

New Model Puts Jobs at the Center of Economic Inclusion in Arab States

Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation and International Finance Corporation launch first-of-its-kind model to drive employment in fragile Arab economies

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, September 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As global aid budgets decline and displacement reaches record highs, a new partnership between the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation (AGF) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, is introducing a bold alternative: jobs, not handouts.



AGF & IFC Representatives at 1001 Star JOBS4ALL Forum in Dubai

The collaboration aims to expand employment opportunities for refugee, internally displaced, and marginalized youth in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria. Rather than focusing on short-term relief, the model brings together philanthropic capital and private sector expertise to invest in regionally led, market-based solutions. The model reflects a growing global consensus that

sustainable livelihoods are a key driver of long-term recovery.

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To officially mark this new chapter, AGF and IFC, in partnership with the Kingdom of the Netherlands and with the support of DIFC, hosted the second edition of the 1001 Stars JOBS4All Forum in Dubai today. The forum convened leaders from the public and private sectors, development organizations, and philanthropic institutions to explore practical solutions for inclusive job creation across the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The event featured high-level panels, a strategic signing ceremony, and a

matchmaking lunch to catalyze collaboration and employer commitments.

“Opportunity is not given, it’s built,” said Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar, CEO of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation. “This is not about temporary aid. It’s about mobilizing employers, educators, investors, and communities around the shared goal of building livelihood opportunities that are sustainable, dignified, and resilient to the volatility of fragile environments. Our approach is rooted in the values of the UAE and builds on its legacy of humanitarian leadership and responsible philanthropy.”

Under the IFC-AGF partnership, nearly 7,000 young people, at least half of them women, will receive market-relevant skills training, Business English, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship support. The Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair Refugee Education Fund will lead implementation in partnership with Glocalshift, working closely with IFC to engage private sector partners through its 1001 Stars project to expand access to inclusive jobs.

This collaboration stands out for integrating philanthropic innovation with actual labor market demand, creating pathways to employment that address both unemployment and displacement. It offers a practical response to one of the region’s most urgent challenges: access to dignified work.

“Across the Middle East, forcibly displaced individuals are striving to overcome exceptionally difficult circumstances. I had the privilege of meeting some of those affected and was deeply moved by their resilience, eagerness to learn, and determination to build a better future,” said Hela Cheikhrouhou, IFC’s Vice President for the Middle East, Central Asia, Türkiye, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. “IFC is proud to partner with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation on this important initiative—working alongside private enterprises in host countries to expand access to skills and jobs that create dignified livelihood opportunities.”

IFC’s 1001 Stars project, launched in June 2024, brings together companies from seven countries across the Middle East, Pakistan, and Afghanistan to create thousands of jobs and training opportunities for marginalized groups. With tailored advisory support, IFC is helping these companies integrate more women, youth, and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and displaced communities, into their workforces. This approach supports companies in strengthening labor practices and expanding access to both jobs and digital contracting opportunities.

Since its launch in 2018, the Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair Refugee Education Fund has worked on bridging the education-to-employment gap for underserved youth. This latest phase expands that mission by aligning philanthropic funding with private sector demand to generate long-term job opportunities in some of the region’s most challenging environments.

As traditional aid models fall short of growing needs, the AGF-IFC initiative presents a new approach to driving lasting change. It marks a step forward in how institutions work together to deliver long-term stability and opportunity in the Arab region.

About the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation (AGF):

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation (AGF), established in 2015, is the largest privately funded philanthropic organization focused on education in the Arab region. It supports Emirati and Arab youth through high-impact programs and strategic partnerships that build future-ready skills. To date, AGF and the Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair Refugee Education Fund—administered by AGF—have reached over 354,000 young people.

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