

Pearl Initiative Appoints New Executive Director

The appointment of Ranya Saadawi reaffirms the Pearl Initiative's steadfast commitment to promoting corporate governance practices across the Gulf region

24 February 2021 - United Arab Emirates: The Pearl Initiative, the leading Gulf business-led non-profit organisation promoting a corporate culture of accountability and transparency, announced the appointment of Ranya Saadawi as its new Executive Director. Ms. Saadawi will be spearheading the implementation of PI Vision 2025, the organisation's updated strategy, working with key stakeholders to ensure the Pearl Initiative's diverse programme offerings effectively address gaps in the corporate governance ecosystem across the Gulf region.

Ranya Saadawi has extensive experience in the field of social entrepreneurship, impact investment and international development, with a particular focus on the Middle East & North Africa. Ms. Saadawi was most recently the Head of Global Grants at Expo Live, Expo 2020 Dubai. In her last role, Ms. Saadawi established the Grant Management department, where she managed a team that oversaw the investment portfolio into 140 social enterprises from 75 countries. In addition, she has worked and consulted for social sector organisations, including Ashoka Arab World, The Gerhart Center at the American University of Cairo and Education For Employment (EFE). At EFE, she led the expansion of youth employability and entrepreneurship programs in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and across the MENA region.

Ranya Saadawi started her career on Wall Street, where she consulted for companies in consumer-packaged goods, life sciences and manufacturing industries. She holds a Master's of Public Administration (MPA) from the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE) and received her B.A. from Barnard College, Columbia University in Political Science and Middle Eastern Languages & Cultures.

Ranya Saadawi will work closely with the Pearl Initiative Board of Governors and the organisation's growing community of partner companies to advance the mission of enhancing corporate governance in the Gulf region. Ranya joins at a time when the mission of the Pearl Initiative to bolster economic resilience is more important than ever, as its key stakeholders including corporations, family firms, MSMEs, and philanthropic organizations embrace building an organisational culture based on sound environment, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks.

Commenting on the appointment, Badr Jafar, Founder of the Pearl Initiative said: "Over the past 10 years, the Pearl Initiative has been a leading player in helping to champion good corporate governance practices across the Gulf region. Reflecting on the organisation's journey to-date, we have updated our strategy, marking a renewed pledge to continue to advance the business case for strong corporate governance practices in the region. The appointment of Ranya is a testament not only to her diverse experience and abilities to advance our renewed pledge, but also to the Board's commitment to succession planning as a key pillar of corporate governance. On behalf of the Pearl Initiative's Board of Governors, I would like to thank our

departing executive director Yasmine Omari for her contribution during her tenure with the organisation.”

The Pearl Initiative’s proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic enabled it to adapt its programming, and the organisation successfully delivered 75 virtual webinars and workshops, reaching thousands of participants across the Gulf region, including the vibrant student community.

Ranya Saadawi added: “I am excited to lead the Pearl Initiative in executing this ambitious strategic vision. PI Vision 2025 builds on the Pearl Initiative’s work over the past decade and provides a blueprint and actionable plan on how to expand and adapt our offerings to ensure we are delivering relevant, timely and impactful programmes that meet the needs of our partners and stakeholders. In this way, we will continue to contribute to building a thriving economy in the Gulf region, that embraces governance, accountability and transparency as key pillars of sustainable growth.”

Ranya Saadawi will continue to leverage her expertise to advance the Pearl Initiative’s renewed vision and reinforce its positive impact on the private sector in the region, including addressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business community.

Current programmes run by the Pearl Initiative include Anti-Corruption Best Practices, Diversity in Business Leadership, Governance in MSMEs, Governance in Family Firms, The Business Pledge, and Governance in Philanthropy.

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About the Pearl Initiative

Business leaders from across the Gulf Region formed the Pearl Initiative in 2010 to create a non-profit organisation for the Private Sector to collectively embrace the business case in adopting higher standards in corporate governance, accountability and transparency to enhance business innovation, opportunity and value creation.

With over 40 regional and international partners, the Pearl Initiative brings together business, policy and social sector decision-makers to share best practice and help maximise sustainable and inclusive growth across the region. The Pearl Initiative also supports Gulf-based university students to identify and embrace strong ethics and integrity as they embark on their future careers.

For more information, please visit www.pearlinitiative.org or contact us at enquiries@pearlinitiative.org.

Follow us @PearlInitiative on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter and @ThePearlInitiative on LinkedIn.

Media Coverage

The press release was featured in numerous new outlets across the Gulf Region, Middle East & North Africa and Europe, including:

- Gulf News:



- MENA FN:



- Zawya:

