



Press Release

AIESEC ‘Leadership Forum’, held in partnership with ‘Careers UAE’, highlights concerns of Emirati students

- **Students highlighted the challenges of finding a job without experience**
- **Dealing with stereotyping and perceptions when searching for a job**
- **Emiratisation is more than recruiting nationals, companies must show commitment to ongoing training and development**
- **Need for encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship**

Dubai, UAE; March 30, 2010: The UAE chapter of AIESEC, the world’s largest student led organization, held a Leadership Forum during the Careers UAE exhibition at the Dubai International Convention Centre. The forum gave Emirati students an opportunity to discuss their concerns with a panel of eminent educationalists and career specialists. The panel consisted of Dr. Ayoub Kazim, Executive Director of Dubai Knowledge Village and Dubai International Academic City; Seher Saleem, Human Capital Manager for the Middle East, PricewaterhouseCoopers; Stella Grancheva-Al Najjar, Ex- President of AIESEC United Arab Emirates; Professor Dwight Anthony, Lecturer at Dubai Women’s College; and Abdul Muttalib Al Hashimi, CEO of Next Level Management Consultancy.

“AIESEC ‘Leadership Forum’ is an annual programme to address the key challenges youth are facing in the UAE. It provides an ideal space for young Emiratis to voice their concerns to the government, industry and private sector. At the recent forum, students discussed various topics ranging from the challenges of finding a job to their fears of adapting to a corporate culture and meeting management expectations,” said Thamim Ahmed, Vice President, External Relations and Communications, AIESEC in the United Arab Emirates.

The participating students highlighted the difficulties of finding jobs with no experience. They urged that UAE companies should provide more internship opportunities and entry level jobs to aspiring graduates. During the discussion on ‘Unemployment and Labour Mobility’ led by Abdul Muttalib Al Hashimi, they also pointed out the perception problems that Emirati students have to endure as most companies view Emirati employees as being not so dedicated as the expatriates. The very fact that UAE has achieved great lengths of development under the leadership of Emiratis shows the commitment and dedication that Emiratis are capable of, students argued.

Dr. Ayoub Kazim led the discussion on whether Emiratisation should be part of every company’s Corporate Social Responsibility. The students emphasised that a company’s commitment to Emiratisation does not end with just the recruitment of nationals; they should also invest in training and development of Emiratis to integrate them into mainstream workforce. This will help to engage Emiratis in the company’s growth and development.

Students also pointed out the important role media can play in bridging the cultural gap between nationals and expatriates; and help change perceptions.

“It is important to encourage interaction between different cultures in order to break stereotypes,” said Dr. Kazim

Professor Dwight Anthony emphasised the significance of nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship to create more job opportunities. Often what hinders entrepreneurship is the fear to embrace 'change'. Developing entrepreneurship and leadership skills are important to the economic development of any nation, he pointed out.

The forum also highlighted that recruitment processes should focus on the qualification and potential of a candidate rather than 'who they know', thus ensuring everyone has a fair chance. Seher Saleem and Stella Grancheva-Al Najjar joined in the discussions on the importance of training in employee development.

Students from various Universities in the UAE participated in the Leadership Forum. They also attended various skills development workshops organised by AIESEC on Team Working, Communications, Presentation, Problem Solving and International Internships.

About AIESEC

AIESEC, the world's largest student organisation, spanning 110 countries - is the international platform for young people to discover and explore their leadership potential. AIESEC in the UAE was established in 2001 as the First AIESEC initiative in the Gulf. Since 2004 AIESEC in the UAE has been strongly supported by Dubai Knowledge Village, and now Dubai International Academic City as a Founder Partner of the National Office of AIESEC UAE. The current membership of the organization diversifies across many institutions of higher education

Our activities enable our members to develop competencies and skills in personal and professional activities, while facilitating global consciousness through our global learning platform; we focus on the leadership development and cultural awareness of current students at universities through participation in and facilitation of a Global Internship Programme. We offer many involvement opportunities for employers geared towards engagement with our motivated, high-potential members.