

## **Press Release**

# **Ma'an's Innovation Platform, The Exchange Highlights Why Establishing Long-Term Partnerships Will Drive Success and Growth for Social Enterprises**

**Abu Dhabi, 25 March 2022:** With partnerships being the key component to stimulate meaningful and impactful social enterprises, the Authority of Social Contribution – Ma'an's Innovation Platform, The Exchange, explored how stakeholders can come together to foster a sustainable start-up ecosystem.

The Exchange is an innovation platform developed by Ma'an to initiate conversations with community members to share ideas and stories to encourage new connections and collaborations.

On 24 March, the workshop focused on 'Partnering with Social Enterprises to Deliver Community Solutions' looking at the potential for corporations and government entities to take action in delivering community solutions by creating relationships and collaborations with social enterprises.

The workshop began with a keynote speech from Prof. Nikos Nikiforakis, Professor for the Center for Behavioural Institutional Design at New York University in Abu Dhabi, who shared 11 lessons on the behavioural techniques to adopt to form successful partnerships.

Prof. Nikos Nikiforakis said: "The UAE has a very interesting start-up ecosystem where so many new players are being launched on a daily basis and I cannot think of anywhere in the world where there is an entity such as Ma'an who is trying to make a difference for social enterprises.

"At the heart of every partnership, irrespective of whether they are personal or not, it should be cooperative. The majority of my work has been understanding the factors that hinder cooperation and we must develop a careful analysis of a partnership before entering into a long-term agreement."

Attendees were also welcomed with a second keynote speech from Dr Chih-Hoong Sin, Director of Innovation and Social Investment at Traverse, who praised Abu Dhabi's efforts for developing growth strategies for social enterprises during a pre-recorded video.

Dr Chih-Hoong Sin said: "Social enterprises are at the front and centre for Abu Dhabi's development and the UAE's capital has been experiencing phenomenal economic growth since the 1970s.

"Ma'an is offering exciting opportunities for social enterprises to become more engaged with partnerships and launch meaningful collaborations. By working together with the private sector, we can have excess skills and resources to articulate outcomes and results that is not driven just by costs. For social investment, people aren't just looking for financial returns, but also social returns. These are all the key ingredients to work successfully in Abu Dhabi's ecosystem."

The workshop was concluded with a Ideas Lab session that was led by Aakanksha Tangri, Founder, Re:Set, UAE with audience members to explore the roadmap for Ma'an in mitigating challenges, providing suggestions for corporations to ensure effective partnerships with social enterprises and how to develop corporate readiness frameworks for social enterprises.

During the session, pre-recorded videos were presented to audience members from key industry experts including Roberto Croci, Managing Director for Startups MEA, Microsoft for Startups MEA, UAE; Åsa Skogstrom Feldt, Manager, IKEA Social Entrepreneurship, Sweden; Yasmina Zaidman, Chief Partnerships Officer, Acumen, USA and Lamisse Muhtaseb, HR Director at Deloitte.

The speakers discussed a range of topics including how corporations and start-ups can meet each other in the middle to form an ethical partnership, the important areas for creating impact in a partnership, exploring the potential and challenges for community impact, and the economic benefits for diversity and inclusion.

The Exchange will be running until Monday 29 March at The Galleria, Al Maryah Island, Abu Dhabi and will welcome Kareem Refaay, Managing Director MENA & GCC for the London Institute of Banking and Finance tomorrow to discuss Financial Literacy for Kids and Financial Literacy for Adults.

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## **About Ma'an**

Founded in February 2019 by the Department of Community Development Abu Dhabi, the Authority of Social Contribution – Ma'an drives social innovation and builds a culture of social contribution and participation to address social priorities in the Abu Dhabi Emirate.

Ma'an brings together the government, private sector and civil society with the objective to support innovative solutions and contribute to the development of strong, active, collaborative and inclusive communities.

The Authority has launched several pioneering programmes through its five pillars of work - Social Impact Bonds, Social Incubator and Accelerator programme, Social Investment Fund, Community Engagement and Outreach Management to deliver solutions and make life-changing differences for Abu Dhabi residents.

Ma'an provides resources and support to seed and grow community-based organisations, raise and allocate funds towards community-based organisations and social initiatives, and promote community engagement and a culture of volunteering.

Ma'an is a 'Ghadan 21' accelerator programme initiative, supporting Abu Dhabi to become one of the best places in the world to invest, live, work and visit.

## **Notes to Editors**

For more information on Ma'an, visit [maan.gov.ae](http://maan.gov.ae). or keep up to date with the latest news and events on:

- [Facebook](#) – Ma'an AUH, @Maanabudhabi
- [Instagram](#) – @maanabudhabi
- [Twitter](#) – @maanabudhabi
- [LinkedIn](#) – Ma'an Abu Dhabi