**For Immediate release**

# **Strong Focus on Saudi Women in Business for Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy with 2019 Workshops Ready to Kick Off in Riyadh and Jeddah Universities**

* Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy (HFEA) returns for the third consecutive year with workshops set at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, [Riyadh, March 26-28](https://hfea.hfeacommunity.com/opportunities/saudiarabia/princess-noura-university-riyadh-saudi-arabia-march-26-28-2019-apply-now#.XGKllVUzb3h), and Effat University, [Jeddah, April 1-3](https://hfea.hfeacommunity.com/opportunities/saudiarabia/effat-university-jeddah-saudi-arabia-april-1-3-2019#.XGKuEFUzb3g)
* Workshops will support elements of Saudi’s Vision 2030, while also allowing participants work on their own business ideas
* More than 30 per cent of additional Ford funds invested in Middle East and Africa Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy workshops last year; HFEA expansion to Europe and the US highlight importance of the programme

**RIYADH, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, March 5, 2019** – Marking its third consecutive year in Saudi Arabia, the Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy makes a welcome return to the Kingdom this month, with Riyadh’s Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University hosting the first workshop of the year, followed in quick succession by Effat University in Jeddah a week later.

As a result of expanding its partnerships in the Kingdom to include [Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University](http://www.pnu.edu.sa/en/Pages/default.aspx) last year, HFEA saw an approximate 30 per cent increase over 2017 in the number of female students trained, with 32 per cent more of Ford funds spent to make the additional workshops possible.

During *The Entrepreneurship Journey* programme, Ford brought together the excellence of far-reaching, continent-crossing educational institutions, as the United States’ [Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)](https://www.vcu.edu/) and Ireland’s [Dublin City University (DCU) Business School](https://business.dcu.ie/) both played a major part in shaping the first Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy workshop held in Riyadh last year.

Jeddah’s [Effat University](https://www.effatuniversity.edu.sa/) has enjoyed continued HFEA success since 2017, having launched the first-ever women-only *The Entrepreneurship Journey* workshop in Saudi Arabia. Then, 50 women – 60 per cent of whom were business industry students at Effat University, with the other 40 per cent comprised of aspiring businesswomen from Jeddah – gained a unique perspective into how to combine the theory of entrepreneurship with the application of entrepreneurship.

These [Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy](http://www.hfeacommunity.com/) workshops over the past two years have been offered to complement Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030, a government plan for economic and social reform that empowers women with the aim of increasing their numbers in the workforce. Among directives recently announced by the Kingdom include a historical decision to allow [Saudi women to open their own business](https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/women-in-saudi-arabia-no-longer-need-male-permission-to-open-businesses-1.705647)\* without the consent of a male guardian.

“On the back of its most successful year in the region to date, training close to 300 entrepreneurs across six cities in three different countries, the Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy is continuing to have a positive influence among some of the Kingdom’s brightest business minds,” said Simonetta Verdi, Director, Government and Community Relations, Ford Middle East and Africa.

“The workshops provide a high quality and interactive environment for aspiring businesspeople to experiment with their ideas in direct exchange with mentors and coaches, who offer invaluable experience,” Verdi added.
“Our workshop is designed to equip current and future entrepreneurs with a set of tools to develop their skills and acumen around entrepreneurship,” said [Jay Markiewicz](http://business.vcu.edu/faculty-and-research/persondetail.php?urn=jtmarkiewicz), executive director of Entrepreneurship Programmes at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Business, and lead architect of HFEA.

“The workshop is built around an innovative learning Meta framework titled 'The Entrepreneurship Journey', from which participants emerge with increased personal capacity to be successful as entrepreneurs, as they learn how to connect with and deliver their unique value contribution,” he explained.  **Note to editors:**
The Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy workshops, together with the Ford Motor Company Fund and Virginia Commonwealth University, afford local future business leaders to excel in their endeavours, and influence them to think and act like entrepreneurs.
The Ford Motor Company Fund invests about one third of the funds in support of education, including scholarships and programmes that help schools offer students new approaches to learning. Since its launch in 2015, the Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy has trained close to 350 entrepreneurs across the Middle East and North Africa.

The Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy is part of Ford’s global commitment to providing access and opportunities for women. From its *Driving Skills for Life for Her* programme, to projects focussed on helping end human trafficking, as well as numerous initiatives that provide professional development and leadership training, globally Ford Fund has long supported programmes that help women succeed by overcoming social, educational and financial obstacles.
[*\*As reported in The National*](https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/women-in-saudi-arabia-no-longer-need-male-permission-to-open-businesses-1.705647)

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*Ford’s history in the Middle East goes back more than 60 years. The company’s local importer-dealers operate more than 155 facilities in the region and directly employ more than 7,000 people, the majority of whom are Arab Nationals. For more information on Ford Middle East, please visit* [*www.me.ford.com*](http://www.me.ford.com)*.

Ford Middle East is also a responsible corporate citizen with currently three CSR initiatives running in the region including the Ford Motor Company Conservation & Environmental Grants, Ford Warriors in Pink® breast cancer awareness campaign and Ford Driving Skills for Life safe driving awareness programme for young drivers and teens.*

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