



J-WEL

Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Laboratory



Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab at MIT to assist in transforming education in Saudi Arabia and the world

- *J-WEL to spark a renaissance in education in schools, higher education, and workplace learning*
- *New Lab supports Saudi Vision 2030 on Education*

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – May 3, 2017

Community Jameel and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have today announced the creation of a new global education laboratory that supports education and learning, including in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.

The global collaborative effort will help educators, universities, governments, and companies revolutionize the effectiveness and reach of education and aims to help prepare people everywhere for a labor market radically altered by technological progress, globalization, and the pursuit of higher living standards around the world. A guiding focus of J-WEL will be learners in the Middle East, and populations underserved by education such as women and girls, and a growing displaced population that includes refugees.

J-WEL will foster new initiatives, and MIT will make its programs and resources available to schools, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), philanthropists, and businesses, and provide special access to trainings, workshops, and certification programs, as well as collaborative opportunities with MIT.

Co-founded by Community Jameel, which was established and is chaired by Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel, an MIT alumnus and MIT Corporation life member, J-WEL is part of MIT's broader global 'Campaign for a Better World'. Ongoing collaborations between Community Jameel and MIT include the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and the Abdul Latif Jameel World Water and Food Security Lab (J-WAFS), along with other projects.

Fady Mohammed Jameel, President of Community Jameel International, said: "The Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab (J-WEL) at MIT will spark a renaissance in education in schools, higher education, and workplace learning in Saudi Arabia and the world.

"Education and learning are fundamental to a strong society and economy. They promote employment and create increased opportunity for all – all central pillars of Saudi Vision 2030. While there has been progress made in improving education, there is always more that can be done. Enabling individuals to do their very best and reach their full potential, whatever their background, is a key priority for Community Jameel, and one on which we look forward to collaborating with the educational community in Saudi Arabia. That is exactly why we are establishing the Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab with MIT.



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“MIT is one of the most respected research universities in the world, and through J-WEL those involved in education will have special access to their programs and resources, such as training and workshops, as well as collaborative opportunities with MIT and other members. From our ongoing collaborations, including the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and the Abdul Latif Jameel World Water and Food Security Lab, we have already seen first-hand the benefits of working with MIT, and J-WEL will build on that record of success.”

According to the World Bank, the Middle East and North Africa region has made significant strides in education – between 1960 and 2014, the average level of schooling quadrupled - but challenges still remain, including improving the quality of education and ensuring new graduates are ready for the rapidly changing workplace.

The Middle East is a region of great interest for MIT. J-PAL held an event in Dubai last month where it confirmed it will be increasing J-PAL's work and presence in the region, while Community Jameel recently organized a visit for the President of MIT to Saudi Arabia.

"For years, Community Jameel's commitment to finding practical solutions to complex global problems has inspired all of us at MIT," said MIT President L. Rafael Reif. "With J-WEL, Community Jameel builds on that extraordinary legacy with an effort that will empower learners around the world and in the United States, opening educational pathways that are currently closed to millions. We are grateful to Community Jameel for their vision, their partnership, and their unwavering dedication to making a better world."

Operational by September 2017, J-WEL will be an entity within MIT's open education and learning initiatives, led by MIT's Vice President for Open Learning, Sanjay Sarma. M.S. Vijay Kumar, MIT's associate dean of digital learning, will serve as J-WEL's executive director and will work closely with faculty on J-WEL's engagement in three core areas – pre K-12, higher education, and workforce education.

"Through J-WEL, we will forge new and long-lasting collaborations as we learn, share, and train together, using the assets developed at MIT as well as by leveraging the community convened by J-WEL," said Sarma. "To borrow an idea expressed by philosophers and educators across the centuries: J-WEL will help to spark fires in students' minds, and enable educators to spark solutions to their communities' most demanding challenges."

For more information on J-WEL, visit: <https://jwel.mit.edu/>

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Notes to Editors

Community Jameel is a social enterprise organization that operates a wide range of initiatives to promote a positive society and economic sustainability. From individual, community and Arab life as a whole, in Saudi Arabia and beyond, Community Jameel promotes Arab arts and culture in the Middle East and around the world, works against unemployment, enables research for poverty alleviation and food and water security, and provides education and training opportunities. Community Jameel was formally established in 2003 to continue the Jameel family's tradition of supporting the community, a tradition started in the 1930s by the late Abdul Latif Jameel, founder of the Abdul Latif Jameel



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business, who throughout his life helped tens of thousands of disadvantaged people improve their lives across a variety of fields, including healthcare and education.

For more information visit www.cjameel.org

J-WEL will tap the power of two areas where MIT is seen as a pioneer: its work in digital learning and its efforts, rooted in neuroscience and cognitive psychology, to understand scientifically how humans learn best, and translate those findings into practical teaching improvements. Building on these strengths, J-WEL will work with global collaborators to alter how to provide education, making it less rote and more active; with fewer lectures and more discussion; and featuring a blend of online and in-person learning.