Press Release

ICDL GCC Foundation calls on more Corporate Social Responsibility participation

Governments and corporate citizens are equally responsible for GCC community socioeconomic development

Dubai, UAE (29 August 2012): The ICDL GCC Foundation, the governing body and certification authority advocating computer competency across the GCC and Iraq for all, today underlined its support for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Being the regional arm for ECDL Foundation, a non-for-profit organization dedicated to promulgating digital competency for all the world's citizens, ICDL GCC Foundation has been mandated to carry out the same ethos in the region through the development and support of good-cause initiatives.

Having been active in the GCC region in the field of promoting IT skills for the masses for over a decade, ICDL has gained a detailed insight into people's social development requirements. At the same time it has forged strong relationships with governments, educational authorities, international organizations and corporate citizens. This unique position enabled it to lead many efforts in the area of CSR.

Corporate citizens in the GCC are equally accountable to their local communities as governments; they are increasingly realizing that their business success is not contingent only on maximizing profits, but also on giving back to the community in some shape or form. Hence, many are dedicating part of their annual spending on CSR initiatives. In developing countries, an increasing number of companies are becoming active in CSR, funding a spectrum of initiatives like the construction of schools, libraries, learning centers, hospitals; as well as offering other means of in-kind support through the donation of products and services.

Over the years, ICDL has initiated and led many CSR projects, on its own or in partnership with local governments, where it had empowered tens of thousands of people with IT skills enabling them to gain employment, confidence and knowledge. A special feature of this has been the work it has done with specific social groups requiring the most assistance. For instance, it has introduced an initiative involving digital skills aimed at prison inmates thus increasing their options for a better post prison life; and educated divorcees and widows to be able to use computers thus increasing their confidence and self esteem. It has also catered for the youth by empowering them with IT skills to become resourceful learners and ultimately qualify to better job prospects.

Mr. Jamil Ezzo, Director General of the ICDL GCC Foundation stated "no corporate citizen can continue to ignore their duty toward their community if they are to exist for the long term. We are privileged to have led many CSR initiatives aimed at improving people's lives, academic careers and/or job prospects through IT empowerment initiatives. We would not have been able to do this successfully without the support of the GCC governments and the many good corporate citizens in the region. We are grateful to them and look forward to our continued CSR efforts for the greater good."

ICDL has long established a fund to subsidize multiple ICT competency projects involving thousands of underprivileged youths, higher education students and teachers in partnership with governments, state owned universities, and United Nations organizations. In conjunction with the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Organization, ICDL shares a commitment to introduce

pioneering projects that drive the economic and social development of GCC countries, focusing primarily on empowering the families of volunteers as part of a CSR program with mutual support from both organizations.

Abdullah Al Hazra, Secretary General of the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, commented on the partnership with ICDL GCC, "This will ultimately help improve the performance of our Organization and further drive our efforts to promote humanitarian activities in the Arab region."

Mr. Ezzo concluded, "It is important that the region not only works towards attaining world class status in economic terms but also in social well being for all of its citizens. We are determined to do what we can in this regards and we call on governments to incentivize private companies to engage in CSR and for those companies to join our efforts and support the social needs of the GCC community."

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The International Computer Driving License (ICDL) concept is a global computer literacy initiative developed to raise the level of knowledge about Information Technology (IT) and increase the level of competence in using personal computers and common computer applications for all the citizens of the world. The ICDL GCC Foundation is the sole body to implement and disseminate the program across the GCC States and Iraq with the support of leading educational institutions and accredited bodies. The ICDL GCC Foundation mission is to enable proficient use of Information and Communications Technology that empowers individuals, organizations and society, through the development, promotion and delivery of quality certification programmes throughout the world.

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