

## PRESS RELEASE

### Pearl Initiative Convenes Gulf Based Institutional Donors and Philanthropists to Discuss Impactful Giving in Emergencies

- Over 324 million people worldwide needed humanitarian assistance and protection by the end of 2022 due to conflict, natural disasters, and other crises ([UNOCHA](#)).
- The UN has estimated US\$51.5 billion will be needed for humanitarian response in 2023, a 25% increase from 2022 ([UNOCHA](#)).
- Currently, around [222 million people](#) are food insecure of which approximately 45 million of those are facing starvation.

#### Sharjah, July 2023:

The Pearl Initiative, a non-profit organisation focused on promoting a corporate culture of accountability and transparency in the Gulf region, recently convened members of the 'Circle', a peer-to-peer network jointly established and powered by the Pearl Initiative and Philanthropy Age which comprises regional institutional and individual donors looking to do more with their giving. Members convened for a virtual session titled 'Impactful Giving in Emergencies', which explored how donors can swiftly and effectively deploy funds and resources to alleviate the immediate needs of communities facing crises whilst remaining strategic and value aligned.

The virtual session was led by Laura Hughston, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at CARE International, who delivered an engaging talk and presentation on the topic, provided insights on the complexities of giving in emergency settings, and shared examples from her own experiences into how giving can be impactful with the long-term goal of developing resilience, rebuilding communities and allowing human dignity to thrive.

With more than 324 million people needing humanitarian assistance and an estimated US\$51.5 billion needed for crisis response in 2023, there is a great need for giving in emergencies to enable sustainable impact within communities. The session aimed to inspire attendees to take a more proactive and strategic approach to their giving that can then help alleviate immediate needs and build the foundation for future interventions. The session provided attendees with a platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities to rebuild that arise in times of crisis. It also delved into the complexities of giving in emergency settings and the importance of transparency and accountability as key components of giving done right.

Laura Hughston commented, "Although typically led by an emotional and reactive response, philanthropic giving in emergencies and times of crises can also be done strategically, allowing communities to rebuild better and more sustainably. We hope this session provided attendees with a new perspective on how to make their giving more impactful and practical ways to cultivate strength and build on the capacity that exists in the communities within which they work."

Key takeaways from the event included the importance of trust and accountability, the need to understand local needs and capitalise on local expertise and reinforce infrastructure and civil society, and the necessity to develop resilience to guard against future humanitarian crises.

Commenting on the success of the virtual session, Anissa Punjani, Programme Manager of the Governance in Philanthropy Programme at the Pearl Initiative, said, “We are extremely grateful to Laura for sharing her expertise with us, and are happy to have been able to provide Circle network members with valuable insights to this relevant and pertinent topic. A fundamental component of effective philanthropy is to ensure that reactive giving, similar to proactive giving, is exercised with more intention and strategy. The region has seen many crises in the last few years, and funders must be equipped to rapidly deploy resources that is a response to the crisis itself and also establishes a foundation for communities to thrive in the long-term.”

The Pearl Initiative and the Circle Network’s session on ‘Impactful Giving in Emergencies’ was a valuable opportunity for regional philanthropic actors to come together and discuss best practices in supporting emergency relief efforts. Through the event, the Pearl Initiative aims to inspire more donors to take a strategic and evidence-based approach to philanthropy for a greater and more sustainable impact.

**-ENDS-**

#### **Note to Editors**

#### **About the Pearl Initiative**

The Pearl Initiative is the Gulf region’s leading independent, non-profit organisation working to promote the business case for a corporate culture of accountability and transparency. The organisation was established in 2010 by regional business leaders in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Partnerships. The Pearl Initiative is the only private, non-profit Gulf business network to receive special consultative status from the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The Pearl Initiative runs a series of corporate governance-related programmes, including Anti-Corruption Best Practices, Diversity in Business Leadership, Governance in MSMEs, Governance in Family Firms, Governance in Tech, and Governance in Philanthropy. The organisation also conducts locally relevant research, hosts workshops and executive education training sessions, and convenes business leaders, policymakers, students, and non-profit executives to encourage a proactive approach to implementing best practices in the workplace across the Gulf region. With a growing network of over 40 regional and international partners, the Pearl Initiative continues to strive to be the leading business-led action-oriented platform to advance corporate governance as a key driver of competitiveness, job creation, and sustainable economic growth across the Gulf region.

For more information, please visit [www.pearlinitiative.org](http://www.pearlinitiative.org) and check out our Social Media Channels:

@PearlInitiative on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter and @ThePearlInitiative on LinkedIn and Instagram.

#### **About the ‘Circle’**

The Circle is a peer-to-peer network for institutional and individual donors connected to the Middle East looking to do more with their giving. The Circle network was established by and is jointly powered by the Pearl Initiative and Philanthropy Age. [www.circlemena.org](http://www.circlemena.org) provides specialist resources and content to support this network, inform and inspire better giving, and help deepen relationships and catalyse connections among members of the network.

Users can register interest in joining the Circle network and community through the site and subscribe to the Circle newsletter. Membership to the Circle is free of cost, and benefits include access to exclusive workshops, roundtables, and networking opportunities, for members to share ideas, ask questions, and find new pathways to action. The network is a vibrant community where funders can learn, connect with peers, and explore synergies for collaboration.

This year, the Circle convened workshops on strategic philanthropy, impact investment, and measurement. Expert facilitators hosted these exclusive events from 21/64, the Mulago Foundation, and the Center for Effective Philanthropy, among others. The events featured a range of international keynote speakers, including Hadi Partovi, Founder of Code.org; Sara Ojeh, Ethos Philanthropy Founder and Director; and Shainoor Khoja, impact investment thought leader.

Visit [www.circlemena.org](http://www.circlemena.org), [here](#).

If you are interested in becoming a member, register [here](#).