

# Saeed Al-Nazri: Empowering and Supporting Youth is a Priority in the UAE

*Flashes: Rana Ibrahim - Photo: Alaa Al-Habashi*

*His Excellency Saeed Mohammed Al-Nazri, Director General of the Federal Youth Authority in the United Arab Emirates, believes that professional empowerment and skills development are more important than academic achievement, and that trust and responsibility are the best approach through which a person can learn as responsibility creates solutions and contributes to the development of the homeland.*



On the sidelines of the 2019 Knowledge Summit, Rana Ibrahim interviewed Al-Nazri who spoke about national projects and initiatives that support young people. He also highlighted the most prominent challenges and solutions facing Arab and Emirati youth in particular as well as the role of youth in building a sustainable future for the UAE.

## **Can you tell us about the Emirates Youth Council and its most prominent roles?**

The Emirates Youth Council is affiliated with the federal government. It aims to empower and support young people so that they can take charge of setting policies, studies and recommendations regarding the youth sector in the Emirates. There are memberships for youth councils in all the emirates of the country through which they transmit their aspirations in different regions, as well as the challenges they face. They work with the government to develop solutions and initiatives. We also have councils in every sector in state institutions and ministries and fields such as energy, finance and environment. Today, there is a youth council with decision makers in the government and in the private sector as well as councils of scholarship students,

we have a youth council at the United Nations as well as in the United States and others. The goal of youth councils is to provide opportunities to develop solutions to the challenges faced by the youths.

#### **What are the main challenges facing Emirati youth?**

The real challenge is how we empower young people to be the solution to their challenges. That is why we work with our partners in the region and the Arab world to develop solutions and provide support. There are societal challenges such as housing, clean energy and others. Youth councils put youths in front of decision makers, government officials and officials from the private sector to develop solutions to these sorts of challenges. Among their outputs, young people have come up with solutions for refugee brothers whom they have provided platforms that make each refugee an educated student and merchant working to promote their products. Likewise, the youth put solutions in the field of housing represented in providing housing for young people in the regions, no matter how far away. There are dozens of solutions from our young people who need to be heard and to those who can and need governments like the UAE government to provide them with confidence and responsibility, because responsibility is the best approach that we can learn through it.

#### **How do young people contribute to building a sustainable future for the UAE?**

Looking at sustainable development goals such as housing, education and equality have all become priorities in the UAE. One of the youth projects in the field of sustainable development was the project of "Emirates Youth Professional School" that His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, launched at the International Youth Day. This project showed that whatever academic need is required, there is a need also to develop specialized skills of youth in every sector. The Emirati Youth Council works on an agenda that is consistent with



the goals of sustainable development. Its goal is to work with institutions in the government and private sector to develop projects, solutions and research regarding various sustainable development goals. Today, these young people are advisers to the government and organizations as well as the private sector. Our youth today are also present at the United Nations panels and they are delegated to global and international meetings concerned with setting policies related to the sustainable development goals.

#### **What is the Emirates Youth Professional School about?**

It is a new experience that provides young people with opportunities, professional empowerment and skills development. It allows young people who are empowered in their specifications in the government and private sector to transfer their experiences and expertise to young people. The aim of the Emirates Youth Professional School is to make every employee and specialist in the government and private sector a teacher for young people. Today, every job needs a mix that combines professional and specialized skills, as well as a mix of personal skills such as public speaking, presentation, creativity. So, we work through this School to add this educational and

executive aspect to young people's life, to instill in them the multiple skills besides their academic qualifications. We note that global institutions depend not only on academic achievement, but also on measuring the skills and capabilities of young people in accomplishing tasks regardless of their educational achievement. Soon, we will provide this education to all young people for free, and they will obtain accredited certificates.

#### **What are the requirements of Arab youths?**

The needs of young people vary according to region and sector but what I can say is that these young people need opportunities whether in government employment, the private sector, or entrepreneurship. Among the projects that we worked on in this regard, specifically in the Arab Youth Center, is to monitor all opportunities available for young people and put them in one platform that brings more than a thousand opportunities, including in business, education, leadership preparation programs, and other projects. Today, all young people can access the opportunity and take advantage of them, especially as our countries are rich in opportunities, and the platform will be a bridge of communication between youth and opportunities.