

Changemakers, inspirational leaders take center stage at TAKminds



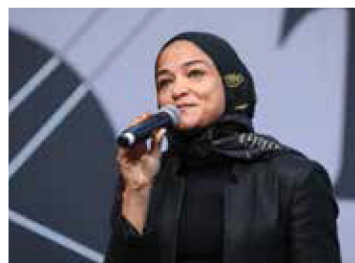
The Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre was the venue for the first TAKminds Forum in Kuwait. Held on 18 November under the title, 'Weaving Sustainable Destinies in the Middle-East', the forum provided a platform for leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs and scientific minds in the Arab world to narrate how current societal challenges influenced various aspects of their work. The forum also facilitated interaction between successful opinion formers and influencers in the region and around the world.

TAKminds was recently launched by TAKREEM — the organization that aims to bring Arab achievers to the forefront of the global stage and to serve as a source of inspiration to the Arab youth — as a new platform to highlight how changemakers and emerging talents are addressing current societal challenges.

Ricardo Karam, founder of TAKREEM, highlighted how TAKminds focuses on changemakers and how they address the post-Arab Spring challenges. He encouraged participants to take advantage of the platform, to think up solutions to their cities, empower communities, take steps to reverse their negative environmental impact, and to support initiatives that promote the sustainable development of an inclusive Arab society.

Indian Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, the Chief Guest Speaker at the event, delved into his experience as a global children's rights advocate for four decades. Since he founded the 'Bachpan

Bachao Andolan' in 1981 his organization has rescued tens of thousands of children from slavery. He explained his tireless efforts to end child slavery, trafficking, forced labor and violence, which has fortunately received international support resulting in the inclusion



of child protection and welfare-related clauses in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations in September 2015.

Mr. Satyarthi detailed in-depth the extent of his global campaigns, and initiatives such as the Rugmark certification for labeling child labor free carpets and 'Laureates and leaders for Children'. He gave a rousing speech to inspire the gathered audience to participate in such endeavors, to make a difference, and he shared his high hopes for the

youth as positive agents of social transformation for the less privileged of society.

Three panel discussions held during the event approached varied topics. The first panel on 'Cities of today, talents of tomorrow' provided new ideas towards the concept of smart cities and emphasized the importance of urban structures such as sport and touristic facilities, tech hubs and clusters in supporting peace building, a positive city life, and community centers to foster communal relations.

The second panel, 'Art, an ideal for sale?' examined the use of art as a medium to express the struggles and dreams of Arab artists who have experienced the changes in the Arab region in recent years. Also discussed was a debate on the role of contemporary art institutions as places of cultural exchange, or as galleries for elite interests.

The third panel covered the topic 'Group dynamics and women empowerment' and underscored women's issues such as available networks, Arab role models and the impact of new technologies that affect the way women consolidate their efforts.

Also, during the event, leaders in various fields gave inspirational

speeches. Special invitee Manal Rostom, the first Arab model featured in a Nike Middle East Campaign wearing a hijab, gave an inspirational talk on 'Breaking stereotypes through sports. She described her struggle against society's expectations, to find her own identity and fulfill her dream to climb mountains. She encouraged youth to be open with their parents about their passions and divulged her own ambitious dream of being the first Egyptian woman to climb

Mt Everest. Explorer, author, and motivational speaker Mostafa Salameh, one of only 13 people to ever climb the Seven Summits and conquer the South Pole and the North Pole — known as the 'Explorers Grand Slam' in his 'Dreams of a Refugee' speech, spoke about his love for mountaineering, the challenges he had to surpass, and his new goal to spearhead change in the community, raise funds for different charities and inspire the young to pursue their dreams.