

Event Outcome Report

## Governance in Philanthropy Roundtable

Transparency for Impact in Philanthropy

**Event Date:** 28 November 2019

**Event Location:** Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, UAE





## Governance in Philanthropy Roundtable Overview

As the landscape of giving evolves in the region, many private philanthropist donors are revisiting the manner in which they have traditionally made donations, and donors are slowly veering towards greater institutionalisation. While private personal giving continues to be an important source of financing for grantees and beneficiaries, donors are now giving through an increasingly diverse range of family foundations and social investment initiatives, including established foundations or new philanthropic ventures as well as corporate vehicles.

Yet it remains that many of these self-sufficient “private foundations” that do not generally seek funding from the general public, companies or government carry out their work in confidence. While discretion is a traditional characteristic of giving in the Gulf Region, the public has higher expectations for organisations and individuals whose missions are to do good. People want to learn more about their activities, missions, goals, impact and the outcomes produced.

Transparency, however, is not just about releasing information for public consumption. It can be a valuable tool for donors to increase their impact through more accurate self-assessments and public engagement.

As more grant-making organisations publish information on their activities and disclose the areas where their funds are flowing, the duplication of efforts are minimised, while geographic and thematic gaps in funding can also be identified and addressed. Not only will this promote greater impact and improve the effectiveness of giving but it will also reinforce trust between donors and their stakeholder communities.

The roundtable discussion convened high-level corporate and family business leaders across the Gulf Region to challenge current understandings of transparency, highlighting the value, opportunities and challenges of implementing higher standards of transparency in giving.



## Keynote Speakers



[Badr Jafar](#)

*Co-Founder*  
Pearl Initiative



[Yasmine Omari](#)

*Executive Director*  
Pearl Initiative



[Michael Green](#)

*CEO*  
Social Progress Imperative

## Panellists



[Muna Al Gurg](#)

*Director of Retail*  
Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group



[Sheikh Khalid Al Massan](#)

*CEO*  
Oman LNG Development  
Foundation



[Dr Natasha Matic](#)

*Deputy CEO & Chief Strategy  
Officer*  
King Khalid Foundation



[Mohamed Al Qadi](#)

*Director General*  
Sandooq Al Watan

## Moderator



[Clare Woodcraft](#)

*Independent Advisor*  
Woodcraft Associates



## Introduction and Welcome Remarks

The Pearl Initiative (“PI”), is an independent non-profit organisation, that was founded in 2010 by the private sector, for the private sector to improve corporate governance standards with a view to enhancing socio-economic value creation across the region. In his welcome remarks, Badr Jafar highlighted that the mere fact that PI is fully funded by the Private Sector is a testament to the commitment of its Partner Companies towards boosting the resilience of Gulf business.

The need for good governance is relevant and applicable cross-sectorally and is not limited to the business operations of organisations. Afterall, philanthropy is private capital for public good and the need to govern philanthropy is imminent now more than ever with the value of philanthropic capital reaching USD\$3 trillion.

It was out of this need that PI established its [Governance in Philanthropy](#) programme in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the King Khalid Foundation. As part of the programme, PI promotes improved governance standards and impact optimisation in the Gulf Region’s philanthropic ecosystem, through research, workshops, the development of case studies and sharing best practices through its Governance in Philanthropy Online Hub.

There is an opportunity to leverage governance systems and policies to enhance the impact of the sector; which is what drove the Pearl Initiative’s Governance in Philanthropy programme into being. Philanthropy is becoming increasingly more complex, with technology itself changing the means in which people are giving.

Just as with other sectoral development, the maturation of an industry requires increased effective governance to match it.

Badr Jafar concluded his keynote by inviting the inspirational panellists to share their experiences and insights on governance and transparency in philanthropy across the Gulf Region with the audience.

*“Traditional charitable investments are now merging with catalytic capital on the impact continuum. This phenomenon is of increasing interest to conventional investors, especially in the MENA region, where we are experiencing the strongest global growth and impact investing.”*

**Badr Jafar**



## Survey Results

Yasmine Omari, Executive Director of the Pearl Initiative, presented the results of a survey that delegates were invited to partake in, prior to the panel discussion.

In answering whether regional governance of philanthropy is aligned with international best practice, results showed that just over fifty percent believed it to be somewhat aligned, acknowledging that there are still efforts to be made regionally to meet international standards. A majority of participants also believed that monitoring & evaluation and impact measurement is the governance area that requires most improvement in the region, taking priority over reporting, stakeholder management and internal audits.

In discussing organisational challenges faced in achieving greater transparency, respondents felt that a lack of capacity and expertise within the organisation was the greatest hurdle they faced. Yasmine noted that there is a regional drive towards furthering these needs, making a reference to King Khalid Foundation's programme focused on the development of organisational capacity. Additionally, Yasmine noted that PI has published a [Governance in Philanthropy Fundamentals Guide and Toolkits](#) to support non-profits and foundations alike in building the wider capacity for the sector. Yasmine also announced the proposed launch of Governance in Philanthropy Hub, an interactive online resource centre housing tools and guides to support the sector.

Please refer to [Annexure 3](#) to see full results of the survey.





## Keynote Speech

### Introduction

Michael Green, CEO of Social Progress Imperative and author of “PhilanthroCapitalism”, delivered the keynote speech before the panel discussion commenced. Some of the key insights he shared are summarised below.

Michael began by touching upon a few points from his book – where he established that it is indeed important to know the origin of philanthropic capital and to what extent it is achieving its intended impact. This is where governance is vital; it plays a key role in ensuring the impact of organisational philanthropy.

### How does data aid impact measurement?

Reflecting on the need for more data, Michael addressed the crucial role it plays in philanthropy. Understanding real priority areas and issues is key for more effective giving. Some causes can be more charismatic than others, whereas there may actually be a more urgent need somewhere else.

The Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”) are an important guideline as to how priorities are set, and the cross-stakeholder consensus it has is critical. However, it is challenging to measure efforts made towards its indicators, as the data needed to report on it doesn’t exist. Even the richest countries have large gaps in their data, making it extremely difficult to address where the best use of funding can and should go. Without accurate figures, it becomes difficult to know what issues need to be prioritised.

*“If we project the progress that we have made with the SDGs so far, on this current trend, we will only achieve the 2030 targets by 2073. “*

**Michael Green**

In addressing this gap, Michael founded the Social Progress Imperative (‘SPI’) a non-profit organisation that collates secondary-research data on the social and environmental health of society. As part of his work with SPI, the Social Progress Index (“Index”) was developed as a comprehensive measure of the quality of life of a society based entirely on non-economic outcome indicators. The Index measures the outcomes that are achieved and the quality of life it produces across the board, instead of, for example, how much money a government spends on educational health.

- The framework of the Index allows users to be flexible with their data and can highlight the precautions that need be taken when setting indicators. The Index uses twelve (12) components to measure the same underlying concepts as the SDGs. Fundamentally, the Index was designed to act as a tool to support the delivery and implementation of the SDGs.
- Most areas across the world are massively underperforming in achieving the SDGs. Wealth is not a binding constraint in achieving this. The resources needed are available, it just needs to be used more effectively. The SDGs are not sky-impossible targets. In fact, they’re extremely achievable new ways of arranging capital and innovation to deliver better outcomes are found.
- When needs are identified and current solutions are not achieving their intended results, data can help identify whether interventions require scaling through partnerships or innovation through the deployment of technological advancement.

Data and development on global social progress can sometimes be paradoxical. For instance, a large improvement globally has been the increased access to information and greater communication. Driven by mobile phones, access to technology has had an increasingly positive impact on people’s lives in unprecedented ways. That being



said, globally there has been negligible improvement in access to clean water and sanitation for the public. These are some of the fundamental challenges in building inclusive societies; these are also challenging problems to measure impact in.

On a regional level, growth and expansion in the university sector has seen the biggest advance in social progress in the UAE. However, the UAE still has strides to make in addressing road safety; as car crashes are still occurring at an alarming rate. This is a prime instance as to why measuring social progress is often difficult and how it can be paradoxical.

## Conclusion

- The growing interest in impact investing is a manifestation of how philanthropists have started to question how different financial models can optimise social impact. Thinking about how capital markets can be transformed to do good and to deliver better outcomes and ultimately to deliver on the SDGs, is a great example of high impact philanthropy.
- In the philanthropic sector, working with government can often prove to be difficult, but it is still critical to its success. To optimise and maximise social impact, all sectors need to be engaged. Governments tend to sometimes be risk-averse and think in the short-term. This is the “sweet spot” where philanthropy fits in for private individuals in providing palliative care to support the limitations of government; private individuals are well-positioned to take risks, innovate and, think long-term.

*Transparency isn't always easy. But if you care about impact, it's something worth embracing.*

**Michael Green**





## Panel Discussion

The moderator, Clare Woodcraft, Independent Advisor, noted that the opacity of the philanthropic sector has been a challenge for some years now and that there are multiple calls for greater transparency when it comes to philanthropic capital. In acknowledging the importance of this open-platform, Clare invited the panellists to join her in the discussion. Over the course of the panel, the speakers discussed a range of topics, including the benefits of adopting greater transparency, the challenges in doing so, and provided recommendations to implement it. Some of the key insights they shared are summarised below.

### Benefits of Transparency

- As philanthropy in the Gulf Region is largely driven by culture, carrying out organisational activities and giving in private is highly valued. However, transparency enables more effective giving and allows for greater clarity in gaps in funding. Innovating new means of communicating activities, through content development for instance, is extremely beneficial, particularly in today's digital age.
- If data is used by organisations to communicate their activities, it brings about more clarity as to where there are overlaps in efforts and where there are gaps in funding. Data provides the language for collaboration.

*"We need to elaborate on philanthropy that is being done in the region through good content development, particularly in this digital age that we currently work in. There are innovative ways of speaking about the cause, rather than about us."*

**Muna Al Gurg**

- Communicating activities can inspire others to follow suit and/or encourage the formation of collaboration and partnerships, for the sake of the wider community.
- The acceptance of risk and failure is a challenge in the Gulf Region, more so than in other parts of the world. Full disclosure and transparency with donors is pivotal in demonstrating what works and what doesn't, and through stakeholder trust, can even attract more funding.
- With large sums of money, as is present in the philanthropic sector, effective and proper governance is needed for stakeholder trust. In addition to sharing best practices and challenges with stakeholders, audits are also vital in order to monitor and track where funds are moving.
- Using the Social Return on Investment (SROI) measure and other metrics to find what works and what doesn't, creates opportunities for collaboration and increases the scalability of philanthropic organisations.
- In building partnerships and collaborating with other organisations in the wider sector, organisations can benefit from the expertise of other organisations in areas that they are lacking.
- Establishing platforms that convene different entities in the philanthropic sector, both non-profit and foundational representatives, can support the sharing of different interests, processes and in wider capacity building.

While there is little doubt about whether effective impact can take place, the challenge is in being able to measure it. The broader impact continuum or philanthropic enterprise ecosystem has grown; actors are no longer simply limited to charities and foundations, but now also involve social enterprises and impact investors. What is essential is to convene all these actors to discuss how to measure impact effectively, and how governance can aid this.



*"If you have strict governance, you may not be able to operate well and if you are too transparent you may lose trust from donors. The key is to achieve a balance."*

**Mohamed Al Qadi**

## Challenges in Philanthropy

- The donor community in the region tends to be smaller and more cross-sectoral, with donors often simultaneously running businesses or sitting on multiple boards. This can be utilised to identify particular needs within the sector.
- Data in the region tends to be sparse and challenging to acquire. When acquired, it is essential to not fully trust it as there is possibility of it being inaccurate, biased or paint a picture that is limiting in its presentation.
- Some larger foundations in the western hemisphere believe the 'curse' that more governance is always better. Boards that have too much control over organisations limit the scope in which they can operate. It is essential to have greater clarity over the role and oversight of the executive and advisory functions – both of which should be kept independent of each other.
- There is a 'golden ratio' in achieving a balance between transparency, whilst maintaining confidentiality and privacy where required. This balance can only be achieved on an entity-specific level and becomes harder to achieve on a sectoral or country level.
- It is essential for foundations to coordinate on efforts and come together in furthering their collective goals. Rigorous impact evaluation can be positive; foundations shouldn't undercut other foundations when it comes to non-profits who prefer more lenient reporting standards.

*"If leaders in an organisation are willing to come out to events and publicly speak about their failures and what they've learned, that's a great message that comes through to the rest of the organisation and also to the wider sector. It is not about blaming, it is about learning."*

**Dr Natasha Matic**

The panellists highlighted the need for effective talent acquisition and development in order to maximise impact in organisation's philanthropic activities.

- Donor funding that is only granted over a period of one (1) year restricts the scalability of its impact and of its measurement. In the contemporary philanthropic world, grants should ideally be received for over a period of three (3) years at a minimum.
- Working in silos limits the scalability and impact of philanthropic programmes and initiatives. Often private foundations and individual donors view other actors in the sector as competition, rather than as partners.
- Younger generations tend to be more sceptical about how funds are being utilised and prefer funding that is authentic and engaging.
- It is possible and perhaps sometimes the preferred method, to integrate the SDGs as part of the conversation, without necessarily referencing them directly. It is also vital to understand what an organisation's role is as part of that ecosystem.

*“When dealing with such large philanthropic capital, governance frameworks must be in place to maintain stakeholder trust and ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation.”*

**Sheikh Khalid Al Massan**



## Recommendations

Having addressed both the benefits of transparency and the challenges in achieving it, the panellists closed the discussion with several recommendations as summarised below.

- It is important to share personal “stories” – essentially sharing both successes *and* failures. This transparency must start with organisational leaders.
- Being open about failures and successes allows the use of data in helping shape future interventions and programme designs. It is vital to talk about learnings both internally and externally. These learnings shouldn’t just end at disclosure, but proactive efforts to rectify and address these learning should ensue.
- Expectations between organisations and donors need to be aligned and set from the outset. Selling false hopes to donors is a set-up for failure. Be realistic about how long it will take to achieve scalable and valuable impact.
- It is essential to create long-term partnerships and collaborations with actors both within the wider philanthropic community and other sectors, in order to maximise the impact and scalability of activities.
- In streamlining governance and establishing strong leadership models, talent acquisition and development is vital.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Event Agenda

5:30pm – 7:30pm

Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi

**5:30pm – 6:00pm** Registration and Networking

**6:00pm – 6:05pm** Welcome Remarks

- **Badr Jafar**, Founder, Pearl Initiative

**6:05pm – 6:15pm** Introductory Remarks

- **Yasmine Omari**, Executive Director, Pearl Initiative
- **Clare Woodcraft**, Independent Advisor

**6:15pm – 6:30pm** Keynote – Lessons in Strategic Philanthropy

- **Michael Green**, Chief Executive Officer, Social Progress Imperative, UK

**6:30pm – 7:30pm** Panel Session – Unravelling the transparency challenge in institutional giving

**7:30pm – 8:00pm** Event Closing and Networking

#### Key Information

**Number of Attendees:** 43 attendees

**Profile of Attendees:** High-level corporate, family business leaders and philanthropists

#### Attendee Feedback:

Quality of registration & administration – **100% satisfaction rate**

Quality of networking experience – **71% satisfaction rate**

Overall quality of event – **100% satisfaction rate**



## Appendix 2

### Speaker Bios

#### Muna Al Gurg, Director of Retail, Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group

Muna Easa Al Gurg is the Director of Retail of Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group, a multidivisional conglomerate with 27 companies. The Group is active in several industry sectors that include retail, building and construction, industrial, real estate and joint ventures. Since 2008, Al Gurg became the Chairwoman of the Young Arab Leaders UAE, where she promotes education and youth development. Al Gurg is on the board of several non-profit organisations, such as the Emirates Foundation, where she works closely with its Chairman, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. At the Easa Saleh Al Gurg Charity Foundation, she is responsible for local and international strategy and initiatives. She is a member of the UNHCR Sustainability Board, which is mandated to provide innovative and sustainable solutions to refugees in the MENA region. She is also a founding board member of Endeavor UAE, a non-profit organisation promoting high-impact entrepreneurship in emerging markets.

#### Mohamed Al Qadi, Director General, Sandooq Al Watan

Mohamed Tajeddin Al Qadi boasts extensive experience in strategic affairs, education, community work and human capital development. He holds a master's degree in Public Policy with a distinction from the University of Oxford, a Bachelor of Science in Politics and International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from the Cass Business School at the City University in London. Prior to his role at Sandooq Al Watan, Al Qadi has held several senior positions in governmental and charity organisations, including Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee at the 'Al Bayt Mitwahid' organisation and Project Manager at the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court.

#### Dr Natasha Matic, Deputy CEO & Chief Strategy Officer, King Khalid Foundation

Natasha is a strategist whose career, for the past twenty-five years, has been dedicated to building sustainable and scalable initiatives to alleviate poverty and promote social and economic development. She has lived and worked in a number of countries and pioneered innovative programs in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Zimbabwe, Bosnia, Serbia, Germany, USA and other countries. Natasha serves as the Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) at the King Khalid Foundation (KKF) in Saudi Arabia working between Washington, DC and Riyadh on developing strategy, management structures, partnerships and investment opportunities for the foundation. During the past decade, Natasha worked on strategic transformation of KKF into a leading Saudi foundation, which played a key role in building the Saudi non-profit sector. Through her consulting practice, she works for both for-profit and non-profit organisations to embed ethical, social and governance accountability into their organizational DNA and find innovative solutions for social and economic development challenges.

#### Sheikh Khalid Al Massan, CEO, Oman LNG Development Foundation

As part of the newly established Oman LNG Developmental Foundation, Khalid Al Massan was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer. Khalid brings with him more than 30 years of diverse experience in various sectors of Oil and Gas Industry locally and globally. He started his career with Petroleum Development Oman in 1987, where he served in a number of positions, for a period of 18 years, before he was posted in Shell EP Dubai. His experience spans over several functional and governance & integrity roles in support of business growth. He joined Qalhat LNG in 2005 and served as Strategic Treasurer followed by Finance Controller before moving to become the Vice President for Corporate Affairs. In 2012, Khalid was appointed by the Board of Directors as Chief Finance Officer and Secretary to the Board. Khalid's effective contribution and wide experience have been valued and shared at all levels of the business.



### Michael Green, CEO, Social Progress Imperative

Michael Green is Chief Executive Officer of the Social Progress Imperative. An economist by training, he is co-author (with Matthew Bishop) of *Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Save the World and The Road from Ruin: A New Capitalism for a Big Society*. Previously Michael served as a senior official in the U.K. Government's Department for International Development, where he managed British aid programs to Russia and Ukraine and headed the communication department. He taught Economics at Warsaw University in Poland in the early 1990s. His TED Talks have been viewed more than four million times, and his 2014 Talk was chosen by the TED organization as one of the 'most powerful ideas' of 2014 and by The Telegraph as one of the 10 best ever.

### Clare Woodcraft, Independent Advisor

Clare Woodcraft is an independent advisor to organisations seeking to build a sustainability agenda and maximize their social impact. Woodcraft has 25+ years of experience in socio-economic development with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the finance and energy sectors. She is the former CEO of Emirates Foundation, the national foundation of the UAE where she led the organisation's transition from traditional grant-making to the model of Venture Philanthropy. While her time as CEO, she was elected Chair of the Arab Foundations Forum, a regional network of foundations, where she helped double membership, secure finance and develop the discourse around catalytic philanthropy. She has worked as a development practitioner, a journalist and a corporate executive specializing in sustainability. She served as the Deputy Director of Shell Foundation which builds scalable social enterprises to address global development challenges.

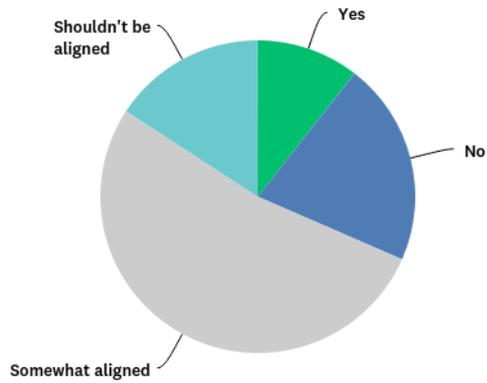
### Badr Jafar, Co-Founder, Pearl Initiative

Badr Jafar is the CEO of Crescent Enterprises. Through his passion for social entrepreneurship, Badr sits on the Global Board of Education for Employment (EFE), the Global Honorary Board of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, is a member of the Synergos Arab World Social Innovators (AWSI) Program Board of Governors and is a Founding Board Member of Endeavor UAE, an initiative encouraging high-impact entrepreneurship. Badr is active with higher education institutions, chairing the Alumni Advisory Council of the Cambridge University Judge Business School and serving as Board Member of their International Advisory Board. He is also a member of the Business Advisory Council of the American University of Sharjah. Badr is an active member of the Young Presidents' Organisation, serving as Ex-Officio Chair of the YPO Emirates Chapter. Badr was honoured as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum and is Vice-Chair of their Global Agenda Council on Energy Security.

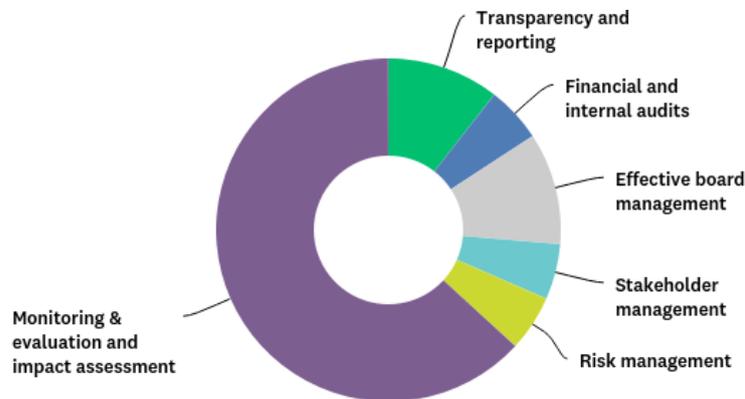
## Annexure 3

### Survey Results

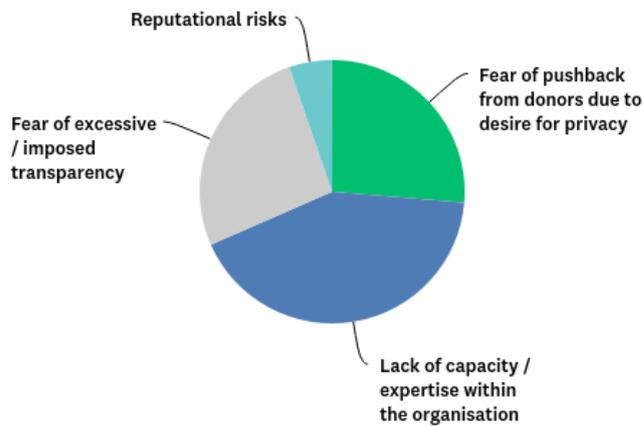
1. Do you think that regional governance of philanthropy is aligned with international best practice?



2. What do you think is the governance area in philanthropy that requires more improvement?



3. What are the challenges your organisation faces in achieving greater transparency?





## Appendix 4

### Pearl Initiative Team



#### Yasmine Omari, Executive Director

An expert in governance for family firms, Yasmine joined the Pearl Initiative as Head of Programmes, and became Executive Director in 2019. She has experience in the implementation and operation of corporate and family governance systems, as well as business performance and risk management capabilities for private companies and family offices. Prior to joining the Pearl Initiative, Yasmine was a Senior Manager at Deloitte and supported clients in navigating the business challenges faced by entrepreneurial families in business. Yasmine has a legal background and holds a degree in Law and Arabic from SOAS, University of London.



#### Lamia Adi, Senior Programme Associate

Before joining the Pearl Initiative, Lamia worked with Pink Tank, a Dubai-based consultancy focusing on research and knowledge-based conferences in the Gulf Region. In her role at the Pearl Initiative, she supports in planning, managing and implementing governance and diversity programmes across the Gulf Region. A graduate with a bachelor's degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown's University School of Foreign Service with a minor in Arab and Regional Studies, she is keen on contextualising international research and adding tangible value to the region.



#### Sumaya Nair, Junior Programme Assistant

Having previously worked closely with developmental social enterprises in the UAE, Sumaya is concerned about a wide range of global issues, including conflict zones, humanitarianism and philanthropy. With a degree in International Politics, she is also passionate about corporate governance and the role the private sector has in pushing forward the SDGs. In her role at the Pearl Initiative, she supports in the managing and implementing of the Governance in Philanthropy and Governance in Family Firms programmes across the Gulf Region.