Scholars Program (STEM)**. The program 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) at one of the Foundation's 15 partner universities. Since its inception, the program has been providing full financial sponsorships, academic support, career pathways support via workplace learning (mentoring, career advising, and internships), and leadership skill-building opportunities to 648 scholars from 17 Arab nations.

In 2016, as part of the vision to promote online and open learning, AGFE collaborated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to facilitate access of Arab students to micro-credential programs. The **Al Ghurair MicroMasters' Scholarship Program** was launched to pilot AGFE's work in the online learning space. It focused on enhancing employability by enabling 68 students from 13 Arab countries to enroll in two programs: Supply Chain Management and Data, Economics, and Development Policy (DEDP).

In 2017, AGFE launched the Al Ghurair Open Learning Scholars Program (OLSP) with the goal of giving Arab youth access to accredited online degrees and credentials from leading universities. The aim of the program is to help scholars improve their existing skill set and increase their value proposition in the labor

market while simultaneously continuing their education at Arizona State University (ASU) by enrolling in one of 38 supported degree programs. By the end of 2020, the program was supporting 304 scholars from 18 Arab countries.

Table 1: Al Ghurair Scholars by Nationality

Nationality	Total Number of Scholars
Algeria	22
Bahrain	2
Comoros	4
Djibouti	3
Egypt	353
Iraq	10
Jordan	85
Lebanon	111
Mauritania	3
Morocco	76
Oman	1
Palestine	172
Saudi Arabia	5
Somalia	10
Sudan	33
Syria	80
Tunisia	20
United Arab Emirates	6
Yemen	24
TOTAL	1020



Total Scholars: 1020

STEM: 648

OLSP: 304

MicorMasters: 68

Progress to Date

I. STEM and OLSP

Between 2016 and 2020, the number of applicants for both the STEM and OLSP scholarship programs from all Arab countries increased significantly.¹² AGFE devised a nine-week rigorous selection procedure to identify the highest-achieving students with the greatest financial need, as well as those who were the best matches for the programs' objectives. By

2020, AGFE was supporting a total of 648 scholars as part of the STEM Scholars Program and another 304 scholars as part of the OLS Program. For both programs, Graph 1 shows the total number of scholarship applications received and the total number of scholars who started their studies each year.

Graph 1: Total Students' Application vs. Scholars at Universities for STEM and OLSP

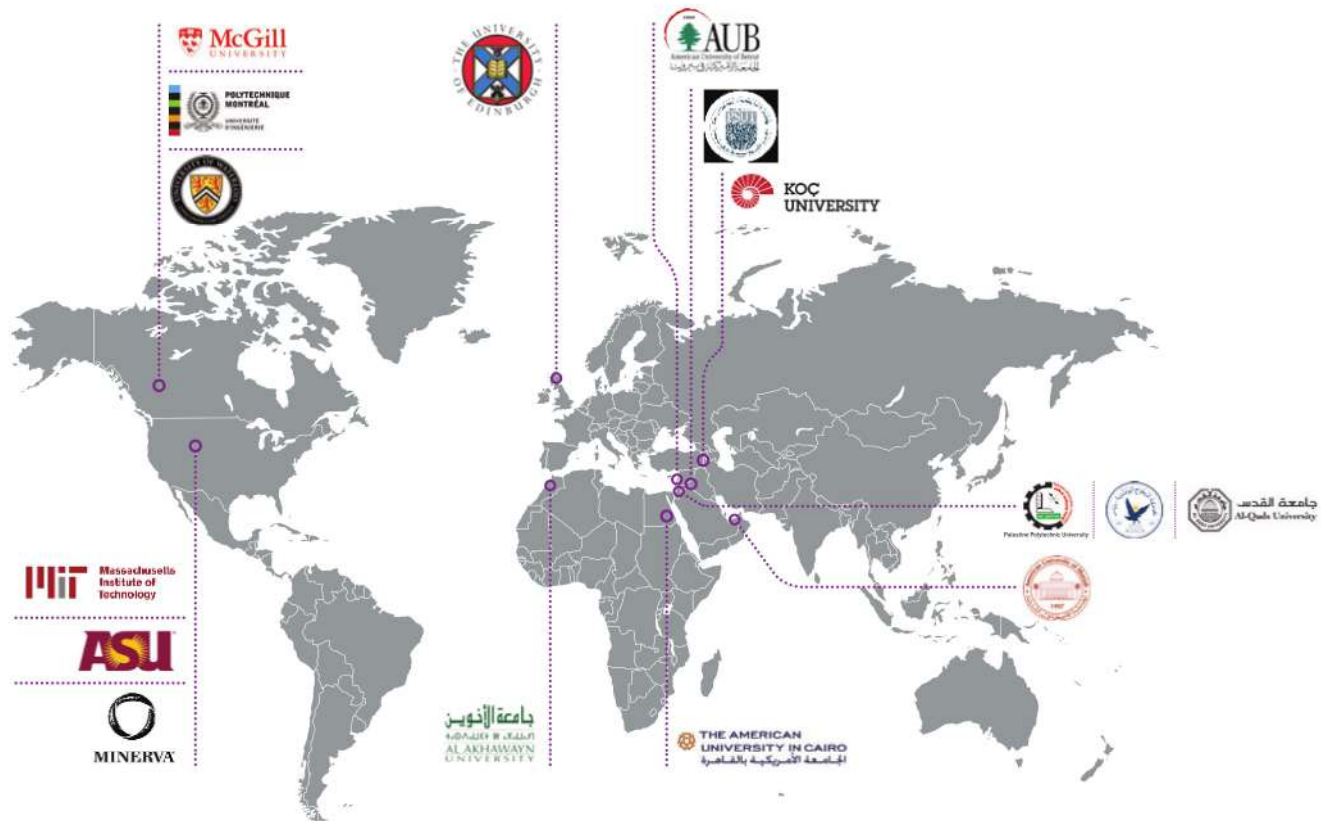


As shown in Graph 1, the scholarship programs witnessed a steady increase in demand over the years. In 2019, AGFE's master's-level STEM scholarships were absorbed into OLSP and are now only available online. This was in accordance with the Foundation's mission to promote high-quality online education, which was in great

demand the following year due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Our STEM and OLSP scholars have been pursuing educational degrees at 15 of our partner universities located in the Arab region and internationally. The figure below presents all our partner universities.

Partner Universities for the Scholarship Programs



AGFE also made specific efforts to reach disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as women, refugees, and those who are the first in their families to pursue higher education (“first generation university students”). The display below depicts the demographics of our scholars in the two flagship scholarship programs. As shown, women make up 47% of the scholars, first-generation university students make up 39% of the scholars, and refugees make up 10% of the scholars.

These figures are particularly notable when put into a larger context. For example, 34.4%¹³ of females in the Arab region were enrolled in higher education in 2019, while 42%^{14 15} were enrolled globally. Additionally, UNHCR reported that in 2019, only 3% of refugees were

enrolled in higher education worldwide, compared to the global average of 37% among non-refugees,¹⁶ and only 5-8% of Syrian and Palestinian refugees have¹⁷ access to higher education in Jordan and Lebanon. Finally, statistics from the USA show that 33% of higher education students are first in their families to enroll in a university or college.¹⁸

At the end of 2020, AGFE awarded the last cohort as part of these scholarship programs and continued our institution-level work and capacity-building efforts with academic institutions and the public sector. The next section describes how the scholarship team continues to support the last cohorts until they graduate and become alumni.

Demographic Information on STEM and OLSP Scholars



*Refugee and First-Generation students' statistics are calculated for STEM and OLSP scholars only



II. Academic Support

Though the Al Ghurair scholarships were competitive and selective, the scholars selected for our STEM and OLSP programs came from backgrounds that made successful integration into high-quality universities away from home difficult. As a result, AGFE has continued to look at university integration options to optimize scholars' success.

The AGFE scholarship team closely monitors students' performance to support success.

The STEM and OLSP scholarship programs are performance-driven, compelling scholars to thrive academically and maintain a high GPA. The team also encourages scholars to volunteer and participate in career-readiness activities.

AGFE's scholarship model purposefully includes dedicated University Coordinators and Success Coaches to advise and support all scholars.

A. University Coordinators

As part of the STEM Scholars Program, University Coordinators (UCs) are appointed at each partner university. The UCs facilitate daily activities and communication between scholars and their universities throughout the scholarship period. This includes following up on scholars' requests and

inquiries. In total, the UCs have processed over 1,200 requests from different stakeholders. The UCs also ensure that scholars fulfill their responsibilities as expected by AGFE and the corresponding university.



B. Success Coaches

Though the Arab region has seen an increase in openness to and demand for online learning, navigating a fully online program remains challenging for many students. AGFE ensures that OLSP Scholars have access to dedicated success coaches online for guidance from enrollment up until graduation,

a resource that has proven key to scholars' success and positive experience with online learning. 74% of OLSP scholars at ASU reported finding their success coaches very helpful in supporting their academic success at the university.

International Students

AGFE supports students pursuing their higher education at universities that are internationally recognized for their STEM education. The STEM Scholars Program has enabled 107 scholars to attend seven international universities in Canada, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Many scholars rose to the challenge and are now thriving.

Initiatives

Duaa Kambal, an OLSP scholar studying Science of Health Care Delivery, MS at ASU, started an initiative, Sanad, to **support street children** in Sudan by providing **healthcare, social services and education**. Duaa's initiative won third place at the SDG-focused Visualize 2030 competition.



Pioneering

Salim Abdi, a STEM scholar at PolyMTL University, has successfully developed a **new technique** for the fabrication of metal contacts on the novel Germanium Tin Semiconductor System. According to Salim, this new technique has a **wide potential of applications** such as infrared cameras for self-driving cars.



Community Support

Yousteena Bocktor, a STEM Scholar and McGill University alumna, worked with several students at Homework Zone to **inspire** them and **develop their interest in STEM**. HZ is an after-school **mentoring** program connecting McGill university student volunteers with elementary school students in **under-served** neighborhoods of Montreal.



III. Career Pathways

In addition to providing full financial coverage and academic support, AGFE provides scholars with extracurricular support to ensure career success and pathways to elevated livelihoods; this includes leadership

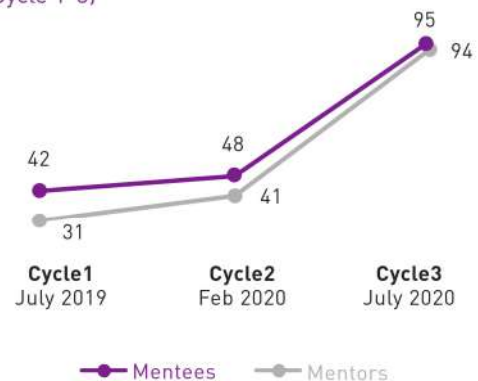
A. Mentoring and Advising

To support scholars' skill-building efforts and facilitate their transition from university to the workplace, AGFE set up a mentorship program for scholars, delivered both face-to-face and remotely, depending on mentor and mentee preferences. While AGFE continued to survey scholars to better understand their needs from a mentor, we also looked to corporate partners willing to engage with their time and expertise. AGFE matched mentees and mentors based on industry, location, and career aspirations. Participating mentors represented several industries including management consulting, engineering, and e-learning. Across the 3 mentorship cycles, AGFE was able to match a large number of mentors and mentees, with a

and community service, workplace learning through mentoring and advising, internships, and access to AGFE's Alumni Network.

total of 185 mentees and 166 mentors participating in the program. Two additional cycles of the mentorship program are planned for 2021.

Figure 1: Participants in the Mentorship Program (Cycle 1-3)



Abdel-Hameed Hamidisaker

BSc Mechanical Engineering, AUB, Lebanon

"This experience came at the perfect time for me. I was part of another mentorship program, but I was mismatched and didn't benefit much. This time, the program pushed my career so much further and I benefited a lot from it."



Nour Abu Seif

BSc Nursing, An-Najah National University, Palestine

"It is one of the most amazing experiences I have had, and that goes back to my mentor. She helped me focus on my weaknesses so that I can transform them into strengths."



B. Leadership and Community Service

AGFE encourages our scholars to give back to their communities through community service projects. By the end of 2020, our scholars have completed over 24,000 hours of community service work.

Scholars' Extracurricular Activities

While pursuing their academic degrees, our scholars continue to partake in skill-building activities and engage within their communities. Some examples of scholars' extracurricular activities include:

Participation in Competitions

As part of AUI's Mechatronics team, **Ikram Rachak and Asmae Guemrani** participated in Morocco's National Competition VEX-U Robotics. They **designed robots**, partly autonomous and partly driver controlled, and won **first place** nationally, earning them a spot in the **international edition** of RoboTalents.



Winning Awards

As part of the National Model Arab League in 2018, our scholar at AUC, **Nada Samy**, won the **Best Delegation Award**, which is the highest award possible in this conference. Nada applied again this year and was accepted to **represent the delegation** of Djibouti in the Social Affairs Council on behalf of AUC.



Community Support

Ahmad al Zuhbi, our scholar pursuing his Master of Healthcare Innovation at ASU, is working as a **physiotherapist for Syrian refugees** in Al Azraq Refugee Camp. He is focused on the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and assessing those with injuries to create a suitable treatment plan.



C. Workplace Learning (On-Campus and Off-Campus Working Experience)

AGFE facilitates access for our scholars to opportunities where they can gain quality practical experience in a real work environment. This is done through purposeful engagement with good-fit corporates, partner university career centers, and proactive searches by scholars to fulfill their AGFE internship requirement ahead of graduation. By 2020, scholars have

completed over 350 internships, and more than half of them (63%) have completed over 47,000 on-campus working hours. Our scholars have completed internships at highly reputable companies representing different sectors in the Arab region. The highest number of internships were secured in three key sectors: **Information and Communication Technology, Engineering, and Medical/Health.**

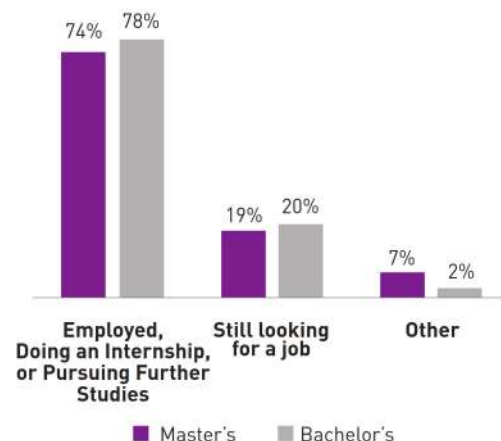
IV. Graduating Scholars (Alumni)

By the end of 2020, 207 STEM and 34 OLSP scholars have graduated with either a master's or a bachelor's degree. 74% of graduates with a master's degree and 78% of graduates with a bachelor's degree went on to pursue jobs or internships in their fields or to pursue further studies. Our graduates have secured jobs in various governmental agencies, academic institutions, and multinational corporations, such as: Ministry of Education (UAE), University of Cairo (Egypt), Bain & Company (UAE), Cloud Solutions (KSA), and Toshiba (Japan). Moreover, STEM and OLSP graduates that have opted to pursue further studies have been accepted into tier one universities, such as McGill University (Canada) and The University of British Columbia (Canada).

Of the 144 scholars who graduated during the COVID-19 pandemic in a tough labor market,

56 are currently employed, have found an internship opportunity, or are pursuing further studies. For those still looking for employment opportunities, AGFE is supporting alumni transition into the workplace through the AGFE Alumni Network.

Graph 2: Status of Graduates by Program Level



AGFE Alumni Network

To continue supporting our scholars in their transition to the world of work and to foster a community of scholars committed to paying it forward and bettering their communities, AGFE continues to engage and support our alumni through the **Al Ghurair Scholars Alumni Network**. Alumni convene through an online communication platform to network and share relevant opportunities,

as well as to connect in an informal and interactive way. For example, during the challenging lockdown period amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the platform was used to share mental health resources, provide job application tips for remote opportunities, and to offer support to our alumni and continuing scholars.

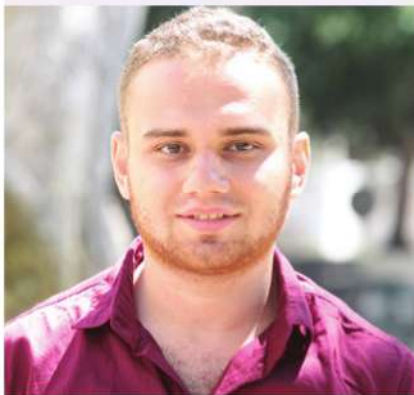
Having achieved our goal of empowering hundreds of deserving Arab youth to become leaders in their respective fields and commu-

nities, AGFE is currently exploring other avenues to expand our reach to serve more youth through education.

Abdallah Alhaj Sulaiman

Syrian, American University
of Beirut

"AGFE taught me how to value myself and benefit others. Most importantly, AGFE gifted me hope for a better future."



Ahmed Abderraouf

Mauritania, Polytechnique
Montreal

"AGFE provided me with the opportunity to realize my dream."



Abdul Malek Naes

Syria, Koc University

"AGFE supported me through one of the most crucial stages of my study, which served as a bridge to the successful completion of my educational journey."



2. Leveraging Online Learning

AGFE has been advocating for high-quality online learning spaces since 2016. As detailed below, we first started our journey with online learning through a collaboration with MIT to facilitate access to micro-credentials that would equip Emirati and Arab youth with skills to enhance their employability. Our experience in this program and feedback from beneficiaries informed our future work. In 2017, when we designed the OLS Program, we engaged with experienced and leading institutions to create a program based on best

practices and tailored to the regional context. We also continued to leverage our partnerships to advocate for online education and capitalized on the lessons learned through this journey to engage public and private partners, later launching the UAE Consortium for Quality Online Learning (UCQOL), which will become an example of how sustainable and innovative partnerships can shape the education ecosystem to be more agile to students' needs.

I. Al Ghurair MIT MicroMasters Program

In 2016, as part of the vision to promote online learning, AGFE collaborated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to facilitate access of Arab students to micro-credential programs. The **Al Ghurair MicroMasters Scholarship Program**, AGFE's first entrée work in the online learning space, focused on enhancing employability by giving students the opportunity to enroll in two programs: Supply Chain Management and Data, Economics, and Development Policy (DEDP). The intention was to create a flexible

model which could allow the learner to set their own pace to complete the MicroMasters degree. We quickly learned that online learners in our target groups needed more support and that we could achieve a deeper impact by refining the model. The MicroMasters Scholarship Program provided support to 68 students from 13 Arab countries, and our learnings from the experience informed the design of the OLS Program that followed.



68 Scholars



97% Graduated

II. Blended Learning for Capacity Building in the Arab World with AUB and AUC

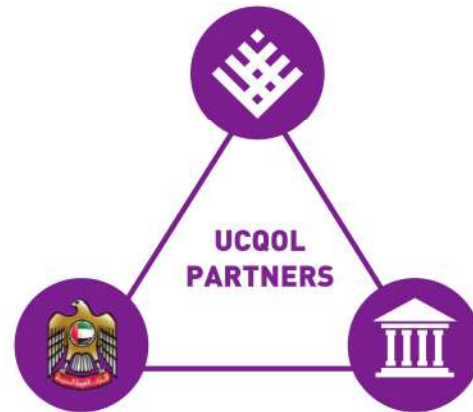
In 2017, AGFE collaborated with MIT again for a two-year project to support the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the American University in Cairo (AUC) to build regional capacity for online learning. A critical mass of faculty and instructional designers were trained and coached as part of the initiative to help these universities redesign undergraduate courses and offer online and blended learning courses in selected STEM fields. To date, the courses have allowed 1,196 students to learn STEM subjects online.



In 2019, AGFE continued its collaboration with AUB, this time working with the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture. The project supported AUB through a capacity needs assessment to inform the initiation of a hub that would launch new online degrees and certificates and digitize existing residential courses to transform instruction and make courses accessible to more students. Establishing this hub at AUB will allow it to serve as a regional model for other universities to pursue a similar path.

III. UAE University Consortium for Quality Online Learning

Following the shift in our focus towards supporting the educational ecosystem, at the end of 2020, AGFE launched a public-private partnership with the UAE Ministry of Education to support nine leading universities in the UAE to help develop high-quality, accredited online programs at their institutions. The UAE University Consortium for Quality Online Learning (UCQOL) serves as a model initiative in the Arab region. It fosters collaboration among leading universities as they launch high-quality online programs and share lessons learned and best practices throughout the process.



The consortium includes nine leading universities in the UAE: American University of Dubai, American University of Sharjah, British University of Dubai, Khalifa University, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE University, University of Dubai, University of Sharjah, and Zayed University.

Nine UAE Universities Participating in UCQOL



In 2020, the project team started implementing the first of four phases. By 2022, UCQOL will be working to achieve the following objectives:

- Creating a university consortium to strengthen collaboration among UAE universities
- Building capacity of leading UAE universities in online learning
- Making high-quality accredited online

programs available to a wider pool of students

- Serving as a model of online learning for other countries
- Cultivating public-private partnerships

PILLAR 2: CAREER READINESS AND UPSKILLING PROGRAMS

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals



AGFE's upskilling programs reflect the UAE's and Global 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda's commitments to equitable and universal access to education, economic growth, and decent work.

In line with SDG 4, the upskilling programs specifically cater to the needs of Emirati and Arab youth, providing them with high-quality education and employment resources. YTP, for instance, was designed taking into consideration the digital barriers facing youth and the lack of high-quality Arabic content available online. Therefore, content is provided in both Arabic and English, free of charge, to youth who may have not been able to access this information previously. In addition, by developing their leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills through the YTP platform, youth are better positioned to pursue higher education opportunities and achieve workplace success. Ultimately, this leads to improved livelihoods for Arab youth and their communities.

-Target 4.4: Increase the number of people

with relevant skills for financial success

In accordance with SDG 8, AGFE's Upskilling and Career Readiness Programs contribute to improving livelihoods by supporting Emirati and Arab youth across the Arab region alongside private and public sector stakeholders. Given the commitment to elevating livelihoods, there is a focus on creating content to support soft skills development, identifying technical and vocational training opportunities, removing socio-economic barriers (especially for females), and sharing region-specific labor market information via YTP's career assessment tool.

-Target 8.2: Diversify, innovate and upgrade economic productivity

-Target 8.6: Promote youth employment, education and training

Finally, in line with SDG 17, AGFE fosters partnerships across the Arab region to support the engagement, outreach, and acquisition of various upskilling programs. For YTP, AGFE currently engages with a network of 33+ partners who actively promote the program; several have fully integrated it into their mandates and activities. In just over two years since YTP's launch, AGFE has

managed to reach 28,122 youth by the end of 2020, exceeding the program's initial five-year target of 5,000 youth by 462% [4.5 times].¹⁹

- Target 17.16: Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development
- Target 17.17: Encourage effective partnerships

1. Al Ghurair Young Thinkers Program

Program Overview

Launched in 2018, the Al Ghurair Young Thinkers Program (YTP) was developed as a university and career readiness platform to help Emirati youth. AGFE helps Emirati and Arab youth between the ages of 15 and 35 anywhere in the world, so that they have direct and open access to high quality education and employment-related

information in Arabic and English. AGFE designed YTP in collaboration with Arizona State University (ASU). The UAE's Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE) endorsed YTP and has been using it as part of their efforts to promote better career preparation for Emiratis.

Progress to Date

Some 48 hours after the program's launch in October 2018, Success Advisors had already reached full capacity. The number of users increased sharply, with 10,996 users joining between October 2018 and December 2019, and an additional 17,126 (156% increase) new users registering in 2020 alone.²⁰ By the end of 2020, 36% of the registered users on the platform were Emirati and 53% of them were women.

Graph 3: Total Registered YTP Users



Chart 1: Breakdown of YTP Users by Nationality²¹

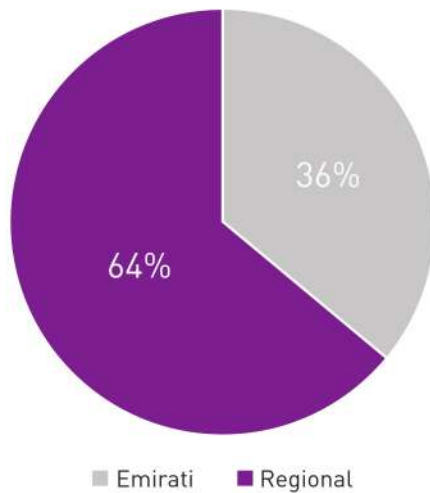
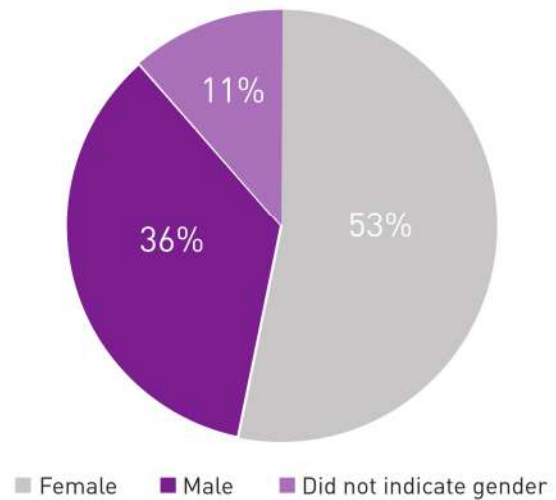


Chart 2: Breakdown of YTP Users by Gender²²



YTP courses cover a wide range of themes, including university preparedness, career planning, communication skills, leadership and personal development, financial literacy, information and digital literacy, and online safety. All these courses were chosen and developed in response to emerging needs of Emirati and Arab youth and are tailored specifically to meet their aspirations. By the end of 2020, YTP users had completed over

14,000 courses. All courses are offered in both English and Arabic except for the ASU-delivered English Composition and College Algebra & Problem-Solving courses. In 2019, AGFE embarked on adapting the program to ensure relevance to the regional context, in addition to the UAE context. The program's adjustments have been well received, extending its positive impact to a wider pool of beneficiaries.

Impact of COVID-19 on YTP

During the COVID-19 pandemic, AGFE adopted an online campaign to promote the program to a wider Arab audience, tailoring it to regional needs and reducing the risks it posed to our stakeholders. As more youth went online during the pandemic, YTP expanded, and partnerships with new institutions were forged to ensure long-term engagement. As partners continue to recognize the value of the content and incorporate it into their operations, the program can be expanded for broader, sustainable outreach.

YTP has expanded rapidly and organically since its inception. The shift in 2019 has initiated strategic partnerships with more stakeholders in the public sector and civil society. When COVID-19 struck, AGFE was already implementing a new partner-led strategy for program adoption and implementation. AGFE's model, which identifies strategic youth-facing partners whose mandates also include upskilling, has ensured that the program will expand beyond the Foundation's immediate reach. Several partner organizations, including Zayed

University in the UAE and Luminus Technical University College in Jordan, have started to incorporate YTP into their operations. Similarly, the UAE's Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE) has endorsed YTP and has been using it to boost its efforts to promote career readiness for Emiratis. By 2020, YTP had established 33 formal and non-formal partnerships in the UAE and the Arab region, as shown in Table 2. Charts 3 and 4 clarify the type and location of YTP partners.

Table 2: List of YTP Partners

Partner	Location	Type of Organization
Crown Prince Court	UAE	Public Sector
Dubai Future Foundation	UAE	Public Sector
Dubai Government Human Resources Department	UAE	Public Sector
Federal Youth Authority	UAE	Public Sector
Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA)	UAE	Public Sector
Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation	UAE	Public Sector
Youth4Sustainability/ Masdar	UAE	Public Sector
CareersUAE	UAE	Private Sector
GEMS FirstPoint School	UAE	Educational/Academic Institution
Higher Colleges of Technology	UAE	Educational/Academic Institution
United Arab Emirates University	UAE	Educational/Academic Institution
Zayed University	UAE	Educational/Academic Institution
Emirates Foundation	UAE	NGO
UNHCR UAE	UAE	NGO
American University of Beirut (AUB)	Lebanon	Educational/Academic Institution
Algorithm Lebanon	Lebanon	NGO
DOT Lebanon	Lebanon	NGO
Kiron	Lebanon	NGO
United Lebanon Youth Program (ULYP)	Lebanon	NGO
War Child Holland - Lebanon Office	Lebanon	NGO
World Learning	Lebanon	NGO
Luminus Technical University College	Jordan	Educational/Academic Institution
Crown Prince Foundation	Jordan	NGO
DOT Jordan	Jordan	NGO
The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development	Jordan	NGO
Relief International	Jordan	NGO
UNHCR Jordan	Jordan	NGO
UNICEF Jordan	Jordan	NGO
War Child Holland - Jordan Office	Jordan	NGO
Career Guidance Egypt	Egypt	NGO
Institute of International Education (IIE)	Egypt	NGO
Sawiris Foundation	Egypt	NGO
Hadramout Foundation	Yemen	NGO

Chart 3: Type of YTP Partners

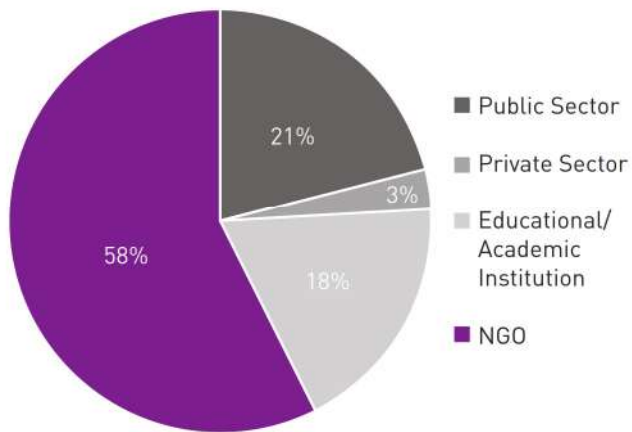


Chart 4: Location of YTP Partners

