

BAHRAIN HOSTS GLOBAL EDUCATION EVENT

- INAUGURAL EDUCATION PROJECT TO TURN RHETORIC INTO REALITY -

16 September 2009, Manama: Plans for a global education event to be held in Bahrain next month are gathering pace as governments worldwide are being urged to invest in education to meet growing population demands and alleviate social deprivation, as a driver of improved standards of living and economic development.

The inaugural Education Project, set up by the Kingdom's Economic Development Board (EDB), will take place in Manama from October 15–17 2009 to address the gap in the global education system. Seventy five million children across the world are without an education; a situation at risk of being exacerbated by the global economic downturn as education budgets and aid commitments feel the pinch. At the same time the world's population is expected to hit seven billion by 2012. Education for all is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest challenges facing the world today.

Professor Ralph Tabberer, Chief Schools Officer at GEMS – the world's largest private provider of schools – and among the education experts speaking at the event, said: "It is barely 10 years since small groups of highly motivated academics and scientists got together – alone and initially unheard – to call for greater interest in global warming and green solutions; now there is no world leader who dare ignore these issues. We need to make the same transformation in our thinking about education; a debate on how we put it top of the agenda for every government worldwide."

Countless commentators have recently called for governments to meet their commitments toward education. Warm words from the G8 in Italy this summer were not backed by immediate commitments or resources, and campaigners such as Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu maintain that a global fund for education is the only answer.

The Education Project seeks to address the issue by identifying practical solutions and gaining commitment from educational professionals to put them in place. A key focus will be on encouraging commitment from both the private and public sector to adapt successful, proven and transferable models of innovation and success for wider roll-out by matching potential donors with projects seeking funding to enable real outcomes. And on identifying a series of

deliverables for action during the year ahead, to be taken into next year's project and serve to propel education outcomes globally.

Shaikh Mohammed bin Essa Al Khalifa, Chief Executive of the Bahrain EDB which is supporting the event explained: "Education is the single most important factor in bringing stability, productivity and prosperity to all societies. But it is globally recognised that outcomes are poor compared to the investment made and that solutions need to be found and scaled for the widest possible implementation at a global level. The Education Project aims to help address this issue. We want delegates to leave equipped with the information and insights, commitments, partnerships and backing they need to enable them to make real changes."

Professor Tabberer added: "The new global shortage is not in energy, nor in bankers willing to risk or invest, nor in green and sustainable options. It is in education. The problem is not falling standards, but rather escalating demand; of keeping up with the fundamental ambition of every family for their children. In a recession, wise people invest. And as we take in the lessons of the financial crisis it is crucial that we invest in education so that it is fit for a global age."

Other confirmed speakers include Tony Wagner, Co-Director of the Change Leadership Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Adriana Jaramillo, Senior Education Specialist, Middle East and North Africa, World Bank and Dr. Shafeeq Ghabra, former president of the American University of Kuwait and Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University.

The Education Project is free to attend for educational professionals from all sectors as well as from public and private sector institutions with an interest in developing new models and standards in education. For further information and to register for an invitation visit: www.educationprojectbahrain.org

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About The Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB)

The Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) is a dynamic public agency with an overall responsibility for formulating and overseeing the economic development strategy of Bahrain, and for creating the right climate to attract direct investment into the Kingdom.

The role of the Bahrain EDB is to provide leadership by uniting all of the Kingdom's shareholders through a unified vision, and to develop key strategies for growth. The Bahrain EDB also acts as a facilitator, helping all of Bahrain's stakeholders to understand and adopt the changes necessary for progress. In addition, the Bahrain EDB provides sound project management to ensure that all agreed reform initiatives are implemented in an effective and timely manner.

The Bahrain EDB is also responsible for attracting inward investment into Bahrain, and is focusing on six target economic sectors in which the Kingdom offers significant strengths. These are financial services, downstream industries, tourism, business services, logistics, and education and training.

More information on the Bahrain EDB is available at: www.bahrainedb.com

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About The Experience

The Experience is a strategic experiential communications firm and event management company founded by Richard Attias, the man behind the production of the Davos Forum for over 13 years and the creator and producer of the Nobel Laureates Conference, the Monaco Media Forum, the Global Clinton Initiative, and many other unique public and corporate events. The Experience has offices in NY, Paris, Dubai, Jeddah and coming soon to China.

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