1001 Women reveals a forgotten legacy to inspire young women in STEM

Global initiative founded and led by Ahmed Salim draws on a decade of research into more than 300 women from Muslim civilisation


1001 Women - Global Initiative

LONDON, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- September 25, 2026 – 1001 Foundation, the producer of 1001 Inventions, is introducing 1001 Women, a global initiative bringing the overlooked achievements of women from Muslim civilisation to new generations. Produced and led by British producer Ahmed Salim, the initiative aims to encourage young women's participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), broaden aspirations, and strengthen society's support for women's contributions.

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>
> *Ahmed Salim*

Drawing on a decade of research into more than 300 women, 1001 Women plans to bring their stories to life through books, exhibitions, educational resources and digital storytelling. Its work explores women's contributions to scholarship, medicine, literature, education and public life during the Golden Age of Muslim civilisation and across the centuries.

"The stories young people grow up with help shape what they believe is possible," said Ahmed Salim. "So many women who helped shape our shared history remain unfamiliar to the wider world. By bringing their achievements into view, we want young women to see new possibilities for themselves, and families and educators to recognise and encourage that potential."

The initiative responds to a persistent global challenge. Women account for just 35% of STEM graduates worldwide, a proportion UNESCO says has remained unchanged for ten years. Women also represent approximately one-third of researchers globally.

UNESCO's Call to Action to Close the Gender Gap in Science identifies role models as one way to challenge stereotypes and biases. By making historical achievements more visible, 1001 Women aims to contribute to this wider effort alongside practical learning opportunities and support from families, teachers and communities.

The initiative will focus on three intended outcomes:

- Greater participation in STEM, encouraging young women to explore science and technology and progress towards further study and careers.
Broader ambitions and stronger support, helping young people recognise their potential and encouraging families, teachers and communities to support young women's choices.

- A lasting place for women's achievements in education, helping schools, publishers, museums and creators incorporate these stories into everyday learning.

- These aims align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on quality education (SDG 4) and gender equality (SDG 5). The initiative's emphasis on shared heritage also connects with SDG target 4.7, which includes appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development.

1001 Women builds on Ahmed Salim's work as co-founder and producer of 1001 Inventions, whose programmes have engaged more than 500 million people worldwide, according to the organisation. That work spans exhibitions, films, live experiences, books and educational resources developed with international partners.

His film credits include 1001 Inventions and the Library of Secrets, starring Sir Ben Kingsley, and 1001 Inventions and the World of Ibn Al-Haytham, starring Omar Sharif. The wider programme includes the touring exhibition launched at London's Science Museum in 2010 and a flagship book published by National Geographic.

Previous collaborations with UNESCO include 1001 Inventions: Journeys from Alchemy to Chemistry, developed for the United Nations proclaimed International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements in 2019 and launched at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The programme used live events, films and educational activities to connect the history of science with young people's learning.

"A story can start a conversation at home, change what a teacher brings into a classroom, or encourage a young woman to take her interest in science further," Ahmed Salim added. "Our ambition is to connect that inspiration with opportunities to learn and participate. We want these stories to have a lasting place in education and in how the next generation sees its future."

Research will continue towards the ambition of 1001 documented women, supporting the initiative's public engagement mission. 1001 Foundation invites educators, cultural institutions, publishers, funders and other partners to help develop and bring these stories to audiences around the world.

About 1001 Foundation

1001 Foundation is a British not-for-profit organisation founded in 2006 by British producer Ahmed Salim. It develops educational and cultural initiatives that connect science, history and heritage with audiences worldwide through films, exhibitions, books and learning programmes. Its work includes 1001 Inventions and the 1001 Women global initiative. Its core mission is to reveal overlooked contributions to human civilisation and inspire new generations to learn, create and shape a better future.

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