



Empowering Emiratis to Drive the Nation: The Al Ghurair Young Thinkers Program

01 Preparing Emirati youth for careers in the private sector

Emirati youth are at the heart of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Centennial Plan 2071, in which they are the driving force of the country's economic transformation through jobs in the private sector or entrepreneurship. The areas of highest priority include innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability and advanced science and technology.¹ The UAE government also generously supports the educational journey of its youth; roughly 70% of Emiratis are employed in the public sector and only around 7% are unemployed, compared to 27% regionally.² While the education system has traditionally successfully supported Emirati youth to seek work in the public sector, private sector companies are still facing challenges to find and retain local talent. This may be attributed, in part, to three areas of support that Emirati youth require in their education to employment journey.

1 Professional guidance in high school and university

Despite the support they receive in high school and university, Emirati youth do not have adequate information in their transition to university and to employment.³ This includes information about university requirements, which majors or specializations are most valued or where to find job opportunities.⁴

“Only 21% of Emirati students feel they know what qualifications they need to work in their preferred industry...”

“...and 24% understand the application process for a job in their preferred industry.”

In addition, around 66% of 300 Emirati high school and university students stated that they turn to their family for advice about school, compared to only around 7% who seek such advice from their education institution or from a professional career advisor.⁵

2 Skills development

There is a perceived mismatch between the skills that are required to thrive in the labor market and those that are taught to students at school and in university. Only 16% of employers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region feel that curricula are in line with the needs of the private sector.⁶ In another study, employers reported that UAE graduates enter the labor market without essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and the ability to work in a team.⁷

3 Awareness of labor market needs

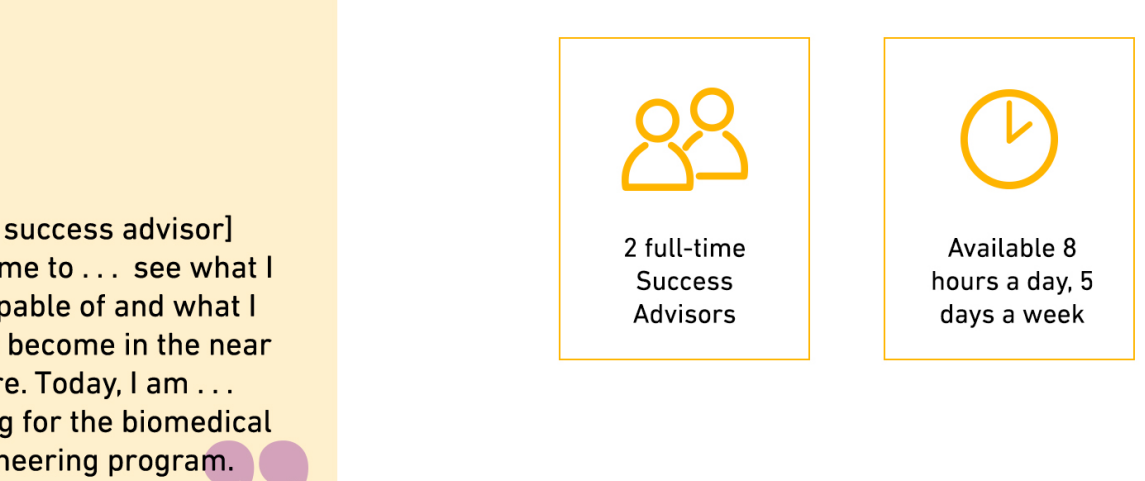
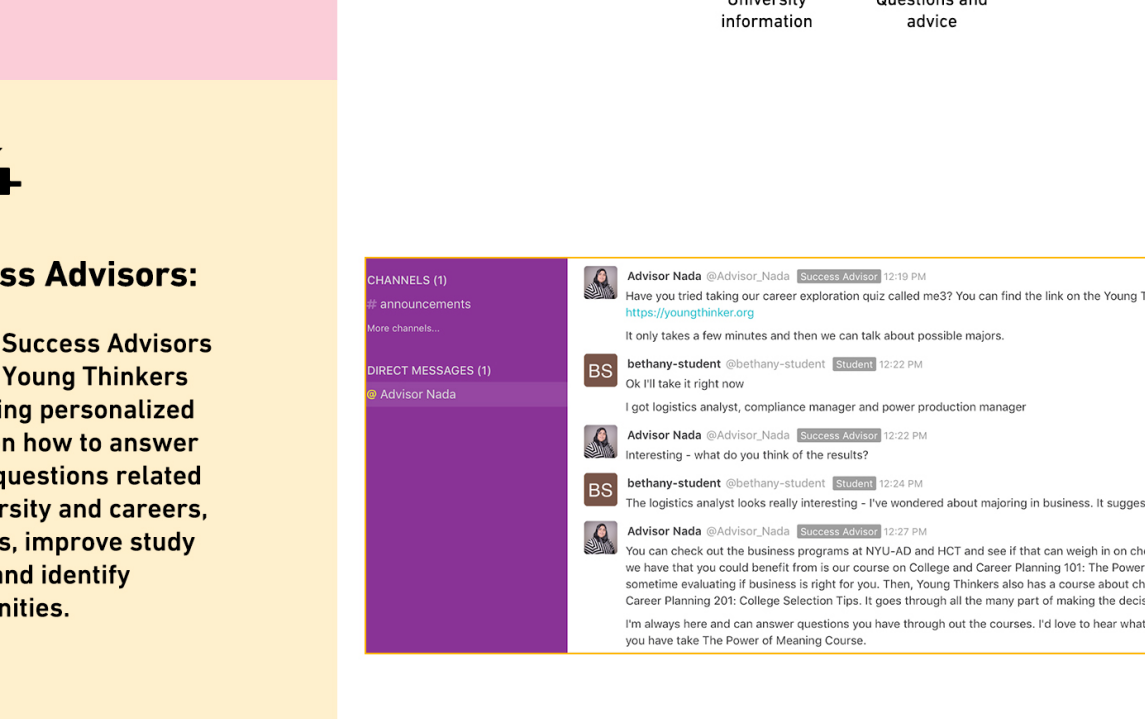
As the UAE's economy diversifies, it is investing heavily in sectors like education, health, energy, transport, space, and water. This includes fields like robotics, solar power, medical research, and biotechnology, among others. Yet, there are limited opportunities for Emiratis to be exposed from a young age to the country's growth sectors and the new career opportunities that will exist as a result. Currently, more students enroll in and graduate from fields that are unsuited to the needs of the labor market than those that are in high demand.⁸ For example, in 2017 more than 50% of students graduated from arts and humanities, social sciences or business programs compared to 29% who graduated from science, mathematics or engineering fields.⁹

02 The Solution: The Al Ghurair Young Thinkers Program

Recognizing these needs, the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education (AGFE) developed an innovative educational solution that prepares Emirati and Arab youth for success along the education to employment journey, empowering them to thrive and contribute to the development of their countries.

In 2018, we launched the Al Ghurair Young Thinkers Program (YTP), a digital platform powered by Arizona State University. ASU has been ranked the most innovative university in the United States since 2016.¹⁰

YTP is designed to support Emirati and Arab youth develop the skills they need to succeed at university and in the workplace and to make well-informed education and employment decisions. The program targets youth between the ages of 15 and 35, and in less than two years, the platform has attracted more than 22,000 users.



4 COMPONENTS OF YTP

01 me3[®]: Visuals-based personal assessment to expose youth to potential careers and credentials suited to their interests.

me3[®]... helped me a lot... to choose the career that I want to [pursue].
Zahra, Greenwood International School, Grade 11



02 Professional and Soft Skills Courses:

Digital coursework introduces youth to critical soft skills required for success at university and sought-after by employers.

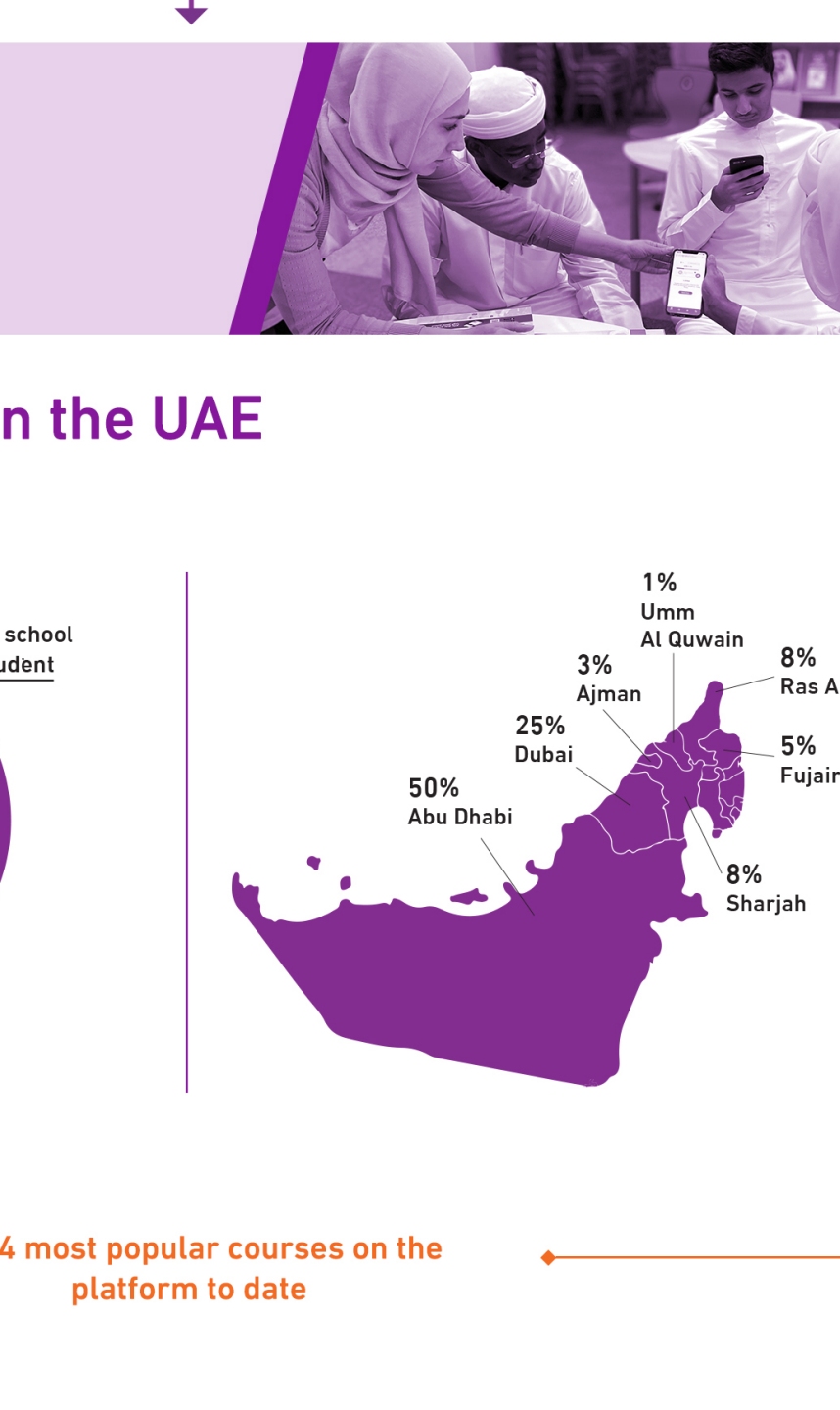
“...learned a lot from [the courses I completed.] As I started applying what I learned in these courses in my daily life, I found that things got easier and simpler for me.”
Khalifa, 19, Khalifa University



03 Education and Career Information:

Expose youth to information that personalizes their learning and career development journey.

“I loved the Young Thinkers Program because it helped me identify majors and future careers that fit my interests and skills... I strongly advise my friends and all the students my age to enroll in the program.”
Juma, Dar Al Marefa, Grade 10



04 Success Advisors:

Trained Young Thinkers support Success Advisors by offering personalized advice on how to answer critical questions related to university and careers, set goals, improve study habits, and identify opportunities.

“[The success advisor] guided me to... see what I am capable of and what I want to become in the near future. Today, I am... applying for the biomedical engineering program.”
Shayma, 18, Khalifa University



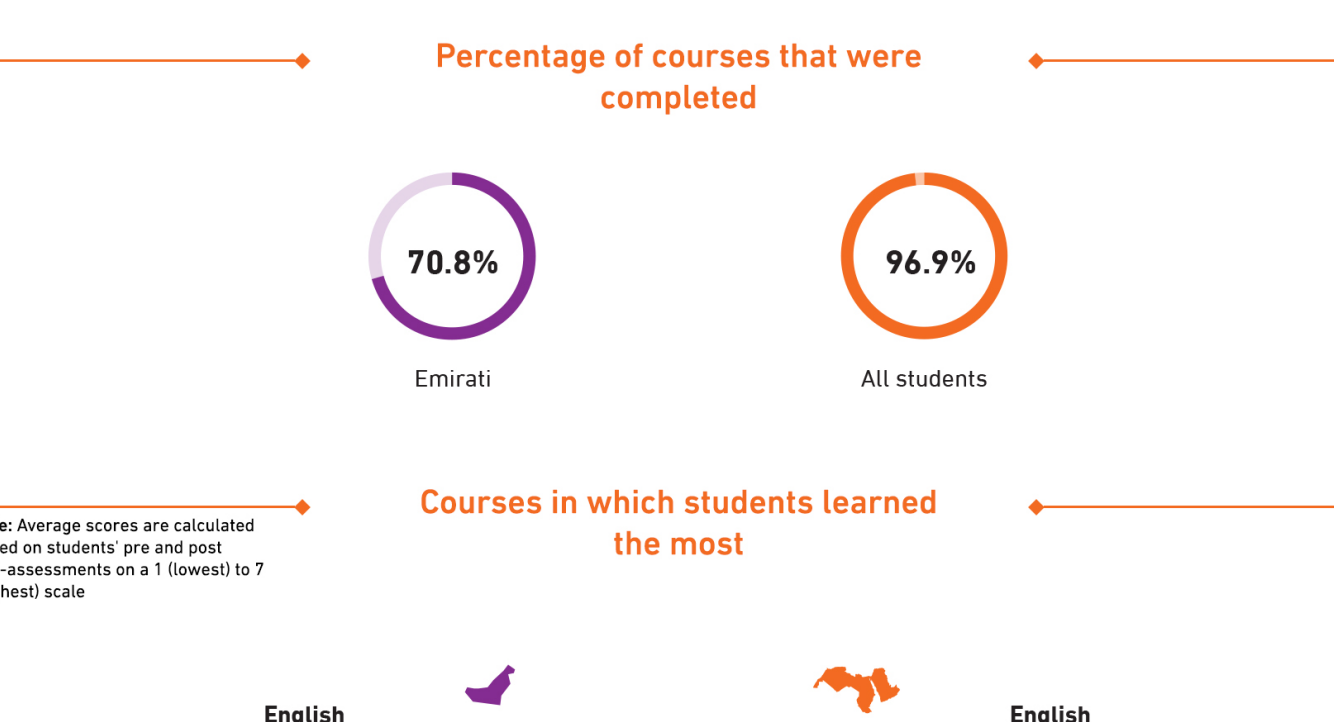
03 Timeline & Achievements in the UAE

Note: The Young Thinkers Program also has partnerships outside the UAE in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon and is exploring future partnerships in other countries across the Arab region.



04 YTP in the UAE

Note: These results are based on data collected for a representative subset (n=31,512) of the total population (n=10,749).

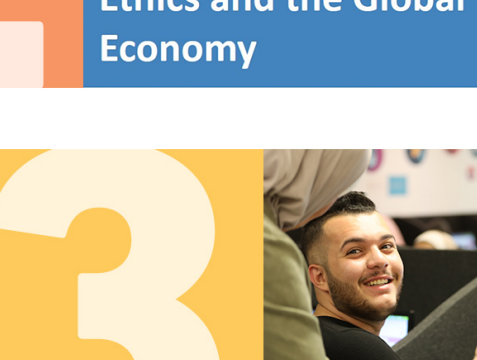


Top 4 most popular courses on the platform to date

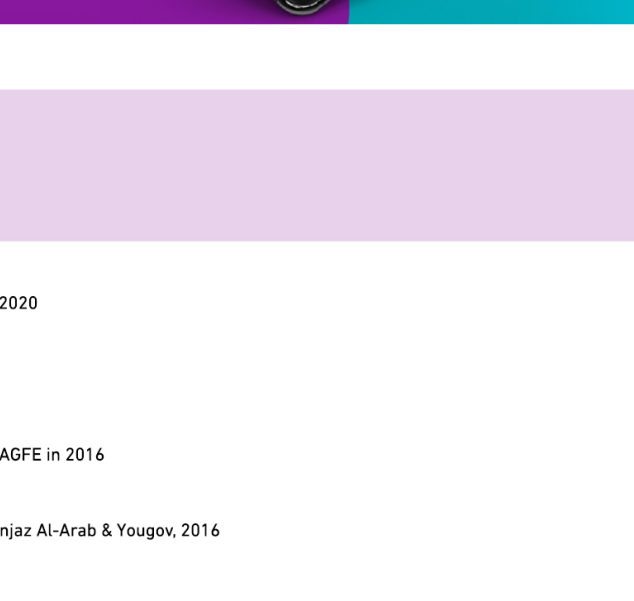
- 1 Communication 101: Public Speaking: Speak with Confidence** (the most popular course on the platform)
- 2 Online Safety 201: Social Media Best Practices**
- 3 College and Career Planning 101: The Power of Meaning**
- 4 Career Planning 301: How to Write Your CV**

05 Users' experience on the platform

Preferred language used in the courses



Percentage of students who completed their courses...



Percentage of courses that were completed



Courses in which students learned the most



User satisfaction with platform

06 Get involved and partner with AGFE

01 We can train our partners to become YTP ambassadors.

02 MORAL EDUCATION 101: Ethics and the Global Economy. We can feature your content on the platform.

03 We can help our partners to find their passion.

DOWNLOAD THE YOUNG THINKERS PROGRAM APPLICATION TODAY!

Endnotes

¹The United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 2020
²British Council, 2018
³World Bank, 2019
⁴Ministry of Economy, 2019
⁵British Council, 2018; Cooper et al., 2015
⁶Cooper et al., 2015
⁷Results of an internet pilot study conducted by AGFE in 2016
⁸Cooper et al., 2015
⁹British Council, 2018
¹⁰Ministry of Economy, 2019; OECD, 2015; Bayt, Injaz Al-Arab & Yougov, 2016
¹¹UNESCO, 2017
¹²U.S. News, 2019

GET IN TOUCH WITH US TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION.

About the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

AGFE aims to empower Emirati and Arab youth to thrive and contribute to the sustainable development of the region, through innovative education solutions and authentic partnerships. As one of the largest privately-funded philanthropic foundations in the Arab region, AGFE supports the provision of high-quality technology-based education opportunities, as well as the development of relevant skills for a successful transition into higher education and the labor market. Founded in 2015, the Foundation is dedicated to the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 8, calling for inclusive and equitable quality education that leads to improved standards of living for all.