



Press Release

ICDL GCC Foundation calls for increased creativity and integration of ICT in schools to reduce student dropouts
Up to 25 per cent of Emirati public school students abandon studies after finishing second year

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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 and Iraq, calls on intensive collaborative to address the silent social epidemic dealing with dropping out of school. This is an international dilemma but in the UAE between 21 to 25 per cent of Emirati students are dropping out of public schools after their second year.

Recent figures from the UAE Ministry of Education revealed that more than 10,000 secondary public school students have dropped out from schools, while statistics from Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) show that 22% among boys and 14% among girls aged 20 to 24 drop out from schools in Dubai.

ICDL GCC Foundation highlighted that the decision to drop out of school does not happen overnight; it comes after years of frustration arising from students lacking interest, motivation, resources and support. School quitters are likely to become a burden on society and the economy as dropouts may eventually become unemployed, forcing them to seek government assistance, live in poverty or end up in prison. The very same problem is also being faced by developed countries. In the United States for example, school dropouts account to an estimated 1.2 million students, highlighting a trend that forced the government to implement drastic measures to resolve this problem. Some of the initiatives carried out by certain states included the institution of a law that forces the completion of high school and/or by linking driving permits to the achieving the high school diploma. Other states instituting a law that early exit from education is only allowed under certain circumstances and with the consent of parents or the approval of the local authority. Other countries instituted a law that punishes dropping out of school in form of fines.

Jamil Ezzo, Director General of ICDL GCC Foundation, said: “New approaches in education relevant to the 21st century are badly needed. Schools must operate in accordance to internationally recognized standards and teachers must be trained on applying best practices in education. ICT has become a priority in our everyday life and pertinent skills are critical at all educational levels. Technology helps students become resourceful and self-learners at their own pace. The vast resources available on the Internet supports students’ learning process and help create for them a healthy

learning environment boosting their confidence, moral and commitment to achievement. We call on all policymakers to further invest in education reform whereby technology becomes the platform for teaching and learning. We further call on all schools, public and private, to increase the adoption of international standards in teaching and institute a high-school graduation requirement not only for English and math, but also for ICT.

Although there has been an initiative by governments to rise the compulsory education age, we believe that this can only be partially effective, as other important issues that lead to increasing dropouts include the lack of motivation and creative subjects that cater to the students' particular interests. In this regard, the introduction of ICT in schools will serve as an excellent complementary program that would help create a more conducive learning and teaching environment, as ICT opens endless possibilities for educators to develop teaching models that match the specific needs of their students. Moreover, the internationally acclaimed ICDL certification that is being introduced in various academic and training institutions will ensure that graduates are equipped with the right ICT skills that will make them contribute positively and easily adapt to a knowledge-based society," added Ezzo.

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