

FLASHES

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE ON KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT
BY THE MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM FOUNDATION

JANUARY 2016
ISSUE 15

The Knowledge Summit 2015



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FOREWORD

Dear Readers,

The Knowledge Summit 2015 concluded successfully in December, bringing together under one umbrella a wealth of voices from fields as diverse as education, media, technology, space travel, and more. While the summit anchors the UAE as the epicentre of education and research, the MENA region faces a daunting range of challenges. For instance, the annual average reading rate for an Arab is six minutes compared with a 12,000 minute average for a child in the West. To this end, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has declared 2016 as the Year of Reading. One of our speakers, the esteemed Gordon Brown, former PM of UK, and UN Special Envoy for Global Education, called for the creation of an international education fund to help refugee children

escaping war or other disasters. In addition, this summit has allowed us to learn from a very impressive range of luminaries, and we are proud to present them in our magazine. From the UAE's first female filmmaker (Nayla Al Khaja) to Iran's first female astronaut (Anousheh Ansari), from tech gurus (Steve Wozniak) to leading geoarchaeologists (Dr. Eric Fouache), from trailblazing health activists (HRH Princess Ghida Talal) to media moguls (David Bennett), some of our esteemed speakers have provided valuable insights on their respective fields through exclusive interviews to *Flashes*.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Jamal Bin Huwaireb

MD of the Mohammed Bin Rashid
Al Maktoum Foundation

UAE declares 2016 as Year of Reading

The need is crucial to push a more erudite culture in the region

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, has declared 2016 as the Year of Reading in the UAE. On his Twitter page, HH Sheikh Mohammed said the country was aiming to become a beacon of knowledge, “just as Baghdad, Andalusia and other civilisations seeking enlightenment were”. “The scientists, researchers and innovators that will lead the future will not come from nowhere,” he added. The year will not only be a source of inspiration for bibliophiles, but also anchor the UAE’s position as the global epicentre of culture and knowledge.

The Cabinet has approved the declaration of 2016 as the Year of Reading and directed the relevant authorities to chart a national framework that promotes reading among future Emirati generations, “in a quest to create a generation of book lovers and lifetime readers”.

Mirroring his thoughts, the President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, stressed that reading promotes tolerance, openness and inter-cultural communication. The foundation of a knowledge-based economy is made of science and innovation. Therefore, a generation of readers must be nurtured who are aware of developments around them. HH Sheikh Khalifa said in a statement that reading is a basic skill for a new generation of scientists, intellectuals and researchers.

THE NEED IS URGENT

HH Sheikh Mohammed also warned of the “reading crisis in the Arab world” and the urgent need to rectify it. Statistics recently issued by the Arab Thought Foundation throw light on the dire situation. According to the study, the annual average reading rate for an Arab child is six minutes compared with a 12,000 minute average for children in the West. To put it in perspective, for every six minutes spent reading by an Arab child, a child of similar age in the West will have been reading for 200 hours.

PROMOTING THE WRITTEN WORD

Likewise, in September 2015, HH Sheikh Mohammad launched the Arab Reading Challenge (ARC) to push students in the Arab world to make reading a part of their daily routine. The ARC aims for a million students in the Arab world to read 50 million books, which will be achieved through an integrated system for supervising students

throughout the academic year. The total value of the incentives will be \$3 million (approximately Dh11 million). The student who comes first will get \$100,000-\$150,000 (Dh367,295-Dh550,923) towards university tuition fees, with a \$50,000 (Dh183,648) gift made to the student’s family. Dh1 million in prizes have also been set aside for Arab schools with the highest participation. The awards for outstanding supervisors are valued at \$300,000 (Dh1.1 million), and there are incentives for schools, as well as awards for students valued at \$1 million. 



HH SHEIKH MOHAMMED INAUGURATES KNOWLEDGE SUMMIT 2015

National Geographic Channel, scientist Hiroshi Ishiguro and media personality Ahmed Alshugairi share \$1 million award



His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, inaugurated the second edition of Knowledge Summit 2015, under the theme “The Way to Innovation”. The opening ceremony of the three-day summit, organised by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (MBRF), was also graced by HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, and HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation.

PRaising ARAB SCIENCE

In keeping with the theme, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid was shown a number of internationally-accredited innovations at the summit, where he was briefed about the device to detect toxic gases in the oil, a new pancreas device to follow up on the patient's condition

accurately without the need for daily check-up and a special device to activate the reading service, and another device to reduce the proportion of irrigation water in plants and increase agricultural production in a modern and economical way.

Praising the scientific and technological talent of the Arab youth, he noted that the UAE will nurture this potential to fulfill the welfare of the Arab people. HH Sheikh Mohammed also called for a healthier synergy between the private and public sectors at the regional and international levels.

REWARDING THE TRULY SPECIAL

At the end of the inaugural session, HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed and HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed honoured the winners of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Award. The Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Award honours individuals or institutions at

the international level for their contribution to the dissemination, transfer and localisation of knowledge.

The \$1-million award was shared between National Geographic Channel; Hiroshi Ishiguro, Professor of the Department of Innovation Systems in the Graduate School of Engineering Science at Osaka University; and Ahmed Alshugairi, presenter of *Khawatir* television programme. Gary E. Knell, President and CEO of National Geographic, received the prize of half a million US dollars on behalf of the channel, while Hiroshi Ishiguro and Ahmed Alshugairi received a quarter million US dollars each in prize money.

HE Jamal Bin Huwaireb, MD of MBRF, also added that the initiatives and projects associated with this summit, such as the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Award, the Arab Knowledge Index and the Arab Knowledge Portal, will add momentum to developing knowledge. 



KNOWLEDGE SUMMIT OFFERS GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR INNOVATORS AND EXPERTS

The first Arab Knowledge Index launched in Dubai by MBRF and UNDP to measure status of knowledge in Arab countries

The Knowledge Summit 2015, the Arab region's leading platform to formulate innovative methods in the

transfer, dissemination and localisation of knowledge, was successfully held in Dubai from December 7-9, and saw the active participation of ministers, top officials, leading educationists, technocrats, thinkers and media personalities from the region as well as overseas, including Gordon Brown, former PM of Britain.

The first edition of the Arab Knowledge Index, a systematic mechanism to monitor the status of knowledge in the

Arab countries every year, was launched at the summit by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (MBRF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

This is MBRF's second edition of the Knowledge Summit, held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Dubai.

RANGE OF VOICES

Some of the prominent speakers at the hugely successful summit included Steve Wozniak, American inventor and co-founder of Apple Inc; French astronaut Patrick Baudry; David Bennett, Chief Development Officer at National Geographic Society; Eng. Hussain Al Hammadi, UAE Minister of Education; Elias Bou Saab, Minister of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon; Dr Ali Al Kaabi, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment at United Arab Emirates University; Prof. Eric Fouache, Vice Chancellor of Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi; Dr Essam Heggy, Egyptian space scientist at NASA; and HRH Princess Ghida Talal, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of King Hussein Cancer Foundation.

'KNOWLEDGE 4 ALL' PORTAL

The MBRF in cooperation with the UNDP launched the 'Knowledge 4

All' portal at the Knowledge Summit, where the findings of the Arab Knowledge Index are available. The portal is a digital reference hub for researchers, professionals, students, stakeholders and the general public for various data and publications on knowledge-related topics.

Apart from the Arab Knowledge Index, the 'Knowledge 4 All' portal features three Arab Knowledge Reports published between 2009 and 2014 and other research reports.

INVEST IN KNOWLEDGE, SAYS UN CHIEF

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon addressed the opening of the summit through a video conference and called for investments in knowledge and empowerment initiatives to overcome the challenges facing the region, and praised the efforts of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum in this regard.

"Successive Arab human development reports warn that the region needs more knowledge, women empowerment and several countries suffer from the effects of extremism, but these challenges can be overcome by empowering young people with new opportunities," Ban Ki Moon said.

Addressing the opening ceremony, His Excellency Jamal Bin Huwairib, Managing Director of MBRF, said: "Our region faces several challenges, particularly in the economic area, where there is an urgent need to secure jobs and decent livelihood for millions of young people. The Knowledge Summit comes as a unique opportunity to achieve innovative solutions to overcome these challenges. The Summit offers a global platform that brings together innovators and experts to create visions and ideas, showcasing the best practices to restore the value of knowledge in Arab societies."

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Sima >

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Issued by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, the magazine is an open window for researchers and innovators in all fields such as knowledge, culture and humanitarian thoughts.



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UPDATES

➤ Bahouth, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said: "The Arab Knowledge Index and the associated 'Knowledge for All' electronic platform that we are launching today elaborate, in an innovative and interactive manner, the essential link between knowledge, innovation and sustainable development. This is highlighted through the three Arab Knowledge Reports that we have produced with the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation."

Highlighting the importance of the Arab Knowledge Index, Alshu-gairi said that measuring knowledge is important to achieve sustainable development.

ARAB KNOWLEDGE INDEX LAUNCHED

The launch of the first edition of the

Arab Knowledge Index, offering a systematic mechanism to monitor the status of knowledge in the Arab countries every year, was announced at a press conference on the second day of the Knowledge Summit by MBRF and UNDP.

Speaking on the occasion, HE Jamal Bin Huwaireb, Managing Director of MBRF, said the findings of the Index are the outcomes of the persistent efforts undertaken throughout the year, in a number of Arab and international countries such as Morocco, Jordan, the US, France and the UK.

Thanking the UNDP for its strategic partnership, established through a series of knowledge reports focused on the Arab region, HE Jamal Bin Huwaireb said MBRF is keen to take this relationship to the next level with more initiatives and programmes that promote the values of knowledge and innovation.

SIX MAIN INDICES

"A group of pioneers, experts and academics in the Arab world participated in the preparation of this valuable knowledge product, ensuring that the index functions according to scientific and statistical standards. The indicator includes six main indices covering the most vital sectors that represent the knowledge levels in every country, which are Pre-university education; Higher education; Vocational education and training; Research & development and innovation; Information technology and communication; and Economic sector," said HE Jamal Bin Huwaireb.

HE Jamal Bin Huwaireb added the index takes into account national, historical and cultural characters of each Arab country separately, and is flexible enough to be adopted in several countries with different development levels.

He also pointed out that the index

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Dr Eric Fouache, Najoua Fezzaa Ghriss, Tarek Shawki, HE Jamal Huwairb and Magued Osman

does not aim to create classifications and rankings, but is a scientific tool that describes the status of knowledge in the Arab region, and establishes a road map for the economic and societal development strategies in the Arab world.

SCOPE TO BE WIDENED

HE Jamal Bin Huwairb stated that while this year the Arab Knowledge Index features only Arab countries,

efforts are on to include all Islamic countries in the Index from next year onwards.

He said the index contains accurate and reliable information and these will be distributed to decision makers and universities in Arab as well as other countries in the region to encourage the nations to take the path of knowledge and innovation.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr.

Bahouth commended MBRF's leading role in supporting knowledge and development in the Arab world, and said the Arab Knowledge Index will serve as a pragmatic tool to establish sustainable development in the region.

"We live in turbulent times and the region is losing focus in the area of knowledge, leading to spurt in extremism and other issues of concern. Qualitative education can help eradicate poverty and unemployment in the region and help establish development channels in the region," Dr. Bahouth added.

Education was one of the key pillars of the Summit this year, considering its importance in achieving the development and progress of the community. Another key pillar was Information Technology, which has come to play a critical role in building the future of nations and the development of major projects.

Discussions at the Summit also focused on Scientific Research in view of its significance in the development of societies and human capacity development.

Innovation in the field of Media and Film Industry was another focal area which saw UAE and regional media personalities and filmmakers taking active part. ↗

THE SUMMIT IN NUMBERS



A Wealth of Perspectives

The Knowledge Summit 2015 had voices from television, cinema, space travel and education giving valuable insights for the future of the region

WHY EDUCATION IS KEY

Highlighting the importance of the Arab Knowledge Index at the opening of the summit, Ahmad Alshugairi, prominent Arab television personality, said that measuring knowledge is key to sustainable development. "The Arab world has witnessed growing literacy rate over the last few decades. In 1960, only 18 per cent of the people in the region were literate. By 2015, the literacy rate in the region has gone up to 82 per cent. At the same time, the literacy rate in several countries experiencing unrest in the region has come down drastically to 38 per cent. We hope that by 2020 all Arab countries will achieve complete literacy," Alshugairi said.

BEYOND MERE STATISTICS

However, more important than merely coming up with data, it was the qualitative data that sets the Arab Knowledge Index apart. Speaking at the press conference, Dr. Najoua Al Ghriss, Professor at the Higher Institute of Education and Continuous Training in Tunisia, and member of the Arab Knowledge Index Core Team, said that while most international indices have failed to look at the small details in the local innovation aspects and have focused mainly on the quality of economies to benchmark their findings, the Arab Knowledge Index is distinguished for keeping the human aspect in perspective.

Dr. Al Ghriss said the Arab Knowledge Index was prepared using scientific methodology to secure accurate data and after testing them in Arab countries. The preparation also involved collaboration with experts and consultants at the local and international levels, she said. ➤





Ahmad Alshugairi,
(second from
right) one of the
winners of the US\$
1 million Sheikh
Mohammed Bin
Rashid Al Maktoum
Knowledge Award



➤ TECHNOLOGY AND IMAGINATION

Patrick Baudry, Retired Lieutenant Colonel of the French Air Force and former astronaut, stressed that education needs to encourage creativity and imagination in young people, with the aim of solving the problems facing the world.

Hugh Herr, Director of the Biomechanics Research Group at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was one of the panelists during the fourth session on 'Scientific Research, Innovation and Development' during the Knowledge Summit. He said, "Bionic devices will spell the end of disability. By innovating, we can transcend human limitations."

A MEDIA SCENE THAT IS RELEVANT

Media is a crucial tool for the development of society. The third day of the summit focused on the role filmmaking and media play in the dissemination of knowledge and ideas in a vibrant society such as the Middle East. No doubt, the media has brought the world together.

However, the huge leap in technology needs to be complemented with high quality knowledge content of relevance to the Arab world, emphasized media experts at the third and final day of the Knowledge Summit 2015.

Speaking at a session on Innovation in Media and Filmmaking, Riz Khan, prominent television personality said that innovation has dramatically brought about dramatic transformation in the field of media in terms of equipment and the way content is generated and delivered. That said, content is king; and what matters to people are still stories of relevance to them.

"If it is a great story of relevance to them, people still want to know it. They ignore the delivery system but just want the content," Khan said.

George Kordahi, popular television presenter, said while the entire media scene has transformed tremendously driven by technology and innovation, the one medium that has adapted best to this revolution is television. "Those who thought television will be eliminated were mistaken. Television

Participants of the session on Innovation in Media and Filmmaking



has made use of the digital revolution and adapted very fast to digital media,” Kordahi said.

A GOOD STORY NEVER DIES

And as an undercurrent was a hint of nostalgia, from both British-Emirati blockbuster filmmaker Ali Mostafa and the UAE’s first female film director, script writer and producer, Nayla Al Khaja. Both felt that with technology being accessible to everyone, content is being diluted. “Today it may be possible for anyone to create a film, but not everyone can create a good story,” Alkhaja said.

Ali Mostafa, for his part, said that while technology has democratised the filmmaking process, the Emirati filmmaking industry needed to adopt a more innovative thinking in its approach, to exploit technology’s true potential.

LEAPING INTO THE FUTURE

Speaking at a session on Innovation in Brain Games on the last day of the summit, Jason Luis Silva, media artist and television personality, said the exponential changes in the technology and innovation have opened up new possibilities in overcoming human limitations. Genetics, Nanotechnology and Robotics (GNR), according to him, will transform the world at an unprecedented pace and humanity is equipped with the know-how to create brand-new forms of expression and beauty.

The next curve in IT will be a biological one, leading to huge leaps in healthcare, Silva said. Nanotechnology will make “programmable” the physical world made of atoms: it will be possible to tell buildings to create themselves, he said. Sounds like a very bright future! ✨

(Clockwise from top left): Patrick Baudry, Riz Khan, Jason Silva, Ali Mostafa, and Dr Najoua Fezzaa Al Ghriss



Pushing Arabic language usage in the digital realm

The third edition of the Bil Arabi initiative encourages the use of Arabic in modern contemporary living

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, MBRF launched the third round of its Bil Arabi initiative (# بالعربي).

The initiative follows a two-pronged strategy: it aims at pushing the use of Arabic in modern, contemporary contexts, thus anchoring it as a universal language as opposed to a regional one. In addition, it is promoting its presence in digital and social media, thus automatically increasing Arabic content by giving the public technological tools to make it a part

of everyday living. The initiative coincides with World Arabic Language Day on 18 December.

Commenting on the initiative, His Excellency Jamal Bin Huwaireb, Managing Director of MBRF, said, "It [the Bil Arabi initiative] comes in line with the announcement of His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, of an integrated strategy to establish the UAE as a global centre of excellence for Arabic language as part of UAE Vision 2021. In MBRF, we aspire to empower the Arabic language in Arab societies,

especially among the younger generation in order to change the stereotype about the Arabic language and demonstrate that it is a global dynamic language, and encourage Arabs to use their mother tongue in general, and in particular over the Internet, and social media".

In addition, HE Jamal Bin Huwaireb urged social media users to participate in the intuitive and embrace Arabic in their posts, tweets, chats, comments etc. to make the hashtag (# بالعربي) among the world most trending hashtags.

In addition, this year's activities to promote Arabic will also include an "Arabic calligraphy competition with Samsung" and "Video with Cannon", where participants can record videos through the kiosks in the malls using Instagram background or the initiative hashtag, and then upload such videos on social media by using the (# بالعربي) hashtag. 📺

Cutting it short, catching them young

MBRF launches short story competition to promote the Arabic language

It is a rather apt initiative to celebrate World Arabic Language Day, which is observed on December 18 each year: the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (MBRF), in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, launched a short story competition for school students and teachers. In addition to a range of other initiatives to promote educational awareness in the region, this competition will highlight the need to promote the aesthetics of the Arabic language and its remarkable heritage.

His Excellency Hussein Al Ham-madi, Minister of Education, said, "We have a responsibility to promote the Arabic language, and this is no longer limited to the Ministry of Education alone. We require the cooperation of all institutions and individuals to enhance the relationship between students and their native language, and raise awareness about the importance of Arabic in preserving cultural and intellectual heritage."

On the occasion, His Excellency Jamal bin Huwairb, Managing Director of MBRF, also added: "This initiative comes in line with the directive of President His Highness Sheikh



Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan declaring 2016 as the Year of Reading to create a generation of book lovers, and consolidate the UAE's position as a global capital for culture and knowledge."

Targeting students and teachers with a flair for writing, MBRF will set an evaluation methodology for the competition. Ten winners in each emirate (7 students, 3 teachers) will then be given the chance to further

hone their craft in training workshops organized by the foundation. Their works will not only be published, but also nominated for the prestigious Dubai International Training Programme. At a time when so many rich voices are emerging from the region, in the fields of arts, film and literature, this initiative will bring authenticity and edge to the future of contemporary Arabic literature. †







CHALLENGE OF OPENING UP A WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE TO REFUGEE CHILDREN

*Charting a dramatic journey
from an academic to that of a
minister dealing with a massive
regional refugee crisis*

Hon. Elias Bou Saab, Minister of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon



One of the distinguished panelists during the First Session titled 'Innovation in Education – Future Outlook' on the opening day of the Knowledge Summit, was

Hon. Elias Bou Saab, Minister of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon.

He describes his journey from an academic role to that of a Minister dealing with a massive refugee crisis and the demands it is making on the education infrastructure in his country.

The following are excerpts from an exclusive interview with *Flashes*:

How has been your journey from the world of higher education to the role of a key decision and policy maker with legislative powers? What are the challenges you face in your new role?

Well, first of all, I was in the education field. I was with the American University of Dubai holding the post of Executive Vice-President. I moved to Lebanon last year after becoming the Education Minister. Part of the challenge that I faced in my new role in government was the grave refugee

crisis in our country. We are a country of four million and we have 1.5 million Syrian refugees and 500,000 Palestinian refugees. So half of the country's population now comprise refugees.

The other problem we face is that we have among the Syrian refugees about 450,000 school-age children that need to enter school. Our government school system already has 250,000 Lebanese students. So while we have 250,000 Lebanese students, we have 450,000 Syrian students that need to be admitted to schools. It is an obligation on me and every government to allow every child to be given the opportunity to enter school.

We don't have the financial means, and we don't have enough schools. We have a lot of issues and problems. We are trying to raise funds from the international community. We have succeeded because I had put a plan in place called RACE (Reaching All Children With Education). And with that plan, which we presented before the international community, we proved that we can deliver and we did that.

So we received international funding and I was able to put 200,000 Syrian refugee children in schools this year. And I have another 250,000 children that I am working to put in

schools during the next year or so.

As for recognition of our efforts, it is not a matter of publicity for us. But the international community should know. Because we need their help. The international community is aware and I have been to the United Nations and I have been to several sessions there and we have had two separate talks at the UN General Assembly and the World Bank. So we are really making progress with them.

Yes, in the Arab world, I agree, that it is not very well-known what we have been doing in Lebanon with regard to educating the refugee children. I think it needs to be highlighted.

You had mentioned the great influence of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, on you as an academic. What are the lessons you can possibly emulate from his vision?

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed has always helped in Education and various other fields. And now we are also presenting to him about the need for assisting us in Lebanon to educate the Syrian refugees. And I am sure, either through the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (MBRF), Dubai Cares or the government, we will be receiving attention and help from His Highness as he always did in the past.

The theme for this year's Knowledge Summit is 'The Way to Innovation'. How do you think Innovation will impact education and knowledge development in the days ahead?

Well, it is well-known that HH Sheikh Mohammed has always been pushing for more knowledge, and the theme of this Knowledge Summit 2015 relates to the future. And this is what each country in the region should be looking forward to.

Finally, what are the issues related to Education in the Gulf and Middle East region as a whole? Are there any common solutions and approaches that come to your mind?

There are lots of differences right now because each country has its own situation politically. Some countries are undergoing war conditions,



others are making slow progress and some are less fortunate to have adequate funding for building schools. On the other hand, the UAE has made a lot of progress in education.

We are hoping to have a unified curriculum which is interactive that will help teachers improve their skills. We are working very hard to develop that in Lebanon. We have spoken to the UAE Minister of Education in order to organise a pan-Arab session with all the education ministers of the Gulf countries taking part very soon in Dubai, in association with the World Bank as they have shown interest in financing such a project.

Developing an interactive curriculum that can be shared with the Arab world, I feel will make a big difference and improve the education level across the board. †

Top: British Prime Minister David Cameron visits the Sed El Boucrah School with Lebanese Education minister, Elias Bou Saab. Above: Developing an interactive curriculum that can be shared with the Arab world, will make a big difference and improve the education level across the board.

A L I F E



D E V O T E D T O



C A N C E R C A R E



I N T H E R E G I O N





*Call for action and collaboration at the regional level
by **HRH Princess Ghida Talal**, who heads Jordan's top
medical centre*

The King Hussein Cancer Centre provides an integrated space for patient care, research and education. With cutting-edge facilities, the KHCC in Jordan has become the main medical hub in the Middle East for comprehensive cancer treatment and care.

Addressing the session on Scientific Research, Innovation and Development at the Knowledge Summit 2015, Her Royal Highness Princess Ghida Talal, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Centre (KHCF/KHCC), spoke from her heart about her own experience in 1992 as a young

bride of six months, whose husband was undergoing chemotherapy for Hodgkin's lymphoma. They were at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre in New York. And she realised they were the lucky few who were not only able to access such a facility, but also could afford the high costs involved in treating cancer.

'A VOW TO MYSELF'

"And this is when it hit me. It hit me that my husband had a chance to live because we were at one of the most advanced cancer centres in the world. My husband and I had the access to ➤

➤ the latest treatment and, of course, to the best research,” said Princess Ghida.

“We were, what I called, the privileged few. This is when I made a vow. I made a vow that if and when we were able to come back to our country, Jordan, I would devote my life to the fight against cancer and I would establish a cancer centre of excellence to not only treat Jordanians, but patients from all over the Arab world.”

“As you all know, cancer has no barriers. It invades every home. Who amongst us can claim that cancer has not affected them one way or another,” she asked.

A few years later, His Majesty King Abdullah appointed her as the head of the centre taking care of cancer patients, which had only two doctors.

“There was no concept whatsoever of a standalone cancer centre in the Arab world. And till today the King Hussein Cancer Centre remains the most prominent, comprehensive cancer centre in the region. The first thing that I did was to change the name of the centre. I called it the King Hussein Cancer Centre in honour of our beloved late King who fought so hard, and with so much dignity and courage, to fight this disease. But King Hussein did much more than that. He broke all taboos concerning cancer in Jordan. He spoke about his illness openly. He was on every television screen all over the world and he even removed his traditional head dress to show every cancer patient everywhere that it was not shameful to have cancer,” said Princess Ghida.

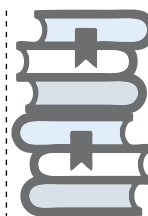
“After that we had to move swiftly. I insisted

on putting the word cancer in the name of our centre because I believed strongly that in order to defeat our enemy, you have to know it. And then I had to go immediately to the United States and I met with the leaders of cancer care to see if they would support us. I met officials of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the premier medical research agency in the US, and with St Jude Children’s Research Hospital, San Jose, California. They were incredibly supportive and they sent a Director to help us establish the King Hussein Cancer Centre,” she said.

Now 14 years later, from two doctors when they started, Princess Ghida said the strength has grown to over 220 highly trained oncologists treating over 30,000 active cancer patients from all over the Arab world, including Syria, Yemen, Palestine and Iraq, countries where the health systems were decimated. “Our priority was treatment. To deliver the highest quality and the safest treatment available. Because everything else was secondary. What is the use of treating a cancer patient half-way? We all know that it does not work with cancer. We accumulated accreditations. We became the first cancer centre in the developing world and the sixth in the world to receive such an accreditation. Also, we developed strong partnerships with the National Cancer Institute, with St Jude and also the MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Texas.”

FOCUS ON RESEARCH

“The King Hussein Cancer Center has over 290



**KHCC HAS
OVER 290
PUBLISHED
PAPERS,
MANY
OF THEM
IN VERY
HIGHLY
PRESTIGIOUS
JOURNALS**



The King Hussein Cancer Centre will be the biggest in the Middle East

published papers, many of them in very highly prestigious journals such as the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*,” Princess Ghida said.

“We are also engaged in international phase two and phase three trials, including numerous research projects. One of them is a major collaboration with MD Anderson and it involves the BRCA1 gene breast cancer tests. We have now solidly entered the research stage at the King Hussein Cancer Centre.

“And how could we not have entered the research arena? First of all, we are living in the age of personalised medicine. The one-size-fits-all formula simply does not work anymore. It has really shown its limitations. As Arabs, we have to conduct our own research and testing, as our gene pool is different and the risk factors are different. The responses to particular treatments are different. And this is why we don’t have any choice, but do our own testing.”

And as a result of these experiences, the King Hussein Cancer Centre has introduced sophisticated molecular testing to start targeted therapy to particular patients for different cases of cancer. “And we found out to our horror that the BRCA1 gene mutations in breast cancer was much, much higher than we expected. So all this points to the fact again about how important it is to conduct our own research. Even if we have access to all the research in the West, we still remain different and our patients are unique.”

Princess Ghida made an urgent call for action and collaboration at the regional level. “There must be a pan-Arab cooperation in cancer treatment and research by pooling the services of the leading specialised centres. We will then have enough number of patients needed to conduct field trials and research. We also need to establish a cancer fund.”

“We can start this today,” Princess Ghida said, addressing the Knowledge Summit 2015 participants. “At next year’s Knowledge Summit, we can officially launch it.”

Taking part in the panel discussion, Princess Ghida, referred to the issue of brain drain. She said that “in spite of having the intelligence and the financial resources, it is difficult to retain and attract the best talent.”

ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

She said the solution to this was to create a proper academic environment. “The only reason the KHCC was able to have 220 highly trained doctors from the earlier dismal low of two was the opportunity for research and publication. It was difficult



for such specialists to work in the prevalent conditions in our hospitals. Besides work, there had to be that extra feeling of wanting to serve your own society. It is still very hard to convince our doctors, who are settled with their families in the West, to leave the comfort of their well-salaried jobs.”

Princess Ghida rued the lack of pan-Gulf collaboration and research efforts. “In basic research, we have a long way to go,” she said. “We need to start from the basics. We need to start publishing as well as actively participate in joint research efforts. We also need to establish strong global partnerships. It may take decades. But it is okay. We need to start and we are starting,” she added on an optimistic note. †

Top: (L-R) Princess Ghida Talal of Jordan, Sir Richard Branson and Tania Bryer attend the launch of ‘CNBC Meets Sir Richard Branson’. Above: KHCC has introduced sophisticated molecular testing to start targeted therapy to particular patients for different cases of cancer.





A MERGER OF ONE'S HOME AND THE WORLD

Anousheh Ansari, first female private space explorer, talks about using technology for a better world, and how women can help shape a better future.

One of the panelists at the session on 'Innovation and Information Technology' during the Knowledge Summit 2015 was Anousheh Ansari, co-founder and chairwoman of Prodea Systems. She also made history nine years ago as the first female private space explorer and as the first astronaut of Iranian descent. She can be considered a pioneer in every aspect, earning her place in history as the fourth private explorer to visit space.

"Interacting with the environment around you changes your priorities. From space, you see the world as one place where all the borders and the differences that separate us just melt away; one home for everyone and every race, every gender, every human being at some level," she says about her experience in space.

In an exclusive interview with *Flashes*, Anousheh Ansari spoke about the impact of her space trip, her company Prodea

Systems' development projects around the world, among others.

Below are excerpts from the interview:

ON THE ROLE OF BEING THE FIRST WOMAN PRIVATE SPACE EXPLORER

It was later that I realised, after I had made that space trip, that there are so many women out there who don't have the opportunity and don't necessarily get the kind of support that I got from my husband and my family to go to space. So I wanted to tell my story to inspire them and to help them see beyond the limitations that are sometimes put around them. And most importantly, I realised a lot of times women put limitations on themselves because they feel that the culture of their family or friends, or something around them, tells them they are not supposed to do so. And that becomes sort of ingrained in their minds, and they start putting boundaries on themselves. So I hope by >



Baikonur, Kazakhstan, September 18, 2006, first female space tourist Anousheh Ansari, left, and Russian cosmonaut, flight engineer, Mikhail Tyurin (Roskosmos) of the 14th ISS crew seen before the launch of Soyuz-FG rocket booster

➤ telling my story, they will start thinking differently and would not put limits on what they can achieve and what they can hope for.

ON IRAN AND THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS

I am very, very excited because Iran is a young country. There is a large majority of people that are under the age of 25, like in the Gulf region, and they have lots of hopes and dreams. For many years, those hopes and dreams were, you know, not going anywhere. And they didn't think that they would be able to accomplish much. But now as the boundaries are starting to fall, they have hope of being able to establish communication, establish relationships with the Arab world, and collaborate and benefit from it. I think it is a wonderful opportunity.

Iran is a highly educated society, and they are very big in science and research, and I think it is good for the Iranians, and good for the world, for Iran to integrate back with the international community.

ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE GREAT DIGITAL DIVIDE IN THE WORLD

It is a very interesting issue and that has been bugging me. At our company Prodea, we looked

into how we can use our technology to actually close and bridge that gap. What we've done and which we have announced last week with Tata Trust is that for the first time we are deploying our technology in rural India – starting in Rajasthan – where people don't have access to tablets, smart phones, and many are illiterate even, and how can we bring the benefits of technology to this community.

What we have done is this: in each of these rural homes there is a TV. How can we make use of this and bring the internet to the TV? Not with keyboard and mouse, but through the remote control with which they are familiar. So what we have done is use our technology to get all the benefits of the internet so that they can get access to education, health, government entitlements, entertainment and for whatever it is that we use internet today.

Everyone talks about internet connectivity. Internet connectivity is there, they have 3G, but no one is using it. They don't know about internet and what it is used for. What we have done is [without them knowing that it is the internet that is helping them] – they get to know that later – bring it to them via TV. So they have all the YouTube channels and news and they have

all these videos about health, and we personalise it. For example, when someone registers a birth, we know there is a newborn in that household. And we can send a video to their TV that provides important nutritional factors for the mother and baby in the first month. In the second month, we can send a different video. It is really about getting them to be comfortable about internet and its benefits and doing it in a way that bridges the literacy gap, which is the technology gap and accessibility to devices. I am very excited. We have already started in hundreds of homes and will be in thousands of homes at the end of the year and hopefully in hundreds of thousands of homes by next year.

I have the best partner that I can hope for in Tata Trust and I am fully engaged and I go there every other week. To me, the world is one – a person living in rural India is as important as someone in rural Iran. If I help them it is really for me a blurring together [of races, of nations].

ABOUT HER US-BASED COMPANY PRODEA SYSTEMS AND THE SERVICES THEY PROVIDE

We are a technology company that builds the platform originally for delivering services in a way that is very easy and simple for people to use. When we were doing it we did not necessarily think about rural India, but we were thinking of my mom or my dad who have a hard time using technology and wanted to make things simple for everyone. We also wanted to use smart devices; our technology is used, for example, in smart homes. So while you have it in luxury apartments automating things, but the same technology can be used in rural India to deliver health and education.

That is why we build it like a Lego set. You can use Lego to build a bridge, or a tower. At the end of the day, it is a Lego set! So we build very modular, very powerful technology that can be put together to accomplish different things.

HER INTEREST IN 3D PRINTING AND ITS REVOLUTIONARY APPLICATIONS

I am the adviser to a company called Made in Space and they have the first 3D printer on board the Space Station now. They have just started doing the tests of printing tools and the different things that they need on the Space Station. I have seen companies starting to print food, for example. There are 3D-printed vaccines. So, if there is an outbreak, instead of manufacturing a vaccine in one place and shipping it, you can actually fax or email the formula for that vaccine

and they can 3D print it.

So 3D printing is not printing toys and stuff like that. It is going to change and it will be at the genetic level. It will become 3D printing of hearts and organs. It could be food or clothing. Anything that you could imagine can be 3D printed.

ON HOW COUNTRIES LIKE THE UAE ARE EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY IN A BIG WAY

It will help everyone. And I think you look at how everything is changing. This region has built its wealth around oil. And the way we are using renewable technology and the way the world is changing, the dependence on oil will become less and less. So the economy that has helped this region flourish will not be able to sustain itself unless they reinvent themselves. And the leaders know that already. That is why this kind of congress [like the Knowledge Summit] is taking place. So it's all about empowering and enabling the young people in the region so that they can innovate. It needs that drive innovation. Right now, people may not see or feel the need, but in 10 years they will feel the need. Look at where the oil prices are because of fracking, which is still an oil-based technology.

I am a technologist that is interested in space-powered solar satellites. With the costs for access to space going down, we could get very cheap energy from space. All these things tell you that you have to innovate continuously, and continuously reinvent yourself. We talked about big companies like Nokia going out of business and being disrupted. Countries will be disrupted, and economies will be disrupted

TECHNOLOGY AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN

What I hope is that women will change technology more. Because today there are not enough women in the field, technology is being designed by men with their thinking, with their needs in mind. I encourage women to get into the field of STEM, engineering and technology. We need more women involved in designing, it would get a more human face. If more women were involved, I would not worry about more technology, or about robots becoming super soldiers if there were women designing it. Women always think about the future of their children and because of that they will always want a world that is better; they do not want a world where there is fighting going on. If they were involved in technology, they would incorporate a lot of those desires into making technology softer, human and more about creativity. ♀



INTERNET CONNECTIVITY IS THERE, THEY HAVE 3G, BUT NO ONE IS USING IT.



As the CEO of Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (AHSF), Ms Valentina Qussisiya is leading the Foundation's efforts to invest in cultural and social innovation to positively impact the communities through its three pillars: thought leadership, arts and literature, and employment and innovation.

She is also an active member of Jordan's National Centre for Human Rights board of trustees and a member of Al-Balqa' Applied University board of trustees.

Before joining AHSF, she had held the position of Director General of the Jordan River Foundation, where she played a key role in initiating and supporting youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, and child safety programmes.

Flashes met Ms Qussisiya in Dubai on the opening day at the Knowledge Summit 2015, where she moderated the fourth session on Scientific Research, Innovation and Development. The following are the excerpts of the interview:

POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Can you describe the Foundation's efforts to invest in cultural and social innovation and its positive impact in Jordan.

As part of its commitment to Thought Leadership, AHSF aims to strengthen knowledge and advance dialogue for pluralistic societies. This is accomplished through the Abdul Hameed Shoman Cultural Forum, Abdul Hameed Shoman Fund for Scientific Research and the Abdul Hameed Shoman Award for Arab Researchers, in addition to its Science and Education Programme.

The Abdul Hameed Shoman Award for Arab Researchers was launched in 1982, and is awarded in appreciation of distinguished published scientific works, which have contributed to promoting Arab applied and scientific knowledge, increasing awareness and promoting a culture of scientific research, as well as addressing modern-day issues and priorities at the local, regional and international levels.

FOCUS MORE ON YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EMPLOYABILITY

*Policies should be targeting young people and provide sufficient support to help them start businesses, says **Valentina Qussisiya**, CEO, Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jordan*

Through its investments in Arts and Literature, AHSF aims to promote greater voice, expression and recognition of the arts, culture and literature. AHSF supports art and literary spaces, accessibility of performing arts for all, and recognition and publication of Arab creativity in literature.

The Abdul Hameed Shoman Public Library was established in 1986, as the first well-equipped and fully computerised public library in Jordan. Presently, the library offers free Wi-Fi and access to international resources and databases for students and researchers.

The library also helps organise various literary activities such as book launches and book signings, and hosts various book clubs' discussions. The library also provides capacity-building workshops for its patrons in addition to specialised trainings for librarians from Jordan and across the Arab region.

Since its establishment and as part of its community outreach, the library has helped establish 13 municipal libraries across the Kingdom and

supports 14 municipal libraries in Palestine.

In 2013, the library released a second edition of The Expanded Thesaurus (*Maknaz*) in its web-based version in cooperation with Dubai Culture and Arts Authority and Juma Al Majid Heritage and Culture Centre. The Expanded Thesaurus (*Maknaz*) is the largest Arabic trilingual thesaurus that covers all fields of knowledge and serves as the main subject analysis tool for different information sources.

Knowledge Path Library for Children and Youth was launched in 2013 to provide a dynamic, open space and nurturing environment for children and youth (of three to 16 years of age) from different backgrounds to read, interact and participate in fun and creative activities as part of their intellectual and creative journey to self-discovery and awareness. In addition to its daily storytelling and creative activities, the Knowledge Path Library runs its own summer and winter programmes, offers capacity building workshops for children, and hosts monthly book signing ceremonies for renowned authors



➤ of children books, in addition to science shows and children book club sessions in collaboration with local and international parties.

Through the Abdul Hameed Shoman Award for Children's Literature, the Foundation recognises and promotes the publication of distinguished Arabic literary works specifically for children and youth. The Award was launched in 2006, in an effort to address the growing demand for increased and improved Arabic literature and content for children that can further enrich creativity at an early age.

IMAGES OF PROGRESS

The Cinema Programme was initiated in 1989, to promote a culture of cinema and filmmaking as a form of expression, and contribute to the growth of the film industry in Jordan. The Programme mainly consists of weekly screenings of carefully selected world movies ranging from classics to modern and experimental film genres at the Foundation's cinema hall. The film screenings are usually followed by a discourse/critiquing session among renowned critic and/or filmmaker and the audience.

For persons interested in filmmaking, the programme often holds workshops on topics ranging from scenario and script writing to film editing. Moreover, as an advocate of world cinema, the programme regularly organises local, regional and international film weeks in partnership with different entities.

The Children's Cinema Programme was launched in 2014, to enhance the critical thinking of children and youth, and heighten their appreciation for the arts through filmmaking workshops and monthly free film screenings followed by discussions.

LET THE NUMBERS DO THE TALKING

The Foundation balances scientific research to build an economic base along with cultural awakening through promoting the humanities. How do you do this successfully?

For over 37 years, AHSF has been balancing scientific research to build an economic base along with cultural awakening through promoting the humanities by driving innovation through its investment in intellectual prosperity.

➤ The Abdul Hameed Shoman Arab Scientific Researchers Award has been granted to 390 researchers representing 69 Arab

- Universities and Scientific Institutes
- The AHSF Scientific Research Fund has provided more than 1 million Jordanian Dinars worth in grants to 98 Jordanian research works.
- The Forum held more than 1,500 assemblies celebrating prominent thought leaders, discussing various issues while providing direct interaction to over 180 attendees weekly and 81 publications in addition to raising awareness online.
- The Cinema Programme held more than 60 local, Arab and International Film Weeks and hosted more than 1500 screenings.
- By end of this year, the AHS Children Literature Award was granted to 18 of the 400 authors who have applied for the award from Jordan and the Arab World.
- Sponsored more than 250 activities and initiatives that aim to realise Intellectual Prosperity.
- Since 2014, the Foundation approved more than 100 applications and proposals in

The Knowledge Path Library runs its own summer and winter programmes, offers capacity building workshops for children, and hosts monthly book signing ceremonies for renowned authors of children books



grants and sponsorships support distributed across the three programmes.

FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Personally, you have played a key role in initiating and supporting youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and child safety. Tell us about your involvement and your views on possible solutions to these issues in the region?

During my tenure at the Jordan River Foundation (JRF) we focused on community development and child protection. We aimed to empower communities, including the more vulnerable ones, to participate in creating their own economic opportunities, and improving the quality of their lives through creative reorganisation of the natural, human and economic resources at local levels.

Community members were trained to identify and select appropriate projects that would enhance their economic, social and environmental conditions. Community participation and engagement was key in selecting and designing projects that are economically sound and sustainable. Projects were owned and implemented by local community members where they also received on-the-job training to build their capacity along the way.

Child protection is a neglected issue in our Arab region and is considered a taboo subject. While with JRF, we have worked on a national protection policy and a national family protection system that provided a multidisciplinary model that provide holistic services to the children reported within the system. A temporary treatment centre (Dar Al Aman) has been established to ensure providing the comprehensive treatment and care for the children, while campaigns and protection centres were established to enhance positive child rearing practices and help strengthen positive healthy interactions between family members.

Unemployment among youth is very high in the Arab region. And community development cannot happen if you don't involve youth in every step of the way. Youth should be part of every decision made in their communities.

Training programmes were given to youth to help them start their own businesses, including entrepreneurship education and training; information,



advice, coaching and mentoring and financial support. They also received training on basic life skills, technical skills and project management skills to allow them to be key players in the social and economic development of their communities.

Grants and micro funding were provided to youth who are interested to start their own businesses, while linkages with employment opportunities for those who are more inclined to enter the labour market.

The region should focus more on youth entrepreneurship and employability. Policies should be targeting young people and provide sufficient support to help them start their businesses in different sectors. Support should include skill building, networking and financial support. Continuous monitoring and mentoring should be provided to ensure success.

Can IT & Innovation help countries like Jordan to tackle the present day as well as the challenges of the future?

IT and Innovation can help drive the productivity and growth of any nation as long as it is absorbed and employed to make improvements in line with local circumstances, ecosystems, and development priorities. IT & Innovation are key to a country like Jordan, where its main capital is its skilled workforce. We can provide the infrastructure needed to nurture a stable IT sector and we can encourage innovation through startup hubs and accelerators with mentors such as Oasis500, which takes passion, energy and dedication to transform a startup to a sustainable business. We in Jordan have many success stories such as Maktoob and Jamalon among others. 📌



The Children's Cinema Programme was launched in 2014, to enhance the critical thinking of children and youth, and heighten their appreciation for the arts.



ON A PHILANTHROPIC MISSION TO SUPPORT EMIRATI, ARAB YOUTH IN ACHIEVING THEIR POTENTIAL

*Innovation must
be integrated
throughout the
education system
and reform
efforts must be
given sufficient
time, says
Maysa Jalbout,
CEO of Abdulla
Al Ghurair
Foundation for
Education*

Established in July 2015, the Dubai-based Abdulla Al Ghurair Education Foundation is one of the largest privately funded philanthropic education initiatives in the Arab world, devoted to equipping Arab youth with the knowledge and skills they need to become future leaders of the Region.

In October, the Foundation announced the appointment of a recognised leader in education, Maysa Jalbout, to the position of Chief Executive Officer.

Ms. Jalbout is a recognised leader in education and brings to the Foundation over 20 years' experience in building highly effective organisations, initiatives and partnerships targeting young people throughout Canada, the Middle East and in developing nations.

In this leadership role at the Abdulla Al Ghurair Education Foundation, she will spearhead innovation and development of the Foundation and its programmes.

At the Knowledge Summit 2015, Maysa Jalbout was the moderator of the first session titled 'Innovation in Education – Future Outlook' on the opening day, which featured the Education ministers of the UAE, Lebanon, and Morocco.

Maysa Jalbout, spoke at length about the Foundation and its goals to *Flashes*:

What is the mission of Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education?

The mission of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education is to provide access to opportunity for high-performing, under-served Emirati and Arab youth. ➤

Maysa Jalbout
at the World
Economic Forum
on the Middle East
and North Africa
2015 in Jordan



➤ **When it comes to the UAE, what are your thoughts on these three key issues: improving the quality of education, skills development, and about integrating technology into education?**

The UAE invests significant financial resources for its education reform efforts. This is a testament to its commitment to improving the quality of its education system. In its short history, the country has made huge gains, with access to secondary education almost doubling between 1999 and 2012 and literacy rates increasing by more than 60 per cent for women since the mid 1970s. To better prepare its citizens for the world of work, the country has also welcomed the establishment of a vast array of higher education institutions, with strengths in both science-based education and the liberal arts. Specific examples of these include Khalifa University and NYU.

Aware of the importance of remaining globally competitive, the country's leadership is also investing in significant reforms to continue improving the learning outcomes of its students and preparing them for a more knowledge-based world. The challenge for the future will be to ensure that all children and youth across the country can access a high quality education. But, the government cannot take on this task alone. All educational stakeholders should work to

support the government in achieving these goals and scaling up successful efforts.

From your wide international and regional experience, how can educationists and policy makers create and launch high-impact innovative programmes that will improve the quality of education in the Arab World? What are the factors that have to be kept in mind?

Countries across the region are currently struggling to determine how education systems can better prepare young people to be more innovative in a world driven by technology. While countries and organisations have been experimenting with the introduction of new programmes and models of learning, there is no doubt that technology can serve as an enabler and accelerator in the educational process. However, to have an impact, innovation must be integrated throughout the education system and reform efforts must be given sufficient time for monitoring, refining, and evaluation.

The UAE is a perfect testing ground for such innovations, given the country's significant investment in education, its mission to serve as a hub for innovation in the region, and its drive to develop the skills of its people to work in jobs



of the future. To succeed in this process, the UAE and the region, needs to develop and integrate the tools that would support more innovative ways of teaching and learning in schools.

We know much more today about what our students need to learn and how best to help them do so. Part of what we've learned is that we can exploit technology to make high quality content available to our teachers and students and encourage our teaching to be more student-centred and learning to be more collaborative.

What are the academic subjects that need to be introduced in schools and educational institutions here that address the needs of the local and global economy and the priorities of nation building?

The MENA region is in need of more graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). In recent years, governments and education institutions have been working to encourage students to pursue these fields. These efforts should not end there, but be integrated with the arts (STEAM) to help students develop soft skills such as working collaboratively, creatively, and incorporating new forms of media in their learning. One way this can be done is through the introduction of multidisciplinary



projects that teach students how to develop creative solutions to real life problems.

Who are the key local, regional and international partners that your Foundation will be forging ties with?

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education is open to establishing partnerships with all relevant actors in the field of education, from the government to other foundations and the private sector, with the goal of working collaboratively to support Emirati and Arab youth in achieving their potential. We strongly believe that the philanthropic sector has an important role to play in the field of education in the UAE and more broadly in the MENA region and hope to see it serving as a key partner in addressing the most pressing problems in our community. †

Left: Governments and education institutions have been working to encourage students to pursue these fields.



THE MENA REGION IS IN NEED OF MORE GRADUATES IN THE FIELDS OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH





EMIRATES MARS MISSION 'THIS IS THE DREAM WE NEED'

*NASA space scientist **Essam Heggy** lauds the initiative as a timely decision*

During the Third Session on Day Two of the Knowledge Summit 2015 on 'Knowledge Index – Education Indicators in the Arab region', one of the panelists who passionately backed the higher education programme in the Arab countries was the Egyptian-born Essam Heggy, now a renowned NASA space scientist.

Heggy later spoke exclusively to *Flashes*. Following are the excerpts from the interview :

How do you view the UAE's Mars mission?

I think the UAE's space programme is really the right decision at the right moment. I know that many people tend to see this as a luxury, something that we can live without. But they are wrong. This is the dream we need. Without a scientific dream for the nation, our youth are living in a constant nightmare and constant distraction. So I am very happy to see the Mars exploration programme by the UAE. And this is what we really need the most, >



since if we can't understand the climate change on Mars and how it was transformed from a blue planet – from a wet planet to a dry one – we will never understand the future of climate change in a desert environment. So it is a well-taken decision at an opportune time and it will bear fruits for the whole region.

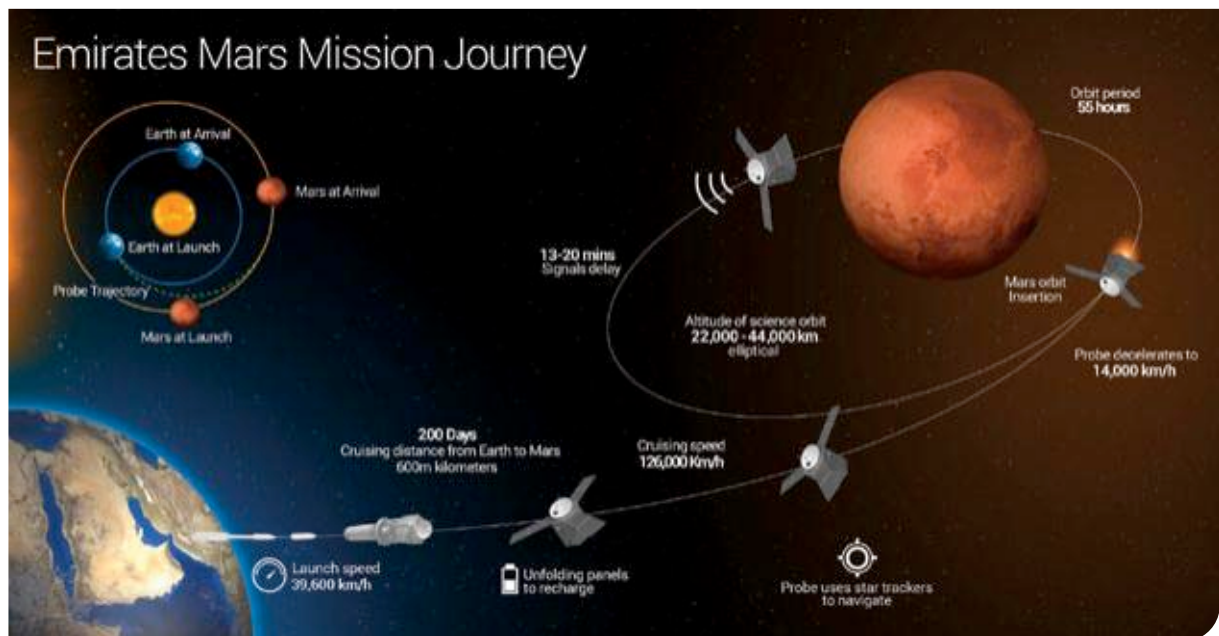
Do you think there will be technological payoffs as a result of launching this space programme?

Of course, I think the moral value, the science value and the educational value far outweigh any technological or economic benefit we will have. The Arab world was the leader in astronomy. So today we are not doing something that is outside of our history. Today, we are just coming back.

There was a major exchange of ideas during earlier times and developments in subjects like mathematics, chemistry and physics were absorbed by the culture in the Arab world to understand astronomy, because it was the main tool of navigation in desert environments. And then they ceased to.

We have to build on two things. First, on the youth motivation. They are thirsty to see such projects in the Arab world. And secondly, we have to build on our vision of what we want to be. If we have to have a nation that lives by science, we have to have a science dream. There

Left: Rosetta
Mission
Below: Emirates
Mars Mission
Journey



is no science advancement without a scientific dream. The Emirates Mars Mission is the scientific dream, as was the Apollo programme for the United States in the 60s.

Tell us about your on his own journey into the world of science?

I can describe my own journey by an easy word. It is a dream that has never stopped – to be able to go to work every day and to explore images of remote worlds, to understand, and to evolve myself and to evolve the knowledge of the others. I think it is a journey that I want Arab youth to live in their homeland, in the UAE and in the many Arab nations that are starting a space programme. I would like to one day live this journey in my homeland and not have this dream only when I travel.

What was your dream as a school student?

When I was in high school in Egypt, I was always fascinated by astronomy and space and it is that fascination that drives you every day and it is that curiosity of knowing about the world that drives you. It is not to have the status of being a NASA scientist. It is scientific curiosity that has been the main driver.

What is the current research project that you are working on?

My current research is on the Rosetta mission. We are exploring the Comet 67P and the mission is coming to an end within a month. It is providing us with excellent new data every day, giving insights into a comet, as never before. For the first time we have learnt what comets are made of. For the first time, we understand the porosity of a comet. These bodies are very light. They have a porosity of 90 per cent. So you can put the whole mass of a comet into a room to fit the size of four chairs. That will be the mass of the comet, but do you see the volume that it occupies?

So a lot of space exploration has changed the way we perceive our idea of water transportation through our solar system, through cometary body movement. It will throw light on how life evolved in the solar system. We don't want to colonise anyone. We want to understand how our own earth evolved. And that cannot happen if we just keep looking underneath our feet!



On space exploration and living in space?

I think this is what we want to do. I think we are already in space. Our Earth is a body in space. We would like to understand the key element in the climate change environment. We want to understand how similar or how different is our earth, how life conditions changed across the solar system. We would like to understand our origins and where we are going. I think these are the big questions.

On whether he is optimistic that we can cope with climate change?

We have to raise public awareness. If there is no public awareness about the impact of climate change, then humans will become a species that can vanish. What helped humans to survive is their ability to adapt to the climate. That ability is dependent on our understanding of our climate. So, if we lose our understanding, we lose our ability to adapt, and then we vanish. †



COMETS ARE VERY LIGHT AND HAVE A POROSITY OF 90 PER CENT



'THE DIGITAL DIVIDE BOTHERS ALL OF US'

Stephen Wozniak, co-founder of Apple Inc. on life after Apple and his current views about education, philanthropy and the world of technology

One of the panelists at the third session on 'Innovation and Information Technology' on the opening day of the Knowledge Summit 2015 in Dubai was Stephen Wozniak, co-founder of Apple Inc. and inventor of Apple II computers.

Wozniak had helped shape the computing industry with his design of the Apple's first line of products – the Apple I and II and influenced the popular Macintosh.

The following are excerpts from his exclusive interview with *Flashes*:

ON HIS CAREER AFTER LEAVING APPLE

I moved out from Apple to philanthropy and

then to teaching, in that order. I had an unusual personality. When we started Apple, I did not want to run a company and I made sure I was never at the top of the business. I was only at the bottom of the organisation chart as an inventor in the laboratory.

Eventually, Apple grew big. I did some very important, critical inventions in the early days of Apple and kept it going. But eventually it was so big and managed ...it was not my style. I like start-ups.

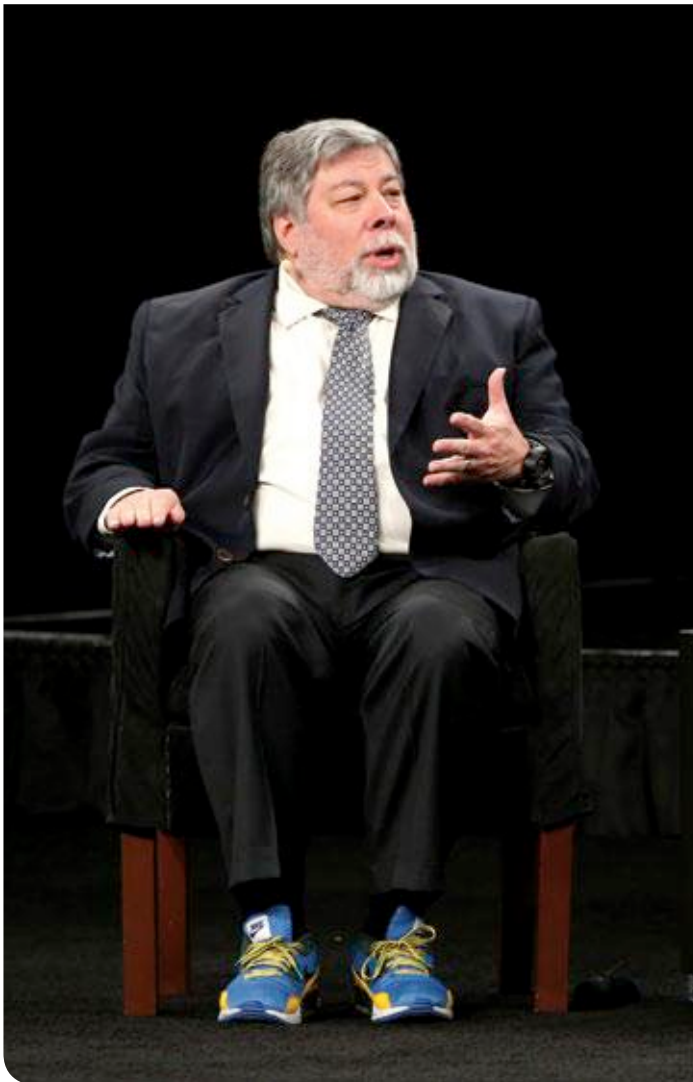
One time I had a plane crash and five weeks later, I came out of amnesia and I called up Steve Jobs and I said, 'This is my only chance to go back to college and get my degree.' So I went back to college for one year and earned my degree from Berkley under a fake name. My Berkley diploma says Rocky Raccoon Clark. I returned to Apple as an engineer. And after a few years, I got an idea – around the time the Macintosh has been in use – it was an idea to build a universal remote control. This is when anyone in the US had two remote controls – one for TV and one for VCR. No one had remote controls for hi-fi stereos, laser disc players, satellite TV receivers, etc.

And it was a difficult machine, with two microprocessors – it was like a little computer in your hand. And I built that.

Then I started getting involved at the same time with philanthropy. I did not want huge sums of money. I had more than I needed and I started giving it to museums and arts groups and things like that. I did not want to wind up in that phase of maximising one's wealth forever and getting powerful forever. That's not my personality. I am the opposite. In fact, when Apple had an IPO, I gave away huge amounts, maybe almost \$20 million worth today of this stock to some early employees and to some other employees because I felt that it was wrong for only the three of us at the top to have it.

ON THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN THE WORLD

I have no better answer than anyone else. If I were to look at a statement that would have meaning, I would say that it has to be based on something that does not exist yet. Some day we may have smart computers that are conscious, that can actually come up to you and be your best friend. And you can have one teacher per student. Education is where it all starts. More



Photos: © Getty Images



Wozniak did a Berkeley diploma under the fake name Rocky Raccoon Clark

education, knowhow and resources too. I wish there were incubators just to give more resources into people's hands, just to build things for their own homes. Things they want for themselves. That is how I started.

The digital divide bothers all of us at the top tech companies. And some go and teach in poor neighbourhoods. I did my teaching for eight years, but I did it in the town I lived in, which is not a poor neighbourhood. But I did it in the public schools, not the private schools. I kind of feel guilty about that some times. When you go to an impoverished area, this is the problem: You might bring technology in. You can tell students how to use technology, to be part of the oncoming world and get a job and a career. But their parents sometimes don't have the ability



to be teachers in their homes and don't guide them or give them the culture. So in impoverished areas, many will not be ready to reap the full benefits of the mobile internet culture we have today. It will eventually reach there. But it will take a long, long time [for technology in these spaces to be culturally enriching]. ‡

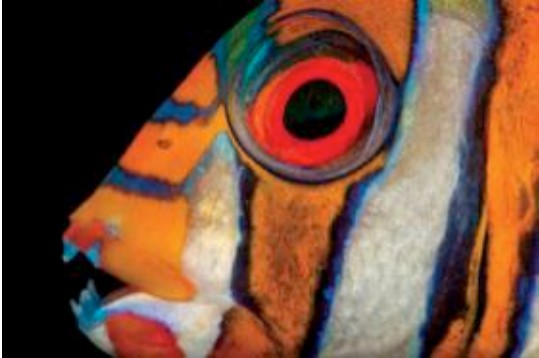
Drew Carey guest hosted *The Late Late Show*, with guests David Arquette and Steve Wozniak on the CBS Television Network



HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY



Photos: © Getty Images



***David Bennett**, Chief Development Officer, National Geographic Society, is aware of the risks the Earth faces. But he sees much hope in how technology and science will save the day*





David Bennett was one of the panelists in the session on 'Innovation in Media and Film Making' on the penultimate day of the Knowledge Summit 2015, featuring film and media personalities Nayla Al Khaja, Riz Khan, Ali Mostafa and George Kordahi from the UAE region and elsewhere. The National Geographic Society has been inspiring people to care about the planet since 1888 and is one of the largest non-profit scientific and educational institutions in the world. Based in Washington, he leads the National Geographic Society's team that engages individuals and institutions worldwide to generate philanthropic support for the Society.

THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE FILMIC IMAGE

During the panel discussion, Bennett shed light

on many aspects of the channel's pioneering work, which has kept it in the media limelight over the years and which has a devoted following across the globe cutting across generations. Innovation, said Bennett, has made it possible to generate more stories from more people and broadcast them to a larger audience than ever before. Describing the dramatic changes in the world of photography and videography, Bennett said technology has eliminated the need for infrastructure and expertise, and drastically cut the costs involved in creating high quality photography. National Geographic posts 40 billion photos on Instagram, and uploads videos on YouTube every day that would normally involve 65 days of work in theatre format, he added.

A STRONG LOCAL BASE

In comments to *Flashes*, Bennett also commented on localisation of content: "Abu Dhabi Media is a longstanding partner of ours, and all our local channel partnerships are made with the people who understand the local market, and who know the local language and the culture. So when we wanted to find a partner here, Abu Dhabi Media (ADM) was a very large co-partner. I believe we have more localised content from National Geographic Abu Dhabi channel than any other local channel in the world. There are more localised programmes produced, not just in terms of language, but also in terms of culture."

A DISTINGUISHED HONOUR

On the opening day of the Knowledge Summit, Gary E. Knell, President and CEO of National Geographic, received the prize of half a million US dollars on behalf of the channel, after being named one of the three winners of the \$1 million Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Award. The award honours individuals or institutions at the international level for their contribution to the dissemination, transfer and localisation of knowledge. The award was shared between National Geographic Channel; Hiroshi Ishiguro, Professor of the Department of Innovation Systems in the Graduate School of Engineering Science at Osaka University; and Ahmed Alshugairi, presenter of 'Khawatir' television programme.

On winning the Knowledge Award, Bennett said: "It was a great honour for National Geographic to have been named winner by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Foundation for an award of this kind. We have wanted to increase our contribution to this region, to the Arab world, and to be recognised for that is indeed a great honour. National Geographic believes that we ought to inspire, illuminate and teach about our world, so that people can understand the connectedness we have as a people, between people and Nature, and our opportunity is to share those stories around the world.”

SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE RESCUE

The headquarters for the channel and the NGO that produces those programmes are based in Abu Dhabi. National Geographic Abu Dhabi was launched in July 2009. It is the first free-to-air National Geographic Channel brought to the region by Abu Dhabi Media and National Geographic Channels International (NGCI), and is dedicated to understanding and protecting the world and its programming comprises factual entertainment focusing on popular science, technology, natural history, archaeology and natural mysteries.

On being asked how the channel was targeting the younger generation of viewers, Bennett said, “For us, social media is a critically important part. We have 175 million followers on key social media platforms, and of those 75 per cent are under 25 years of age. And that is where we can become much more accessible, and people can comment in their own languages and their own cultures on stories, photos and videos that are important to them.”

EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW

In increasingly endangered ecological times, how is National Geographic helping to express the urgency with which we need to save this planet?

We have changed our language. Earlier a picture told a story, but now we’ve come to realise that we don’t only need to illuminate to give people access to nature and its bounty, but also offer people a way to make a difference. It’s not only about consumption of nature anymore via documentary or photographs. It comes with a “here is how you can contribute to a better, greener planet”.

Tell us about some recent projects that have thrilled you at National Geographic.

Last week, our team was inside the tomb of

King Tutankhamun in Egypt. Professor Nicholas Reeves, a famous Egyptologist, believes the tomb of Queen Nefertiti might be concealed in there. We have been looking at high-res scans of the tomb to see if there is a door beyond the tomb, and we have collaborated with the Egyptian ministry of antiquities to do radar scans to look further into the conjecture. We are 90% sure of making a discovery and this to us is very exciting. We thought we are the forefront of learning and thought. But that is changing as we make more discoveries. The greatest age of knowledge is before us, not after us, I believe, as this collaboration proves to us.

It is said that there is no part of the globe today doesn’t have a human footprint on it. Isn’t that a bit too much?

I would like to add a disclaimer here: yes, a lot of the land mass is now mapped, and I think that is what you meant to say. However, 80% of our oceans, for example, are so far unexplored. And we are working very hard with scientific teams to get a deeper understanding of that world. As I mentioned earlier, our strategy is to document these unseen worlds, then put them out there, for the public, and then say, “Hey, look at how beautiful our world is, come, let’s protect it together.”

What is the future of nature filmmaking? Much debate at this forum has been about the analogue versus digital divide.

There is a huge resurgence of analogue media, but let me remind you, analogue is an elite hobby. Vinyls, for example, which are an example of analogue music, are expensive. Yes, technology does require better storytelling and we are here to recognise good storytelling through our programming and other initiatives. †



FOR US, SOCIAL MEDIA IS A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT PART. WE HAVE 175 MILLION FOLLOWERS ON KEY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, AND OF THOSE 75 PER CENT ARE UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE



The Middle East is in the frontline of gender equality in filmmaking

Nayla Al Khaja, the UAE's first female filmmaker, talks about her love for the craft, about being a woman and holding the camera, and why digital media needs better storytellers





› **In 10 years, you have become a seminal name associated with Emirati film culture. How did you decide to become a documentary filmmaker?**

I could almost call it an accident. I was motivated to do this student documentary because a German guy in my classroom asked me if people in Dubai had microwaves and I was quite shocked. This is 12-13 years ago. I was quite adamant on flying him down to Dubai and shooting this documentary from his eyes, about his discovery of this place. I fell in love with the process and I thought I could do this for a long time. That said, my first love is narrative and storytelling, creating atmospheres. Narrative filmmaking is where I see myself heading for sure.

As a female filmmaker in the GCC region, how is your cinema different from that of a male filmmaker? Does gender play a role in how cinema is made? Is the term “female filmmaker” too much of a label?

Absolutely not. I have seen lots of interesting films about women directed by men, and

vice-versa. Being a specific gender does not determine your craft. I think the best way to classify filmmakers is whether you're a good filmmaker or whether you need to work on your craft. To break yet another stereotype, women comprise 7% of directors globally, but in the Middle East, we are doing fantastically when it comes to this ratio. We have a balance and are in the front lines of gender equality in filmmaking, even if it is a small step.

We're still not a full-fledged industry, but when it blossoms and becomes bigger, you'll find an even distribution of male and female workers, which to me is interesting. I think the term female filmmaker will die out because it's just not a professional term any more.

Your firm D-Seven Motion Pictures also works with top clients such as car companies, etc. How do you negotiate the space between art and commerce?

D-Seven was established to do commercials because it's work, it's bread and butter. D-Seven also has The Scene club, which is the largest film club in the region. We showcase 36 films a year from all around the world. We fly in the director/producer to discuss the film. We run

A behind the scenes moment from Nayla Al Khaja's *Arabana*

this as a year-long festival, you could say.

The only difference is that a film festival is condensed to a week. It's now turning into a commercial venture, it's now a paid-for service – with commercials, we work with agencies, we are the 'execution' end of things, we get a readymade story-board, the agency has the concept, they have a campaign. We come up with a director who matches that vision. That's hard-core commercials. When it comes to art, D-Seven uses its extra cash to invest in short films and we boost those films in festivals. *Neighbours* has been in 40 festivals and won three awards.

The Scene film club that you launched has a cult following of sorts. Please tell us about the independent film club culture in the Emirates?

When we launched, we had 50 members. Today, we have 10,700 plus members. It has gone from strength to strength. I like the concept, you come in with your jeans, tshirt, flip flops. You don't walk the red carpet. It's just good film, good people, a good day – and the formula works.

What is the status of film education in the Middle East? The Knowledge Summit has had a lot of talks on how to turn the region into a knowledge-based economy. What are some of the hopes and challenges to film education in the region?

That's a very tricky one because I think it's a supply and demand thing. Definitely, film education in Dubai is not available. There is a film institution in Dubai and I don't think it gives you the full-on experience; there is one film school in Abu Dhabi that is more geared and more hardcore and that's a two-year course. That said, you don't have a film culture and film history courses, which is enriching. Students need to be made aware of how analogue cinema works and this is where film history is important. People were so patient back in the day when making films in analogue.

They manually spliced all their footage. That humility and rigour is very important in understanding film. It makes you a more mature filmmaker. I would love to see a film department at more universities. I think the timing is right, and I don't see why not.

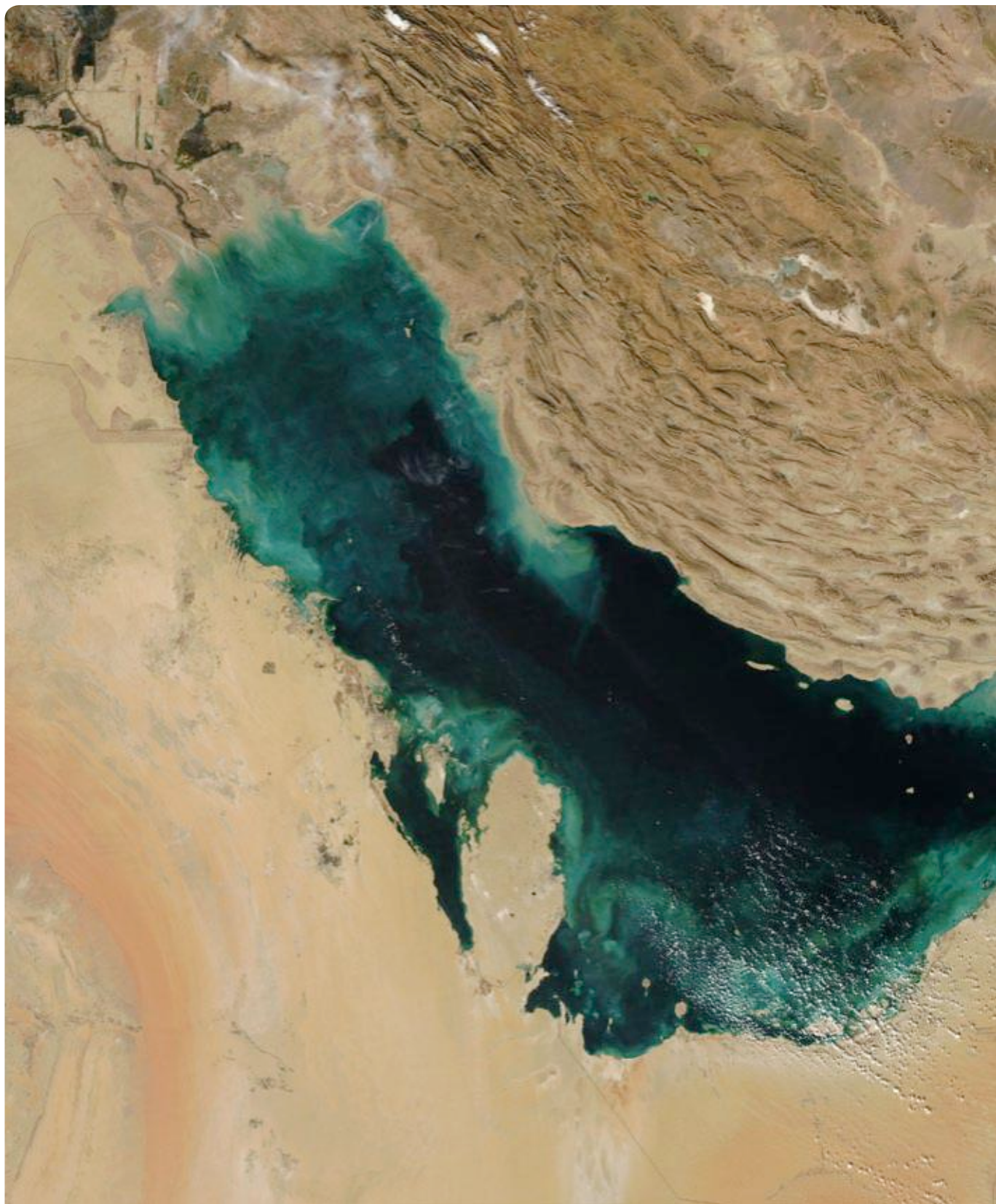
In a world where video/nano-technology is wiping out the format of film itself, do you feel the region needs to do more to promote analogue technology?

I personally absolutely miss analogue production. If I had the chance I would shoot solely in 35mm. It has a depth and aesthetic value that digital can never give you. Digital is hyper reality. It is way too polished.

That said, analogue cinema has become harder to create. How do you do reversal processing? Where do you buy stock? How do you project your film? Because you can shoot so little with film to save money, you had so many rehearsals. The accessibility of digital cinema ironically backfires because you get a lot of garbage in the process as well. 

Nayla Al Khaja on the sets of *Neighbours*







MAPPING A PATH TO KNOWLEDGE IN THE REGION

Dr Eric Fouache, vice-chancellor of Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, talks about non-Anglophonic education's unique appeal, his plans for the region and building bridges between Arab culture and the Occident

As the head of the Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, please outline the history of your institution here and the success it has had in attracting students?

We opened in 2006 as Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, an Emirati university supervised by ADEC ("Abu Dhabi, Education Council") with the aim of being the main French, Francophone and European platform for higher education and research in the region. We opened in 2014/2015 as a continuous training centre and we are accelerating our research development policy. The University is in its mature phase with around 900 students from 77 different nationalities: 25% of our students are UAE Nationals, 15% are French. We are a multidisciplinary university teaching in French and English humanities, mathematics, law and economics, opened through research and continuing education to the Emirati society. As such, we fully participate in the economic and cultural development plan of the government of Abu Dhabi, which funds and supports our university.

How successful has been the experiment to export a French institution in its globality to the Middle East?

This is definitely a success. In a context where almost all the present universities in the Emirates are Anglophone, our difference distinguishes us and attracts top students. All Bachelor degrees, except Science, are taught in French and we have a foundation year entirely dedicated to the teaching of French as a foreign language. These courses are very popular for our Emirati students, who represent 25% of our students. >

➤ More broadly, what we seek to combine for our students at Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi is the triple knowledge of French, English and Arabic. If they are taught in English, as is the case in Master's programme or in the mathematics and physics undergraduate courses, they are made to learn French as a foreign language, or learn another language if they have already mastered French. Today 50% of our students receive an education in French and 50% are taught in English.

Have you developed any special curriculum or subjects that are suited to the region?

Some of our Masters are specifically focused on the interests of the UAE, such as the Master in History of Art and Museum studies. In the region, most of our programmes are rare, even unique: French law, Humanities and Social Sciences in French, Master of Urban Planning, and Master in Communication Management. We also opened a management DU in Sports Management with FIFA.

What are your views about the role of universities and academic institutions in helping countries like the UAE transition to a knowledge-based economy?

In the development of this knowledge society, the presence of Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi helps maintain a healthy diversity of the academic ecosystem. The definition of norms and standards must not result in a single intellectual education mold. Trilingual students (Francophone, Anglophone, Arabic) taught in French in an international context are a plus for the public and private sector in the UAE, and the rest of the world. As expected, 40% of our alumni are employed in the UAE, and 60% in the rest of the world.

How is Sorbonne University helping implement Abu Dhabi Vision 2030 as a centre for Higher Education?

Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, with its French, Francophone and European identity, participates in the construction, in Abu Dhabi, of a higher education and research hub that is internationally recognised. The priority of Paris Sorbonne University is to have a network across the UAE with a main partner, which is the United Arab Emirates University in Al Ain.

This does not exclude the similar partnerships with Ankabut network, with the Department of Economic Development in Abu Dhabi, with the Urban Planning Council and the Masdar Institute. 60% of our students are from the Middle East and therefore we also have to develop a network of regional cooperation, as shown by our membership to the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF). For example, we organized in Abu Dhabi, for the first time in November 2015, the 8th conference of Rectors and Presidents of Francophone Universities in the Middle East under the aegis of the AUF. We have also signed an agreement with Saint Joseph University in Beirut. We also are signing agreements with foreign universities in the Middle East, as was the case last June with Laval University in Quebec City. It is too early to evaluate the network, but it is clear that inter-university regional cooperation is our development tool to help us meet with success the objectives of the 2030 plan.

How is the Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi discharging its role as a bridge between the Middle East and Europe?

We are certainly, as per Abu Dhabi government's decision, a bridge between East and West, between the Arab and the French cultures, and even between European and Western cultures. Remember that Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi delivers exactly the same courses as in France and the same degrees as our Parisian partners in a mixed and secular university. From a total of 900 students, 25% are UAE nationals, 15% are French, 75 nationalities are represented and 60% of all students are from all over the Middle East. The fact that all these communities live together in complete harmony is a remarkable success and a message of optimism to contemporary societies. Beyond our academic activities, we welcome a rich and varied program of concerts, conferences and exhibitions devoted to the links between the East and the West.

As a research scholar in environmental archaeology what are your key findings from this region?

I am a geoarchaeologist. It is a discipline that studies the environment to answer the questions of archaeologists. This may be the study of major changes elements of the landscape, the moving of watercourses, vegetation changes,



TODAY 50% OF OUR STUDENTS RECEIVE AN EDUCATION IN FRENCH AND 50% ARE TAUGHT IN ENGLISH



water resources, variations of shoreline, etc. This may be the study of the environmental impacts of human development. It can also be retrieving information from sediments that fossilised archaeological remains, whether for dating the establishment of these sediments or understanding the process of their implementation.

In the last 20 years, the Middle East has been one of the most active research areas because of the presence of a dense network of international teams, in which France is very much present. Besides the Oriental Institute of Archaeology in Cairo, the Oriental Institute of Archaeology in Beirut, France has opened a new institute in Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan. Meanwhile, CEFAS, which was based in Sana'a, Yemen, is relocated to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia and then to Kuwait. Whether understanding the different routes used by early hominids in their exit from the African continent, the role of climate variability in human-environment interactions, or whether certain aspects of the Neolithic era led to irrigation systems and agriculture in oases, many tracks for very specific research in the Middle

East are still open field!

I personally continue research in Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with Omani, Emirati, French, Italian, American and Japanese teams.

What are your views on the climate change and the recently concluded Paris deal on fossil fuels emissions? How will it impact countries like the UAE?

Our Master of Law and Sustainable development, Master in Urban Planning, and Master in Environment: Dynamics of Territories and Societies have followed with great interest the COP21 (the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference) discussion.

The UAE was among the first countries in the world, despite being an oil producer, to worry about investing in sustainable development and implementing a sustainable plan to prepare for the post-oil global economy. The achievement of an international agreement can only help the UAE to make its efforts and research investments in this area visible. ♡

Dr Eric Fouache

BROWN HAILS UAE'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN SPURRING KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATION

*If there is no education, then for young people there is very little hope, says UN Special Envoy for Global Education, **Gordon Brown**, former PM of UK*



A HUMANE VOICE

Addressing an exclusive session, Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister of the UK, discussed the role of education in not only securing children's futures, but in ensuring an innovative society on day one of The Knowledge Summit 2015, the leading platform to discuss the most innovative solutions in the transfer, dissemination and localisation of knowledge in Arab Communities.

Brown is the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education and in this role, he works closely with key partners to help galvanise support for the UN's Global Initiative on Education, Education First, which aims to achieve quality, relevance, and inclusive education for every child.

The Office of the UN Special Envoy for Global Education is tasked with delivering on the world's promise to ensure that no child is denied the right to go to school and learn. The office oversees a strategy to ensure that the world keeps its promise to the world's children and youth.

At the outset, Brown paid tribute to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

for his leadership and for the tremendous success of the UAE topping every table in the Arab Knowledge Index for knowledge, education and learning and "to have the vision of the future of this country, which is as an education and innovation centre and capital of the world."

PRAISE FOR THE UAE

He said that what the UAE has demonstrated is that while oil and gas are important for the present, "the real potential for the future is the potential of people".

"What you are trying to do is tap the enormous talent and the enormous ability and capacity of every young boy and every young girl, and I want to suggest today that you are not only on course to do this, but that we can learn from some of the great education reforms and innovations that are taking place around the world, and this will make you an even more successful, innovation and knowledge capital of the future," said Brown.

Education is about opportunity, it is about economic efficiency, it is about spurring innovation right across the economy. But education is also about hope. If a young person is in education, then they are able to plan for their future; if a young person is at school and getting qualifications, then they can think of a life ahead of them and prepare for it. If there is no education, then for young people there is very little hope, he added.

Referring to the challenges of refugee population in the region, he said "while food and shelter are essential to survival, it is education and the prospect of getting qualifications, planning for their career, that gives people the hope that is necessary for the future."

"Even in the most hopeless of situations, we can create hope," said Brown referring to Mandela's long incarceration in jail. "When it comes to the refugee problem in this region, where young people are without hope, we have got to give them that hope by making sure that they have education. It's said that you can survive for 40 days without food, you can survive for 8 days without water, you can survive for 8 minutes without air, but you cannot survive for one second without hope. Education is about hope." †



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