

The Al Ghurair Thought Leadership Series

Bridging the Work Readiness Gap: A Multistakeholder Approach to a Sustainable Future



Abdulla Al Ghurair
Foundation

At the RCEP UNESCO headquarters in Sharjah University City, the Al Ghurair Thought Leadership Series explored the skills gaps in the GCC in November 2022. The event leveraged research and experience to highlight potential solutions aimed at addressing the changes brought on by shifts in the labor market. The collaboration between the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation and RCEP UNESCO resulted in an insightful discussion.

The key highlights from the dialog are summarized here.

“The current job market is characterized by constantly evolving demands. Employers expect a workforce with an expanding set of skills while employees demand that employers offer workplace mobility and continuous learning opportunities. Through discussions like these, we hope to identify innovative solutions that the private sector, government, and education institutions can co-design to meet the needs of all stakeholders.”

H.E. Mahra Al Mutaiwei, Director, Regional Center for Educational Planning at UNESCO



5 Characteristics of skill training efforts that meet the needs of the job market:

- **Evidence-based:**

to understand in-demand skills and where to acquire these skills.

- **Quantifiable:**

to clarify the benefits for learners (salary, benefits) and employers (retention, productivity, competitiveness).

- **Equitable:**

to ensure relevant stakeholders share the responsibility.

- **Monitored:**

to update the model so it continuously evolves to meet the job market's needs.

- **Innovative:**

to promote entrepreneurship and build youths' skills so that they can create jobs.

“A clear and continuous feedback loop between the labor market and educational institutions that prepare young people for employment is essential for understanding the ongoing changes in the labor market. This feedback loop must be based on data and a sustainable method of feeding information about the employment market to education providers and training centers.”

H.E. Dr. Amna Al Dahak Al Shamsi, Assistant Undersecretary, Care & Capacity Building Sector, UAE Ministry of Education



Successful upskilling efforts leverage strategic partnerships between employers and education providers:

1. Create a live list of in-demand skills through feedback from learners and employers. Education providers can leverage partnerships with job platforms publishing employers' demands.
2. Cascade the skills into classrooms. Embedding the skills in the ecosystem and developing granular and up-to-date content creates a clear link between training and the job market.
3. Equip educators, who are trained to implement creative and tailored methods of delivery, with the right tools to each and model transferable skills.

“From a skills standpoint, the most successful transformations are led by companies that recognize the value of collaborating, not just with education providers, but also with learners. Ensuring that well-designed models work requires placing learners at the center of the process.”

Ms. Safia Tmiri, Associate Partner, McKinsey & Company



Calls to Action

Youth

to self-advocate and take more agency to decide what, where, and how they can learn.

Education providers

to work with employers to structure work-integrated learning activities so that they are measurable.

Employers

to value corporate training and invest in it.

All stakeholders

to embrace lifelong learning and a growth mindset.

“We need horizontal and vertical alignment, which includes using data, to bridge the skills mismatch. Successful and strategic partnerships built on coordinated efforts can help us advance on a national, regional, and global scale. Through partnerships and a strong sense of accountability to our youth and to ourselves, we can develop sustainable solutions to the constantly evolving challenges in the job market.”

Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar, Chief Executive Officer, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation; Chairperson, Global Councils on Sustainable Development Goals

