Press Release

ICDL calls for more computer training facilities to spread digital literacy among people with special needs in the UAE and other GCC countries

Well-equipped facilities will help differently-abled people become independent and be active contributors in the workplace

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ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority of the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) program in the Gulf region, has called

for increased number of computer training facilities that build the capability of people with special needs in the UAE and other GCC countries.

ICDL GCC Foundation is actively lobbying with concerned government organisations and businesses across the region in support of its 'IT Skills for All' initiative. ICDL also enforces an equal opportunity policy through its ICDL accredited centers to improve the learning environment standards for the benefit of people with special needs. This involves facilities free from physical barriers that might restrict access to the physically disabled. Dedicated accredited centers also exist for people with special needs offering Braille embossed material, screen-readers, hearing devices, specially-designed keyboards and/or special assistance. By adopting best practices and utilising the latest technologies available, learning can become less challenging for differently-abled individuals.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL GCC Foundation, said, "Physically challenged individuals are an integral part of our society, and given the opportunity they are fully capable of achieving excellence. That is why we are fully committed to providing equal opportunity to all. In line with this, we aim to establish new strategic alliances in order to expand the scope of our initiative to reach more people with special needs across the region. These steps aim to promote the concepts of labour integration and skills and capabilities development, which will enable people with special needs to tap some of the available opportunities in the open labour market," he added.

Through this initiative, ICDL GCC Foundation also aims to raise awareness on the importance of people with special needs and their ability to achieve excellence, creativity and innovation, which empowers them to support sustainable development in the Gulf region. The Foundation's efforts to implement this program coincides with the 'Irada Program', a promising development model that seeks to provide employment and job opportunities for people with special needs, and supports them to achieve a more independent lifestyle while enabling them to actively contribute to the process of development in the UAE. Under the supervision of H.H. General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, the Program complements

the UAE's efforts to promote excellence in the field of providing care and rehabilitation for people with special needs.

The success of ICDL GCC Foundation's efforts in the spread of IT literacy among people with special needs can be gauged by the fact that around 200 blind candidates from across the UAE are going through ICDL certification program at the ICDL training and testing centre at General Information Authority in Abu Dhabi. This ICDL training and testing centre was set up specifically for the visually impaired, and is the first of its kind in the UAE to implement the ICDL computer literacy syllabus for the visually impaired.

Endorsed by education ministries, universities and government organizations worldwide, ICDL is an inclusive digital literacy program that empowers individuals with the essential concepts of computer and practical use of common desktop applications. The program is based on a recognized global standard acknowledged through testing and proves that the certificate holder has fundamental skills in IT, using the computer & managing files, word processing, spreadsheet, database, presentation, and information & communication (Internet and e-mail). As IT literacy initiatives witness increased demand in the GCC, several organisations in the region have made ICDL certification a mandatory requirement for their employees.

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