

'Dubai Cares' seeks to dispel darkness of ignorance

Arab News - 20 September, 2007

Dubai Cares, a charity campaign aimed at raising funds for primary education for needy children in poor countries around the world, was launched in Dubai yesterday.

Dubai Cares was formed to help over one million children and assist countries in achieving their UN Millennium Development Goals for providing children's primary education to every child by 2015.

While launching the campaign at Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai, said: "Dubai Cares seeks to shine the light of knowledge and dispel the darkness of ignorance by giving the children in poor countries hope for the future and opportunities to break the cycle of poverty that threatens to entrap them and consign their families to a life with no real future. Only through education can they assume their rightful position as positive contributors in the prosperity of their communities and countries."

The campaign recognizes education as the best long-term solution to alleviate poverty in the developing world, reinforcing the call of experts that educating children, especially girls, is the key to ending the global "cycle of poverty".

"Education is the most effective way to turn good intentions into concrete actions that change the lives of people immeasurably and for the better," said Al-Maktoum. "The satisfaction of helping the needy or curbing injustice can be immense. Now, imagine how much stronger that satisfaction is if that act helps to free generation after generation from grinding poverty."

Global statistics significantly add to the urgency of this campaign: 120 million school-age children are not enrolled in primary education; one in every three children in developing countries does not complete five years of primary education, the minimum required for achieving basic literacy. Of the children who do not attend school, 58 percent — more than half — are girls. This gender gap in education is a major obstacle to alleviating poverty.

"Eight years ago, the international community set the millennium development goals countries pledged to fulfill, one of which is to guarantee every child receives a basic education by the end of 2015. It is unlikely this goal will be met on time unless we take urgent action to see them through," he said.

Events and promotions will be organized over a six-week period and will tap into the spirit of giving and the tradition of philanthropy deeply rooted in the Emirati community — elements that will be key to achieve the campaign's objectives.

Among the campaign's goals is social cohesion, which is in line with Sheikh Mohammed's commitment to enhance a collective sense of belonging among all communities in Dubai.

Dubai Cares will bring different communities in Dubai's multicultural population together by binding them for a common cause to contribute to a greater purpose.

"I expect both Emiratis and expatriates to compete in charity and to participate in any way

you find suitable. I expect the private sector to make a substantial contribution, including the international corporations and their offices in the UAE. In our country, we added to our Arab and Islamic tradition a diversity of values represented by the diverse mixture we have here of companies, cultures and nationalities from all over the world,” said Sheikh Mohammed.

“Joined by my sons and daughters, I will participate actively to ensure the success of this campaign and invite everyone to participate personally and motivate your family members to contribute as well, so we can all fulfill our duty in what pleases our Creator and our own conscience,” Sheikh Mohammed said.

Dubai Cares joins a list of international initiatives launched in Dubai that express Dubai’s will to play an effective role contributing to achieving the world’s mission to secure a better tomorrow for future generations — a huge responsibility given Dubai has chosen to assume yet another initiative with the welfare of the person as its focal point.