

GLOBAL TIMES MAGAZINE



GLOBAL CHAMBER OF BUSINESS LEADERS

Fifth Edition

A CALL TO ACTION:

**SAVING OUR OCEAN
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

UNDP: CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED

**EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH-LED
MSME's FOR AFRICA's SUCCESS**

BIG INTERVIEW

GLOBAL TIMES

H.E. LAILA RAHHAL ELATFANI

GCBL VICE-CHAIR FOR THE GULF STATES REGION

GLOBAL TIMES MAGAZINE



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Fifth Edition | 5-2023 | MMXXIII



Fifth Edition

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2023 GLOBAL CHAMBER OF BUSINESS LEADERS
THE YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY
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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

A YEAR OF RISK, BLOOD, SWEAT, AND OPPORTUNITIES



The seal of the Chairman

DEJAN ŠTANCER,
CHAIRMAN

Dear readers,

Although it is a summer that always brings with it unforgettable memories, this year is a different summer. After all, it will (again!) be marked by the consequences of climate change, which are showing up more and more often and are becoming more and more brutal. The saying: "Acta Non Verba" (i.e., Act don't talk) is, therefore, all the more appropriate.

Nothing new, you could say, even when it comes to the cooling of the World Economy. On world stock exchanges, share prices fell last week because inflation in Western countries is still at high levels, so central banks will most likely continue to raise interest rates, which will further slow down the growth of economies. And that means spending and inflation will remain at high levels, which could lead the US central bank to raise interest rates more aggressively than expected.

Without cooperation and trust, with constant competition and open hostilities, the stock market indices will not be able to grow excessively. The time may be for a new social compact, but who can achieve it? Would it even be adhered to, and would it even be possible to achieve it?

That at the Global Chamber of Business Leaders we do more than we talk is probably clear by now to everyone who deals with us, and that is why I am extremely honoured to be able to announce a new appointment (or rather promotion): H.E. Laila Rahhal El Atfani became Vice-Chair for the Gulf States Region.

Soon we will also announce the first major projects that we are planning in the Gulf region under the leadership of the newly appointed Vice-Chair. I can only tell you that there are great things ahead and some changes that we will all be very happy about.

We started the year 2023 on a great note, and since it has now turned into the second half, it is right to announce that the second half will be even better and more successful.

Let me now invite you to read the extraordinary and unique content that you can find in a one-of-a-kind magazine like the Global Times Magazine. Enjoy reading!

Yours sincerely,

Dejan Štancer





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CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED: EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH- LED MSME'S FOR AFRICA'S SUCCESS

Dr. Angela Lusigi,

UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana on MSME's



On this MSME Day, we celebrate the tremendous dynamism of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and their vital role in driving economic growth and fostering sustainable development.

In Africa, MSMEs constitute nearly 90 percent of all businesses, generate over two-thirds of employment opportunities and are becoming hubs of innovation. This means that MSMEs could play a vital role in facilitating Africa's industrialization, agricultural development, food security, and structural transformation to accelerate the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which is the African Union's special theme for 2023.

However, despite their undeniable impact, women and youth-led enterprises often face significant barriers to accessing markets beyond borders and building resilient value and supply chains. There is growing recognition of the importance of addressing the challenges to women and youth entrepreneurship in order to transform our economies and build resilient societies. The high-level event at the UN Headquarters in New York by the International Council for Small Businesses under the theme, "Galvanizing MSMEs Worldwide by Supporting Women and Youth Entrepreneurship and Resilient Supply Chains" represents a significant step in co-creating innovative solutions to overcome these challenges.

For Africa, we must redouble efforts to unlock the transformative potential of women and youth-led MSMEs by connecting them to the opportunities available under the single African Market facilitated by free movement of persons, goods, services and investment across borders. By empowering these enterprises with improved access to markets, financing, and technology, we can enable them to thrive and make substantial contributions to the continent's transformation.

Connecting the unconnected women and youth-led MSMEs across Africa involves linking ideas, people, and products, forging invaluable partnerships that will drive progress and unlock the immense potential within these MSMEs.

Connecting people, unleashes the power of networks

Africa's single market truly comes alive when we connect consumers and producers across borders to exploit economies of scale. However,



many women and youth-led enterprises have limited access to information on cross-border market opportunities and struggle to establish connections with potential buyers, suppliers, and distributors. By connecting women and youth entrepreneurs to relevant training, mentorship, and capacity-building programs, we can enhance their competitiveness and integration into regional and global supply chains.

For example, initiatives like the Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum provide networking platforms, mentorship, and training opportunities for women entrepreneurs, enabling them to expand their networks and connect with potential business partners. These connections empower them to access new markets and strengthen their presence in the MSME ecosystem.



Empowered Lives. Resilient Nations.

Connecting products, builds resilient supply chains

Africa is blessed with abundant mineral and agricultural resources. For instance, Ivory Coast and Ghana are by far the largest cocoa growing countries, accounting for over 60 percent of global cocoa production. Similarly, Madagascar is the top global vanilla producer. Multinational companies import these raw materials to produce their food and beverage products which are then sold across Africa and globally. Value addition and creation means suppliers and producers will benefit from growing MSMEs sourcing products easily across countries. Creating resilient supply chains is crucial for MSME growth and sustainability.

A noteworthy example is the recent Ghana-Kenya Market Entry Expo held in Nairobi. This initiative aimed to connect products and unlock new market opportunities for MSMEs.

The Expo enabled business-to-business engagements, promoting the distribution of Ghanaian goods in the Kenyan/East African market. To support this endeavor, the Ghana Trade House was officially opened to facilitate the entry of Made-in-Ghana goods into the East African region.



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With the backing of UNDP and other partners, 60 Ghanaian women and youth-led MSMEs showcased their products at the Expo. Florence Cossou Tomaza, a young woman entrepreneur producing agro-processed goods such as honey and tea, remarked: "I have been aspiring to enter the East African market, and the Ghana-Kenya Expo presented a fantastic opportunity for me to connect and assess the market. It's been an invaluable platform to gain insights and forge meaningful connections.,,"

Connecting ideas, cultivates collaborative innovation

Creative solutions, efficient and innovative products that solve current and future problems will flourish with collaboration within and across borders. Innovation hubs such as iHub in Nairobi and initiatives such as UNDP's Accelerator Labs provide opportunities and spaces for incubation, collaboration, knowledge-sharing and cross-pollination of ideas among entrepreneurs, technologists and innovators. These platforms serve as catalysts for ground-breaking innovations, leading to the development of products and services that transform industries and contribute to sustainable development.

Conclusion

This MSME Day, let us recognize the transformative power of connecting the unconnected. As Africa embraces the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA, it is crucial to prioritize the integration of women and youth-led enterprises into regional and global value chains.

During her recent visit to Ghana for the Hekima Accra, UNDP Regional Director for Africa, Ahunna Eziakonwa, emphasized the need to support MSMEs in leveraging the AfCFTA to expand their market reach. By working together to empower African MSMEs and nurturing their creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, we can forge an inclusive and prosperous future where no one is left behind.

Article End

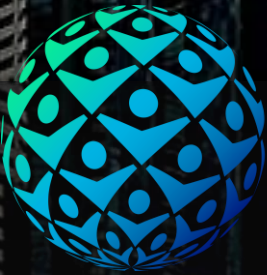


ABOUT UNDP

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is a United Nations agency tasked with helping countries eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth and human development. The UNDP emphasizes developing local capacity towards long-term self-sufficiency and prosperity.

Based at United Nations Headquarters in New York City, it is the largest UN development aid agency, with offices in 177 countries. The UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states.

2023



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H.E. LAILA RAHHAL EL ATFANI

IMPROOVING THE GCBL'S POWER IN THE GULF STATES REGION

Vice-Chair, GCBL Gulf States Region



Her Excellency, Laila Rahhal El Atfani, is one of the most sought-after and busiest women in her fields of work. With multiple portfolios encompassing community work, business, ambassadorship and much more, she has become known as a mover and shaker in her own right.

One whose exuberance, friendliness and endearing spirit surely plays a major role in her popularity as well, she captures the hearts of the many individuals whom she encounters.

Balancing the roles and responsibilities of an entrepreneur, philanthropist, humanitarian, motivational speaker, among other things, she is also passionate about woman empowerment, youths and the underprivileged.

At the helm of her companies, Business Gate Dubai and I Am Africa, she has forged many new and strategic paths for businesses around the world. She has a vested interest in her initiative, Women Business Circle (WBC) and actively collaborates with barrier-breaking women from various fields and occupations. Over the years, she has received many awards and accolades and has been given much recognition for her commitment to Causes and work.

"For me, the most meaningful nomination is when they nominate me for serving humanity, for assisting people in need and for empowering others. I earned numerous physical medals and certificates, but these awards live on in the world, and when I get an Oscar in my heart, people are delighted. I can list some - WOW Awards USA -Women of Worth, The Voice Achievers Award, Super Mom Award, She Award Dubai, Wellness & Health Award, Mawlana Awards Turkey, Oscar of Best Entrepreneur Morocco, Most Inspiring Women Award, Ambassador UAE Africa, AFRIFATA and others."

Highlighting her career within *Business Gate* and *I Am Africa Platform*, Rahhal El Atfani shared an overview of its purpose.

"*Business Gate Network* is a professional bridge for the business globally that operates from many industries and chapters around the world. Our major goal is to connect C-level executives, business owners and government officials to exchange useful experiences, explore collaborative business prospects and create strong professional relationships. We have established ourselves as a trusted business network and a catalyst for global business relationships through our outstanding track record of creative Business Gate events and sixteen years of devoted member engagement initiatives. Furthermore, inside Business Gate, we offer services for business formation for all



types of companies, whether they are large or SMEs. Our partnership and sponsorship opportunities play an important role in business branding and marketing, facilitating introduction and launching events, and attracting foreign direct investment. We have numerous initiatives at Business Gate, such as the Women Business Circle, B2B, SMEs, and so on. At *I Am Africa*, we are dedicated to forging a lasting partnership between the UAE and Africa, facilitating collaboration and empowering businesses to unlock their full potential in an interconnected world."

Citing her passion to develop courage, resilience, happiness and a positive mindset even through her work, she noted her train of thought when it came to what spurred her to become involved in her chosen fields. Asked what she thought was her most dynamic impact to date, the modest trailblazer replied,

"I have always had a strong desire to promote empowerment, economic progress, sustainable development, new technology and modern business. These are the major pillars that will determine our society's future and have the power to affect positive change on a global scale. I don't like working in a routine, I don't like boredom, I like to do new activities that are imaginative and creative. I like to open doors with new challenges, and I believe in collaboration and teamwork. I firmly believe that empowering individuals and communities is essential for unlocking their full potential. I am committed to exploring new paths for empowerment, embracing cutting-edge technologies to address global concerns, and building collaborations that promote long-term development. I believe that by remaining dedicated to these ideas, we can create a future that is not only economically vibrant but also environmentally responsible and socially just."

With her uber impressive background and experience, it might very well seem that her introduction to the Global Chamber of Business Leaders (GCBL) was a foregone conclusion. In April of this year, Rahhal Etfani was appointed to the Board of Advisors and in early July, she was appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Gulf States Region Chapter. Her range of associations, far-reaching prowess and keen insight has marked her as an invaluable individual for the latter position. Expressing her reaction to the news of her latest appointment, Her Excellency said,

"First and foremost, I would like to express my profound gratitude to Mr. Dejan Stancer, Chairman of the GCBL, for his kind welcome and his kind remarks regarding my most recent appointment as Vice-Chairman for the Gulf States Region. Being a part of this prestigious organization and having the chance to further its goals is an honor. I'd want to thank him for believing in me and entrusting me with this position."

Of her background, passion and pursuits, she shared,

"I have worked hard to demonstrate a strong sense of commitment and passion in all that I do for my career. I am adamant that obtaining significant and lasting achievements is made possible by commitment. My career has been defined by a sincere passion for promoting expansion, igniting innovation and forging long-lasting alliances. I am committed to fostering an environment where businesses can flourish because I fully believe in the value of collaboration. Additionally, I have a strong desire to use the potential of young people and women in the Gulf States Region to influence positive change on a worldwide scale.





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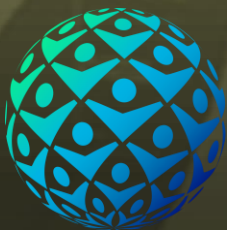
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H.E. LAILA RAHHAL EL ATFANI, VICE-CHAIR FOR THE GULF STATES REGION

The Gulf States have enormous economic potential and I am totally committed to maximizing it in order to support economic diversification, encourage entrepreneurship and aid in the creation of a thriving business ecosystem."

It is noteworthy to mention that the Gulf States Region has been a force in many aspects and Rahhal Etfani surmised on the economic and other political, as well as the geopolitical position of the Region.

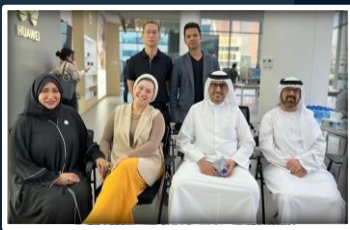
"In the global landscape, the Gulf States Region has major economic and geopolitical significance. This Region, which includes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman, has large reserves of oil and natural gas, making it an important player in the global energy market.

The Gulf States have achieved considerable strides in terms of constructing world-class infrastructure, attracting foreign direct investment and encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. They have implemented ambitious economic reform projects, such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the United Arab Emirates' Vision 2021, with the goal of stimulating economic diversification, increasing competitiveness and establishing a more vibrant private sector. Additionally, the Gulf States have been actively involved in regional and international affairs, playing a key role in diplomatic initiatives."

With the position of Vice-Chairman perpetually being made a statement as to how powerful unity within business can be, on a personal note, what did she consider to be the significance of her appointment?

"The Chamber of Commerce is really powerful and professional and I am incredibly honored to have this role, which I believe epitomizes the strength that comes from working together in business. I am overjoyed to have been picked to work alongside multi-national businessmen

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ABOUT GULF STATES

BIG INTERVIEW

The **Arab states of the Persian Gulf** refers to a group of Arab states which border the Persian Gulf. There are seven member states of the Arab League in the region: Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Yemen is bound to the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, based on history and culture. The term has been used in different contexts to refer to a number of Arab states in the Persian Gulf region. The prominent regional political union Gulf Cooperation Council includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

In modern history, various British Empire protectorates, including the Trucial States were Arab states along the Persian Gulf.



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and women with extensive expertise, and I am on a mission to create synergy and bridge the GCC, Europe, and other nations in order for the economy to thrive. One of the primary objectives of my role is to promote youth and women's empowerment in the Gulf States Region. I firmly believe that investing in young people's potential and providing equal opportunities for women can result in profound transformations in our society and economy.

"My appointment as the Vice-Chairman for the Gulf States Region to the Global Chamber of Business Leaders is truly a testament to the power of unity within business. It provides a unique opportunity to support the cause of youth and women empowerment, paving the road for a brighter and more equal future, which is definitely one of the key Areas of Focus of the GCBL.

I am dedicated to maximizing this opportunity, and working closely with the Global Chamber of Business Leaders, allows me to harness the business community's aggregate strength and knowledge to establish programs and policies that encourage youth and women empowerment. Together, we can create a more inclusive, diverse, and prosperous sustainable business environment."

Speaking of global connections and relationships within certain categories, she referred to the commonalities she may have recognised from working alongside NGOs and companies.

"Humanity is the most valuable coin in my opinion. I am lucky to be involved with a number of non-profit organizations like REFAI - Switzerland, Youth Gate - Cambodia, Anwar Associations, I am Africa, among others and businesses in fields such as information technology, finance, business strategists and education. Despite their disparate areas of expertise, there are some characteristics that define my collaboration with them. One thing they all have in common is a desire to make a positive difference in society. These organizations strive to improve the lives of individuals and communities through technical advancements, financial empowerment, strategic planning and educational activities. Such collaborations are formed on strong relationships based on trust and mutual understanding."

"NGOs organize various initiatives in the field of women and youth empowerment, such as mentorship programs, skills training workshops and leadership development seminars with the goal of enhancing their capabilities by allowing them to take charge of their lives and contribute meaningfully to society. When it comes to assisting new businesses, NGOs provide incubation programs, access to capital and coaching from experienced entrepreneurs. These groups stimulate innovation, job development and economic progress in the Region by developing and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit."

She expounded on her vision and plans whereby she would curate woman empowerment initiatives under the umbrella of the GCBL, professing,

"During a talk with the President of GCBL, we discussed how we could include more women in GCBL and I offered the Women Business Circle



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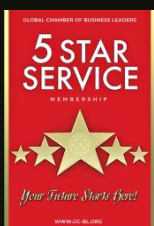



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to him. By incorporating a dedicated women empowerment group, WBC, into the Global Chamber of Business Leaders, the network may actively contribute to promoting gender equality and improving women's rights and opportunities in business. WBC has amalgamated with other programs of mine, including 50 Inspiring Women, 50 Entrepreneur Leadership, Global Women Leadership, Women in Art, Women in Business, Women Driving the Future, and so on.

It enables the Global Chamber to actively contribute to the empowerment of women entrepreneurs and professionals, while also encouraging an inclusive and diverse culture within the larger business community."

Knowing of her dedication to create power and competence among younger generations, she turned her attention to the GCBL's desire, in alignment with young professionals, and also spoke about how the GCBL could be integrated into the work of youth policy and development in the Gulf States Region.



Continue

Some of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf are constitutional monarchies with elected parliaments.

Bahrain (*Majlis al Watani*) and Kuwait (*Majlis al Ummah*) have legislatures with members elected by the population.

The Sultanate of Oman also has an advisory council (*Majlis ash-Shura*) that is popularly elected.

In the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven monarchical emirates, the Federal National Council, functions only as an advisory body, but some of its members are now chosen via a limited electoral college nominated by the seven rulers.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains a hereditary monarchy with limited political representation.

In Qatar, an elected national parliament has been mooted and is written into the new constitution, but elections are yet to be held.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar are the two Arab states and absolute monarchies to have never held elections since their respective establishments as nations in 1932 and 1971 respectively.

Iraq is the only federal republic situated in the Persian Gulf region.



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"The Global Chamber of Business Leaders is committed to actively interacting with and supporting young people. I had been involved in Youth Empowerment for over fourteen years. We understand the significance of empowering students and giving them opportunities to prosper in an ever-changing global market. We believe that partnering with young people represents the future leaders and entrepreneurs who will drive innovation and economic progress. We are committed to developing their abilities, expertise and entrepreneurial spirit, as well as connecting them with successful business executives and mentors. Regarding the Gulf Region, while I greatly believe in the Global Chamber of Business Leaders' vision and future goals, it is realistic to think that our organization would seek to be more involved in the field of youth policy in the Region. Given the shifting corporate landscape and the Region's emphasis on economic diversification, investment in youth development would be critical for long-term sustainability and prosperity."



Known to be an unwavering advocate for networking and understanding that networking is extremely under-rated by some younger entrepreneurs and even professionals, she offered the following advice with a view to using networking strategically.



"Building a strong professional network may be a game-changer for your entrepreneurial path, opening doors to possibilities, information, and collaborations that can advance your firm. As a public advocate for networking, I can attest to this. A long-term investment, networking is. It takes time, effort and a sincere desire to forge bonds of mutual benefit. Young businesspeople can access a variety of information, assistance, and partnerships by effectively leveraging networking opportunities, which can greatly improve their entrepreneurial journey. No matter who you are, where you are from, what religion you practice, what kind of passport you have, what Degree of education you have or how much money you make, my advice to the younger generation is to think about humanity, with respect and tolerance because any organization needs a connection based on collaboration."



Guided by her vast experience and natural instincts, what was her perspective as to whether the Global Chamber of Business Leaders has the potential to become one of the strongest organizations in the Gulf Region?

"I strongly believe that the Global Chamber of Business Leaders can be one of the strongest organizations in the Gulf Region. The Global Chamber of Business is a global organization that connects business executives from many countries and regions. Its extensive network and resources enable it to bring together significant corporate personalities, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers from both within and outside the Gulf Region. This global reach provides a distinct advantage in terms of access to a wide range of perspectives, knowledge and prospective collaborations. Secondly, in recent years, the Gulf Region has seen substantial economic expansion and development. Countries like the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been actively promoting economic diversification and courting foreign investment. As the Global Chamber of Business Leaders establishes its presence in the Region, it will be able to capitalize on these opportunities and contribute to the Gulf Region's economic success."



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Her advice for the GCBL regarding changes for recognition and consolidation in the Gulf States Region was centred around the following sentiments.

“Several adjustments and additions should be considered to improve the Global Chamber of Business Leaders’ recognition and consolidation of power in the Gulf Region. These recommendations are intended to increase the Chamber’s role in encouraging economic growth, promoting sustainable practices and resolving regional concerns. Enhanced representation, an emphasis on sustainability, an innovation and technology hub, policy advocacy, mentorship and capacity building, engagement with educational institutions, knowledge sharing and networking are just a few suggestions.

What I would add is that I believe we should have our own bank. Implementing these adjustments and additions would contribute to the Gulf Region’s recognition and consolidation of the Global Chamber of Business Leaders. The GCBL can successfully meet the requirements of businesses, promote economic growth, and play a significant role in moulding the future of the Gulf business community by embracing sustainability, innovation, diversity, and collaboration.”

She shared her insights on and solutions for business in general on an international scale when it came to some components that are lacking and preventing true and aggressive progress.

“Having extensive experience in franchising, financing, and trading, I have observed several components that seem to be lacking in today’s business world. To address these issues and foster a more conducive environment for growth, I would like to propose the following recommendations:

1. Collaboration over competition
2. Embracing diversity and inclusion
3. Supporting entrepreneurship and small businesses
4. Prioritizing sustainable practices
5. Continuous learning and adaptability

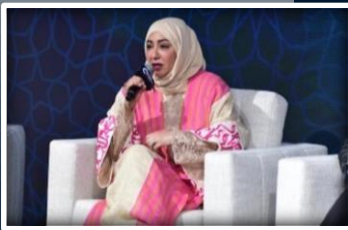
By implementing these recommendations, businesses can create a more collaborative, inclusive, sustainable and adaptable environment, enabling true and aggressive progress. It requires a collective effort from governments, businesses and individuals to overcome the existing limitations and shape a future that encourages innovation, growth, and positive societal impact.”

The fact that there were still some archaic biases and misconceptions that still exist in the 2020s regarding not only women but Muslim





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women in business and top-tier leadership roles, she had this message to share,

“As a successful businesswoman, I would like to address the misconceptions surrounding the role of women, particularly Muslim women, in modern society. It is disheartening to witness that even in these progressive times, there are lingering stereotypes and misunderstandings that hinder the recognition of Muslim women as leaders in their fields. It is also worth noting that Islam, as a religion, encourages the pursuit of knowledge, personal development and social engagement for both men and women. The teachings of Islam emphasize the importance of justice, equality and empowerment for all individuals, irrespective of gender.

As a successful businesswoman, my message is clear: let us embrace diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of life, including leadership roles. By breaking down stereotypes and challenging misconceptions, we can build a more equitable and inclusive society that recognizes and supports the contributions of Muslim women, as well as women from all backgrounds. Let us empower and uplift one another, regardless of gender or faith, to build a future where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive and lead in their chosen fields.”

Her final thoughts for professionals and entrepreneurs were,

“Believe in your vision, find your tribe, know your target, understand your market and filter your network.”

Article End

ABOUT ECONOMICS



BIG INTERVIEW

Most of these Arab states have significant revenues from petroleum. The United Arab Emirates has been successfully diversifying its economy. 79% of UAE's total GDP comes from non-oil sectors.

Oil accounts for only 2% of Dubai's GDP. Bahrain has the Persian Gulf's first "post-oil" economy because the Bahraini economy does not rely on oil.

Since the late 20th century, Bahrain has heavily invested in the banking and tourism sectors. The country's capital, Manama, is home to many large financial structures.

The UAE and Bahrain have a high Human Development Index (ranking 31 and 42 worldwide respectively in 2019) and was recognised by the World Bank as high income economies. According to the World Bank, most of these Arab states have been the world's most generous donors of aid as a share of GDP.





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NEW COMMITTEE: GCBL COMMITTEE FOR FINANCE AND INVESTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

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Introducing the New Committee for Finance and Investment:

Driving Economic Growth and Stability.

In a world of constant change and disruption, the Global Chamber of Business Leaders (GCBL) continues to pave the way for sustainable business growth and the well-being of economies worldwide. As we navigate through the year 2023, filled with new opportunities, the GCBL is proud to announce the establishment of its newest committee—the Committee for Finance and Investment. This committee aims to address the evolving financial landscape and provide strategic guidance to ensure economic stability, resilience, and prosperity for businesses and societies globally.

The GCBL, a coalition of governmental leaders, CEOs, executives, entrepreneurs, investors, and business and industry pioneers, shares a common vision: the sustainable growth and well-being of businesses in a rapidly changing global economy. With a focus on the UN-declared Decade of Action, the GCBL aligns its activities with the Sustainable Development Goals, empowering its partners, members, and participants to prepare their businesses as vanguards of the future.

The GCBL understands that collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action are vital to driving positive change. To effectively address the diverse needs and challenges faced by businesses and society, the Chamber has already established several committees, each focusing on specific areas of interest and concern. The Committee for Finance and Investment joins this esteemed group, contributing its expertise and resources to shape a thriving financial landscape within the GCBL community.

The newly formed Committee for Finance and Investment recognizes the pivotal role that finance plays in business growth, investment, and economic development. By bringing together financial experts, industry leaders, and policymakers from around the globe, this committee aims to foster an interconnected and resilient financial ecosystem. Through collaboration, knowledge exchange, and strategic initiatives, the committee will address key challenges and opportunities in the financial sector.



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Key Objectives and Areas of Focus:

1. **Financial Stability and Risk Management:** The Committee for Finance and Investment will work towards promoting financial stability by identifying and addressing systemic risks. It will develop strategies to mitigate the impact of market volatility, enhance risk management frameworks, and foster resilience in the face of economic uncertainties.
2. **Access to Capital and Funding:** Recognizing the importance of access to capital for businesses at various stages of development, the committee will explore innovative financing models and initiatives. It will support efforts to increase funding options, improve access to capital for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and promote responsible lending practices.
3. **Sustainable Investment and Impact Financing:** The committee will advocate for sustainable investment practices and the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into financial decision-making. It will explore impact financing mechanisms, such as green bonds and social impact bonds, to drive investments that deliver positive environmental and social outcomes.
4. **Financial Education and Literacy:** With the goal of enhancing financial literacy and empowering individuals and businesses to make informed financial decisions, the committee will develop educational initiatives and resources. It will promote financial literacy programs, provide guidance on financial planning, and foster a culture of responsible financial practices.
5. **Regulatory Frameworks and Policy Advocacy:** The Committee for Finance and Investment will engage with policymakers and regulatory bodies to shape financial regulations that foster innovation, competition, and consumer protection. It will advocate for policies that support a conducive business environment and promote financial inclusion.

The Committee for Finance and Investment 's establishment reflects the GCBL's commitment to addressing critical issues and driving positive change within the global business landscape. By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of its members, the committee aims to influence policy decisions, drive sustainable economic growth, and contribute to inclusive global development.

The GCBL invites leaders from the financial sector, including banking institutions, investment firms, fintech companies, and policymakers, to actively participate in this new committee. By joining forces, we can shape a resilient and prosperous financial landscape that serves as a catalyst for economic growth and stability.

As we navigate this new era of opportunity, the Committee for Finance and Investment within the Global Chamber of Business Leaders will play a crucial role in shaping the future of finance. By fostering collaboration, driving innovation, and advocating for sound financial practices, the committee aims to position the GCBL as a global leader in financial governance and development.

Through regular meetings, conferences, and workshops, the Committee for Finance and Investment will provide a platform for thought leaders and experts to exchange ideas, share best practices, and discuss emerging trends in the financial sector. This collaborative environment will facilitate knowledge transfer and create opportunities for strategic partnerships among industry stakeholders.

One of the key focuses of the committee will be to explore emerging





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technologies and their impact on finance. The rapid advancement of technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, and digital currencies has the potential to revolutionize financial systems. The committee will analyse the opportunities and challenges associated with these technologies, promoting their responsible adoption and integration within the global financial ecosystem.

Furthermore, the committee will actively engage with other committees within the GCBL to ensure cross-collaboration and alignment of efforts. Recognizing the interconnected nature of various business sectors, the Committee for Finance and Investment will seek opportunities to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Committee, Business Development Committee, Public Relations and Media Committee...



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ROBERTO MARCHETTI



GLOBAL CHAMBER OF BUSINESS LEADERS

FINANCE AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Business and Professional Women's Committee, Events and Summits Committee, Climate Change Committee, and Cooperation, Peace, and Solidarity Committee. By leveraging synergies across committees, the GCBL can foster holistic and sustainable solutions to complex financial challenges.

The Committee for Finance and Investment will also play a vital role in policy advocacy at both national and international levels. Through position papers, policy recommendations, and engagement with relevant stakeholders, the committee will strive to shape financial regulations that promote transparency, fairness, and stability. By working closely with governments, regulatory bodies, and international organizations, the committee will contribute to the development of robust frameworks that facilitate responsible financial practices and support economic growth.

In addition to its role in policy advocacy, the Committee for Finance and Investment will actively support capacity-building initiatives for financial institutions, entrepreneurs, and individuals

By organizing training programs, mentorship opportunities, and knowledge-sharing sessions, the committee aims to enhance financial skills and empower businesses and individuals to navigate the evolving financial landscape successfully.

The establishment of the Committee for Finance and Investment underscores the GCBL's commitment to fostering a vibrant and resilient global business community. As businesses face new challenges and opportunities in the wake of disruptive forces, the committee will provide strategic guidance, thought leadership, and actionable insights to navigate the complex financial terrain.

The GCBL invites financial leaders, experts, and professionals to join the Committee for Finance and Investment and actively contribute to its mission. By collaborating and sharing expertise, we can shape a financial landscape that drives sustainable economic growth, fosters financial inclusion, and supports the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Together, let us embrace this new era of opportunity and work towards a future where finance serves as a catalyst for positive change, economic prosperity, and shared well-being. The Committee for Finance and Investment within the Global Chamber of Business Leaders is ready to embark on this journey, and we invite you to join us in shaping the future of finance.

Article End



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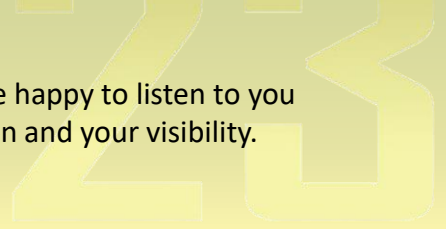
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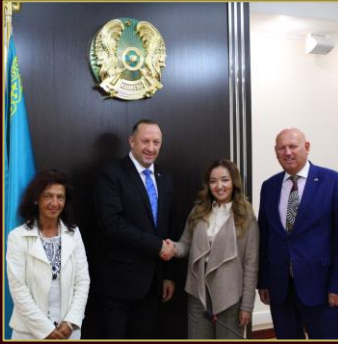


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Keith Mason

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GALA IN LONDON: CHARITY IS NOT JUST ABOUT MAKING A DONATIONS, IT IS ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Editory,
THE GLOBAL TIMES
Tafida Raqeeb Foundation



The Global Chamber of Business Leaders (GCBL) is always inclined to embrace a worthy Cause and lend our support in whatever way we can. Recently, we partnered with the Tafida Raqeeb Foundation (TRF) for their Annual Charity Gala, which was hosted on June 17th 2023 in Kensington, London. The GCBL was represented by Senior Advisor, Keith Mason, and Delegate for Bangladesh, Jakir Chowdhury, who is also the Public Relations Director for the TRF. We are grateful for having had the opportunity to partner with the Foundation for this auspicious event.

The Tafida Raqeeb Foundation's focus is on paediatric neuro-rehabilitation. In 2019, the President and Founder of the TRF, Shelina Begum, experienced horror and dismay when her four year old daughter, Tafida, received a disheartening diagnosis after she complained of a headache one morning and subsequently collapsed. The months that followed were painstakingly crucial.

Throughout this ordeal, the need for dedicated neuro-rehabilitation for children was realised. Beyum learnt that rehabilitation specialists were limited in the United Kingdom. According to the TRF website, an estimated 6,000 children suffer from critical brain injuries every year in the United Kingdom. Therefore, the quest to raise funds for this monumental but needed initiative in the form of a Rehabilitation Centre is of paramount importance. At the event, Begum stressed that the Foundation was not solely about her daughter who is still recovering but about all of the children who could possibly benefit from the availability of the Centre, medical personnel and treatments.

During an interview segment at the event, Keith Mason revealed that the event had garnered over £20,000.00 within even ten minutes of the proceedings.

Said Jakir Chowdhury, "The Foundation aims to improve the quality of life of children who suffer from a neurological condition and be their voice. It is fundamental that all children receive rehabilitation

regardless of the degree of brain injury they have sustained. Even severely injured patients may still have the potential to make continued progress for several years after the injury first occurred. (TRF) has been set up to assist these children and (we) intend to build a paediatric neurological rehabilitation centre in the UK to serve them."

"Moreover, the Foundation intends to initiate a cultural change in the UK towards the treatment of paediatric brain injury. By bringing together leading experts from around the world and by introducing the most advanced neuro rehabilitation treatments, the Foundation will offer the chance of life and recovery for children in the UK, which up until now, has been denied to many. (We) aim to introduce treatments such as hyperbaric oxygen therapy, laser therapy and hydrotherapy, all of which are used successfully in other countries but which are not offered in the UK."

"These latest medically advanced treatments will make the Centre become an international point of reference, which will bring hope and real help to children with neurological injuries and also their families. We would also have a dedicated team of experts who will be conducting research on cures for brain injury and regenerative medicine, including the extremely promising field of stem cell therapy."



"To summarise, our mission is to build a unique state-of-the-art rehabilitation Centre to provide all treatments under one umbrella. Your support is central to our success."

The GCBL family encourages both individuals and entities alike to tangibly support the work and objectives of the Tafida Raqeeb Foundation as every gesture and effort towards these initiatives would not only be appreciated but would also forge a more bolstered impact on the lives of precious children and their loving families as they go through these challenging moments and situations.

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The 10 most widespread waste items polluting the world's oceans:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
|  Plastic bags - 14.1% |  Synthetic rope - 7.9% |  Industrial packaging - 3.4% |
|  Plastic bottles - 11.9% |  Fishing items - 7.6% |  Glass bottles - 3.4% |
|  Food containers/ cutlery - 9.4% |  Plastic caps/lids - 6.1% |  Drinks cans - 3.2% |
|  Wrappers - 9.1% | | |

TOGETHER WE ARE SHAPING THE FUTURE

A CALL TO ACTION: SAVING OUR OCEANS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Editory,

THE GLOBAL TIMES



The world's oceans are vast and magnificent, covering over 70% of our planet's surface. They are home to a staggering array of marine life and play a vital role in regulating our climate and providing oxygen for the planet.

However, our oceans are under threat from a multitude of human activities, including pollution, overfishing, habitat destruction, and climate change. The time has come for us to take action and save our oceans before it's too late.

Tackling Plastic Pollution:

Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing issues facing our oceans today. Each year, millions of tons of plastic waste enter the oceans, causing immense harm to marine life. To combat this problem, we must reduce our use of single-use plastics, promote recycling and waste management, and encourage the development of biodegradable alternatives. Furthermore, supporting initiatives like beach cleanups and promoting awareness about the impact of plastic pollution can go a long way in safeguarding our oceans.

Sustainable Fishing Practices:

Overfishing is depleting fish populations at an alarming rate, disrupting entire marine ecosystems and jeopardizing the livelihoods of coastal communities dependent on fishing. Implementing sustainable fishing practices, such as enforcing catch limits, protecting spawning grounds, and promoting selective fishing techniques, can help restore fish stocks and maintain the delicate balance of marine ecosystems. Supporting sustainable seafood choices and certifications can also contribute to the conservation of marine life.

Protecting Marine Habitats:

Preserving and restoring critical marine habitats like coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds is essential for the health and resilience of our oceans. These habitats provide nurseries for countless marine species, protect coastlines from erosion, and act as carbon sinks.

Establishing marine protected areas (MPAs) and implementing regulations to prevent destructive activities like bottom trawling and dredging are crucial steps in safeguarding these invaluable ecosystems.

Addressing Climate Change:

Climate change poses a significant threat to our oceans, resulting in rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and the bleaching and degradation of coral reefs.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the adoption of renewable energy sources, transitioning to sustainable transportation, and advocating for international agreements on climate action are vital for mitigating the impacts of climate change on our oceans.

Additionally, supporting research and innovation to develop climate-resilient coral species and promoting the restoration of degraded marine habitats can help build resilience in our oceans.

Educating and Inspiring Change:

Education plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of responsibility and inspiring individuals to take action. By incorporating ocean conservation into school curricula, organizing awareness campaigns, and engaging with communities, we can raise awareness about the importance of our oceans and inspire sustainable behaviors.

Supporting and participating in research initiatives and volunteering for conservation organizations are also effective ways to contribute to the preservation of our oceans.

Conclusion:

The state of our oceans is a reflection of our collective impact on the planet. Saving our oceans requires a concerted effort from individuals, communities, governments, and businesses worldwide.

By taking action to reduce plastic pollution, promoting sustainable fishing practices, protecting marine habitats, addressing climate change, and educating others, we can ensure the health and vitality of our oceans for future generations. Together, let us be the guardians of our oceans and create a sustainable and thriving future for all.

Article End





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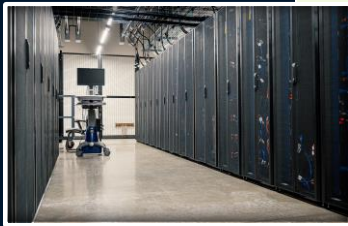
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A NEW FRONT IN THE WATER WARS:

YOUR INTERNET USE!

Editorial,
THE GLOBAL TIMES
WP, Shannon Osaka



When Jenn Duff heard that Meta, the parent company of Facebook, wanted to build yet another data center in Mesa, Ariz., she was immediately suspicious. “My first reaction was concern for our water,” Duff said. The desert city of half a million residents was already home to large data centers owned by Google, Apple and other tech giants, and Duff, a city council member, feared for the city’s future water supply.

“It’s not like we’re sitting fat and happy in water,” she said. “We’re still constantly looking at the drought situation.”

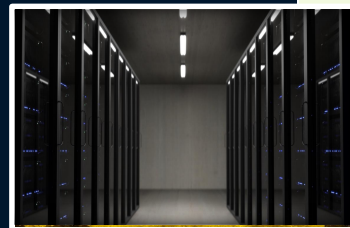
Mesa is only one of many cities and towns in the West wrestling with the expansion of water-guzzling data centers. For years, data centers have come under scrutiny for their carbon emissions. But now, as a “megadrought” continues to ravage the Southwest and the Colorado River dwindles, some communities charge that the centers are also draining local water supplies.

In The Dalles, Ore., a local paper fought to unearth information revealing that a Google data center uses over a quarter of the city’s water. In Los Lunas, N.M., farmers protested a decision by the city to allow a Meta data center to move into the area.

More than 30 percent of the world’s data centers are located in the United States; the power required to run those centers already accounts for about 2 percent of the nation’s electricity use. As the data storage requirements of the planet escalate — and as water becomes scarcer because of climate change — these operations may attract greater scrutiny.

It’s common to think of the stuff of digital life — the photos, the videos, the webpages, the e-books, the reams and reams of data — as somehow lighter than air, existing in “the cloud” or zipping along global wireless networks. The reality, however, is much more concrete. The dozens of zettabytes of data produced every year (a zettabyte is a gigantic unit of data, equal to about 250 billion DVDs) are increasingly stored in thousands of data centers around the world, where massive servers keep the internet afloat.

Those servers require a great deal of energy and produce a great deal of heat. Without adequate cooling, the servers can overheat, fail or



even catch fire. Companies can either use traditional air conditioning to cool the servers, which is expensive, or use water for evaporative cooling. The latter is cheaper, but it also sucks up millions of gallons of water. A large data center, researchers say, can gobble up anywhere between 1 million and 5 million gallons of water a day — as much as a town of 10,000 to 50,000 people.

According to a Virginia Tech [study](#), data centers rank among the top 10 water-consuming commercial industries in the United States, using approximately 513 million cubic meters of water in 2018. Much of that water use comes from electricity use — coal, nuclear and natural gas plants take water to operate, and hydropower also consumes water — but about a quarter is due to using water for direct cooling.

The researchers also found that a lot of data centers operate where water is scarce.

Part of the problem is that tech companies put many of these centers in areas where power is cheap and low-carbon — such as Arizona or other states with plentiful solar or wind power — to help meet their own climate targets. Water in those regions is scarce. Meanwhile, areas where water is plentiful, such as in the East, have higher-carbon sources of power.

“You have to think about how much of the western United States is water-stressed,” said Landon Marston, a professor of water resources engineering at Virginia Tech and one of the study’s authors. California, for example, has at least [239](#) data centers; desert Arizona has at least 49.

Ben Townsend, Google’s global head of infrastructure and water strategy, said there is a trade-off between using more water for cooling, thus saving precious drops, and using more energy for cooling through traditional air conditioning, which emits more greenhouse gases. The right combination depends on where the center is located. Compared with agriculture and urban demands, data centers take up a small proportion of the West’s water. But in small towns and rural areas, the proportion can seem much larger, and spark conflict. In The Dalles, Google was embroiled in a 13-month legal fight to keep the water usage of its local data centers private. Eventually, the company disclosed that its data centers now consume more than 25 percent of the town’s supply. Google then became the first company to publicize its data centers’ water usage [worldwide](#).

John DeVoe, adviser for the environmental group WaterWatch of Oregon, worries that data centers in The Dalles are taking away precious water that could be used to help support species in nearby wetlands and rivers. “It’s an already difficult situation where too much water is promised to too many interests,” DeVoe said. “And now you have a new use coming in and saying, ‘Hey, we want our share too.’” In nearby Cascade Locks, Ore., residents are also pushing back against a proposed data center that they worry will raise electricity rates and suck up precious water.

The good news is that data centers’ efficiency has improved dramatically over the past decade or so. In the mid-2000s, Marston said, researchers projected that data center electricity use would expand to take up huge proportions of the world’s electricity demand. But while data centers’ workloads increased fivefold between 2010 and 2018, their electricity consumption only increased 6 percent.

Still, as the world lives more and more online, data storage requirements are climbing. Newsha Ajami, a researcher at Stanford University’s Water in the West center and water expert at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, said even if data centers’ water use is relatively small, the region’s long-term megadrought means every use is up for debate. “We have really limited amounts of water,” she said. “Every drop counts.”



How do you choose?

Eating more fish is an excellent idea. It's healthy food and it tastes good too. But our choice could contribute to overfishing. Certain species are caught in too large quantities and might disappear from our seas altogether. The European Union is taking action against overfishing to ensure the sustainable management of fish. What can you do about it? It's pretty simple: Stay well informed and always choose sustainably-caught fish! www.chooseyourfish.eu

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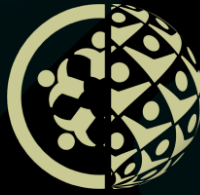
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These committees within the Global Chamber of Business Leaders demonstrate the organization's commitment to addressing a wide range of critical issues that impact businesses, society, and the planet. By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of its members, the Chamber strives to drive positive change, influence policy decisions, and contribute to sustainable and inclusive global development.

GLOBAL CHAMBER OF BUSINESS LEADERS

COMMITTEES

New Logos

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The first signs of global warming are now clearly visible. We urgently need to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Nothing and no-one will be spared from climate change. This warning is therefore to all people, all countries and, in particular, to the Belgian Council of Ministers who, on the weekend of March 20 and 21, will have to decide what action to take regarding essential measures linked to the Kyoto Protocol.



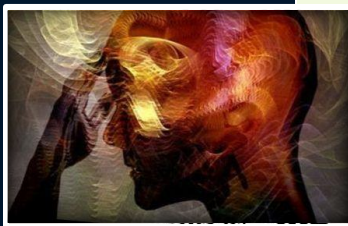


PSYCHOLOGY: BOYS EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION DIFFERENTLY THAN GIRLS. HERE'S WHY THAT MATTERS

Editorial,

THE GLOBAL TIMES

Sciencenews, Sujata Gupta



Teenagers in the United States are in crisis. That news got hammered home earlier this year following the release of a nationally representative survey showing that over half of high school girls reported persistent feelings of “sadness or hopelessness” – common words used to screen for depression. Almost a third of teenage boys reported those same feelings.

“No one is doing well,” says psychologist Kathleen Ethier. She heads the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Adolescent and School Health, which has overseen this biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey since 1991

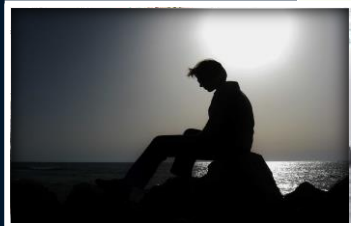
During the latest round of data collection, in fall 2021, over 17,000 students from 31 states responded to roughly 100 questions related to mental health, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, sexual behavior, substance use and experiences of violence.

One chart in particular garnered considerable media attention. From 2011 to 2021, persistent sadness or hopelessness in boys went up 8 percentage points, from 21 to 29 percent. In girls, it rose a whopping 21 percentage points, from 36 to 57 percent.

Some of that disparity may arise from the fact that girls in the United States face unique stressors, researchers say. Compared with boys, girls seem more prone to experiencing mental distress from social media use, are more likely to experience sexual violence and are dealing with a political climate that is often hostile to women’s rights.

But the gap between boys and girls might not be as wide as the numbers indicate. Depression manifests differently in boys and men than in girls and women, mounting evidence suggests.

Girls are more likely to internalize feelings, while boys are more likely to externalize them. Rather than crying when feeling down, for instance, boys may act irritated or lash out. Or they may engage in risky, impulsive or even violent acts. Inward-directed terms like “sadness” and “hopelessness” miss those more typically male tendencies. And masculine norms that equate sadness with weakness may make males who are experiencing those emotions less willing to admit it, even on an anonymous survey.



Consequently, screening tools, such as the one used by the CDC's survey, may miss depression in about 1 in 10 males, research suggests. "We need to have more of a recognition that boys and men, some of them, not all of them, are suffering," says clinical psychologist Ryon McDermott of the University of South Alabama in Mobile. "And we miss them. We miss them in our assessments, and we miss them in our discussions."

Diagnosing depression in boys and men

The idea of overlooked depression in men is not new. Take what happened on the Swedish island of Gotland. In the 1960s and '70s, suicide rates were high. So in 1983, health officials launched an education program for Gotland doctors on depression treatment and suicide prevention.

At first, the program looked like a resounding success. The island's overall suicide rate dropped from roughly 20 out of every 100,000 people in 1982 to roughly 7 out of every 100,000 people by 1985, researchers reported in the 1992 *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*.

But a subsequent, deeper analysis showed that the decline was almost entirely among women. In the 2½ years before and after the program, the number of women dying by suicide decreased from 11 to two, while the number of men dying by suicide mostly stayed steady, seeing a marginal decline from 16 to 15.

Men struggling with suicidal thoughts appear less likely to seek help and more likely to have doctors ignore their depressive symptoms when they do seek help, Wolfgang Rutz, then a psychiatrist at a Gotland hospital, theorized in 1996 in the *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*. Doctors observed, for instance, that men who were depressed often didn't present with classic symptoms, such as sadness, but instead presented as hostile, impulsive and aggressive.

Rutz suspected that this gender disparity in diagnosis and treatment might underpin why, at the time, men in Sweden were being diagnosed with depression half as often as women but dying by suicide five times as often. Without obvious signs of depression, Rutz noted, to the outside observer, many male suicides occurred seemingly without warning. "The criteria of depression that are taught in psychiatric textbooks and diagnostic manuals today and which also have been used in the Gotland project seem insufficient in detecting the typical masculine way of being depressive," Rutz wrote.

Rutz went on to develop a screening tool for male depression, which paved the way for more recent male-specific tools. They include the Male Depression Risk Scale, developed by Simon Rice, a clinical psychologist at Orygen, an Australian nonprofit research, clinical and advocacy institute focused on youth mental health.

The scale focuses on emotion suppression, anger and aggression; drug and alcohol use; somatic symptoms, such as concerns about sleep and sex; and risk-taking. Participants rate various statements, such as how often they bottle up negative feelings, have difficulty managing anger or use drugs for temporary relief. None of the questions ask about sadness or hopelessness.

Research shows that some men meet the criteria for depression on the Male Depression Risk Scale but not on more traditional scales. In a recent study of 1,000 Canadian men, Rice and his team found that 80 respondents, or 8 percent, met the criteria for depression only on a traditional scale that includes a question about how often the respondent has felt "down, depressed or hopeless." In addition, 120 respondents, or 12 percent, met the criteria on both scales.



COMMITTEE FOR HOLISTIC HEALTH

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COMING SOON



But 110 respondents, or 11 percent, met the criteria for depression only on the men’s scale, the team reported in 2020 in the *Journal of Mental Health*.

The results suggest that had the CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey included a male-specific question about depression, there might still have been a gender gap but perhaps a smaller one.

Too many boys and men are suffering in silence, says Rice, who is also a principal research fellow at the University of Melbourne. Ten or 11 percent of missed cases “might sound like a small percentage,” he says, “but at the population level, that is huge.”

Is it depression or something else?

The idea that acting out and aggression could, on occasion, constitute symptoms of depression remains controversial.

The CDC, Ethier says, has relied on extensive research in formulating its survey’s depression-related question, which reads: “During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?”

“That item is actually quite good at predicting who has depressive symptoms,” Ethier says, adding that such accuracy holds true for both girls and boys.

That’s not to say that boys aren’t struggling, Ethier says. Anecdotally, for instance, teachers are reporting a spike in behavioral problems in their classrooms, particularly among boys. But rather than indicating depression, Ethier says, such behavior is emblematic of the broader mental health crisis among teens.

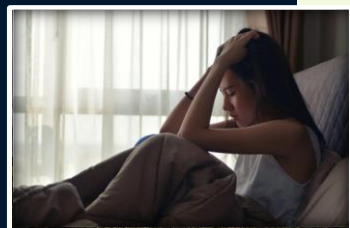
That might sound like splitting hairs. If boys are distressed, why not label them as depressed? Providing the proper diagnosis matters for appropriate treatment and future health outcomes, Ethier says. “We know that depressive symptoms in adolescence have long-term implications for health and mental health. I don’t know that the research is as conclusive about that for behavioral issues in the classroom.”

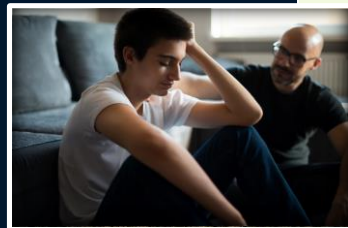
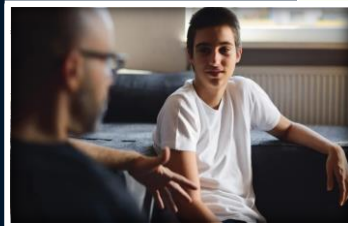
For McDermott, who studies the difficulties of measuring depression, such behavioral problems could indicate other disorders, chiefly attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. But he has no doubt that some of those boys are depressed. “It is hard to say with 100 percent certainty that all boys who are acting out are experiencing depression, but it is a good bet that many of them are,” he says.

The core symptoms of depression, whether internal or external in nature, are the same in men and women, McDermott says. But on a depression scale focusing on internalizing symptoms such as sadness or hopelessness, a depressed man would, on average, score lower than an equally depressed woman.

Why those baselines vary by gender isn’t entirely clear, McDermott says. But when it comes to hopelessness, evidence suggests that boys might sometimes suppress those feelings in adherence to male norms that discourage vulnerability. Consider the results of a review of 74 studies with a total sample size of more than 19,000 mostly U.S. participants published in 2017 in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. High scores on a scale measuring conformity to Western masculine norms, such as emotional control, self-reliance and power over women, were linked with poorer mental health, including depression, and a reduced likelihood of seeking help.

Gender norms become entrenched during the teen years, says Leslie Adams, a behavioral researcher at Johns Hopkins University.





That's when boys are really absorbing messages around masculinity from friends, family and social media. "Endorsing feelings of sadness and hopelessness kind of goes against these learned, general scripts," Adams says.

Those male scripts are poorly understood, say Adams and others studying male mental health, because most gender research focuses on girls and women.

For instance, take research into social media use. Ethier points to the popularity of male social media personalities espousing harmful attitudes toward women, such as TikToker Andrew Tate, who was recently arrested in Romania on suspicion of human trafficking. Anecdotally, Tate and influencers like him are one way boys come to understand the world, but data on the influence of social media on boys are sparse, Ethier says.

"We focus a lot on the ways that social media might be impacting girls in terms of body image," she says. "I don't think we focus enough of the conversation on what is being portrayed to boys."

The resulting knowledge gap about boys' lives affects all of society. "It is difficult to see that we can effectively address the health of boys and young men, achieve gender equity for girls and young women, or achieve rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, without tackling the masculine identities adopted by boys in adolescence," a group of pediatric health experts wrote in a commentary in 2018 in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Depression's link to suicide

Just as Rutz observed on the island of Gotland, missing depression in boys and men can come with high stakes.

"Depression can manifest in many ways ... beyond sadness and hopelessness," Adams says. "When we don't assess the other ways that depression can manifest, there are implications. One is suicide."

Adams suspects that the same tendency to frame depression as an internal emotion also influences how researchers ask about suicide. For instance, asking about who has considered suicide or made a plan, as the CDC does in its youth survey, reflects the belief that the respondent is both ruminating and thinking ahead. "For boys, [suicide] may not have that linear path," Adams says. "We're missing ... impulsivity."

That could help explain why, in the CDC survey, teen girls reported higher levels of suicidal thinking, planning and attempts than boys, despite the fact that boys die by suicide at higher rates. Provisional federal data show that, in 2021, roughly 6 of every 100,000 girls ages 15 to 24 died by suicide. That's compared with roughly 24 of every 100,000 boys of the same age. From 2020 to 2021, the rate of suicide in that age group increased 5 percent in girls compared with 8 percent in boys.

Access to guns might factor in here. For every 10 percent increase in household gun ownership in a state, the youth suicide rate increases by about 27 percent, researchers reported in 2019 in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. And boys are seven times as likely to kill themselves with a gun than girls are, according to a 2022 report by Everytown for Gun Safety, a gun violence prevention organization.

Missed depression in boys could help explain a long-standing research question, Adams and others say: Why do more women get diagnosed with depression, the most common precursor to suicide, when more men die by suicide?

One path forward is to look beyond sadness and hopelessness as proxies for depression, Adams says. What about impulsivity, conflict

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with others or social withdrawal? Perhaps those symptoms serve as better proxies for depression — and suicidal thinking — in men, she says. Understanding other proxies could protect not just depressed individuals from harm but also broader society, another line of research suggests. Seena Fazel, a forensic psychiatrist at the University of Oxford, and colleagues began examining data from Swedish patient registries to investigate if depression links to violent behavior. Their participant pool included about 47,000 adults diagnosed with depression from 2001 to 2009 and nearly 900,000 people without such a diagnosis.

People with depression were three times as likely to commit a violent crime, such as assault, arson or a sexual offense, as individuals without depression, the team reported in 2015 in *Lancet Psychiatry*.

To attempt to rule out genetic or environmental differences, the team looked at siblings. A person with depression was twice as likely to commit a violent crime as their sibling without depression. Fazel and another team reported a similar link between depression and violence among teens and young adults in 2017 in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*.

The link between violence and depression has been found for both men and women. But since men commit most violent crimes, missing depression in men is a concern, Fazel says.

But he stresses the importance of keeping such findings in perspective. His earlier work, for instance, found that over a 13-year period in Sweden, there were 450 violent crimes committed per 10,000 people. Of those, 24 were committed by people with severe mental illness. “With guns and mental illness,” Fazel says, “you are much more likely to kill yourself than kill somebody else.”

Shifting views on depression

The idea that depression may look different in men and women — not to mention differences based on other demographic factors (*SN: 2/11/23, p. 18*) — is gaining traction.

For instance, a 2022 revision to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, or *DSM*, the American Psychiatric Association’s reference book, acknowledges the gender differences in depression. The revision’s authors note that, compared with depressed women, depressed men tend to report “greater frequencies and intensities of maladaptive self-coping and problem-solving strategies, including alcohol or other drug misuse, risk-taking and poor impulse control.” Even before the revision, the *DSM* included “irritable mood” as a feature of depression in youngsters. So teenagers’ age and gender both potentially influence how they express depression.

Even if the idea that depression looks different in boys and girls gains wider acceptance, changing the Youth Risk Behavior Survey will take time. If enough experts express concerns about how questions related to mental health are posed, then the earliest the CDC could amend the survey would be for the 2025 round of data collection, a CDC spokesperson told *Science News*.

But the experts I spoke with are hopeful that such changes will trickle into other mainstream research. Even adding a single word to questions, such as asking about irritability in addition to sadness and hopelessness, could identify a huge number of depressed boys who might otherwise appear fine, these researchers argue.

Tweaks of this nature, Rice says, “could be a game changer at identifying depression in boys [and] young men.”



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In this Issue, we highlight Graciela De Oto of our Board of Advisors and one of the Co-Chairs for our Business and Professional Women's Committee.

Our dear Graciela, an Argentinian native, has been bestowed with the illustrious Mother Teresa of Calcutta Award. We extend the heartiest congratulations to her!

Of the honour, De Oto expressed her joy and appreciation, "It is with great honour and humility that I express my profound gratitude."

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"This award represents not only a recognition of my achievements but also a testament to the power of dedicated leadership and unwavering commitment to positively impacting our society. I am deeply moved by this acknowledgment and vow to continue my journey inspired by the legacy of Mother Teresa."

We take this opportunity to wish Graciela continued success in her endeavours, recognition for her stellar work and representation and her genuine interest in humanity.

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