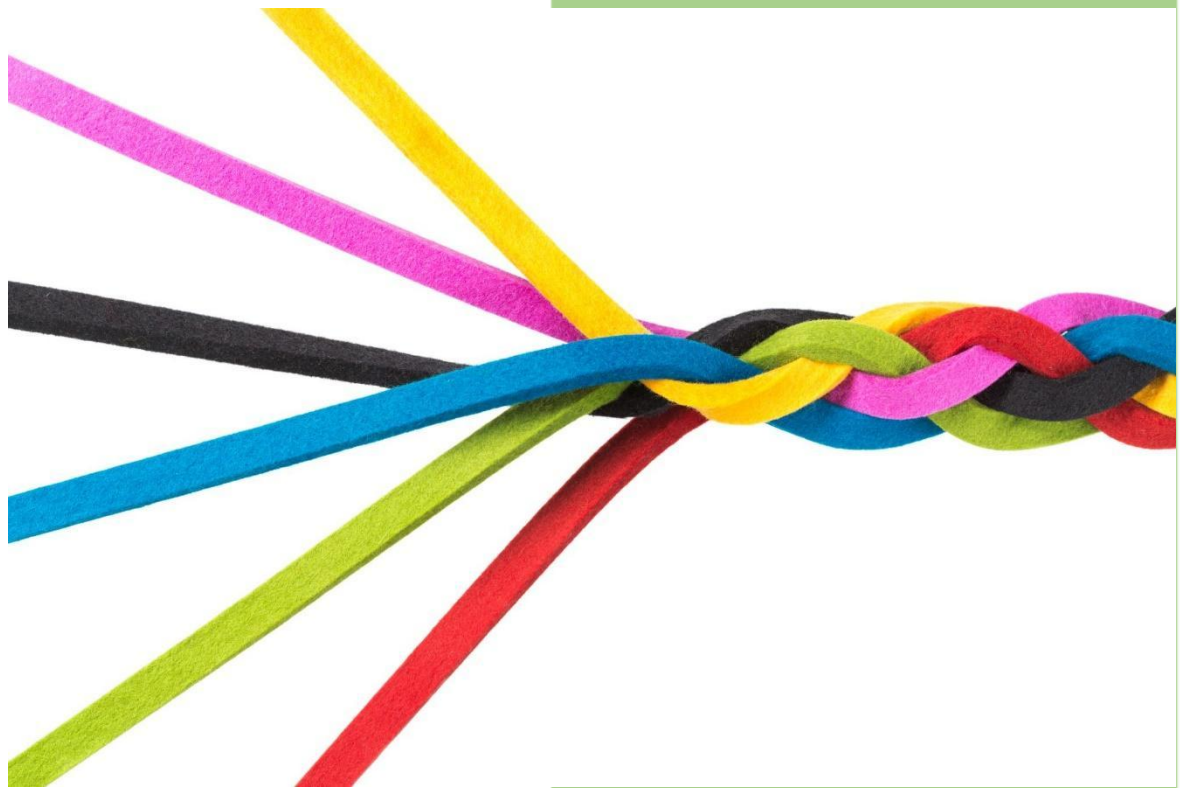


2021

Global Minds University



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Concept Note

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# Executive summary

The World and MENA region are plagued with millions of youth and refugees who are deprived from the opportunity to pursue higher professional education. This proposal aims to provide a novel model of learning based on competences and certified training through action learning and project-based learning to enable youth to be independent global citizens and access the global job market. It is estimated that there is about 79 million refugees worldwide where about 3% only have access to education. Moreover, Climate change, SDGs, and Covid-19 pandemic propelled humans to re-think strategies for delivering services and creating value. Besides, the unemployment among youth and refugees requires new thinking in terms of qualifying the fresh graduates to enter the marketplace or start their own business. This proposal intends to contribute to enhance human capital including refugees and contribute to knowledge creation through harnessing ICT technology and knowledge to promote sustainable innovation, human security, and urban resilience.

During 2020, the deep disruptions due to Corona virus, accelerated the adoption and diffusion of a variety of on-line learning platforms to sustain education. New technologies emerge to support education and learning and the integration of technology in our daily life is a New Normal. The Global Minds University (GMU) offers a new paradigm of education that is characterized by the following:

- Meeting the needs for refugees to acquire competencies and professional training.
- Partnership with civil society, International Organizations, and corporate sector to ensure financial sustainability and employability.
- On-line, project-based, and certified professional education focusing on green technology, sustainability, and clean energy.
- Innovative business model underpinned by crowd sourcing and trust fund (Waqf) of knowledge.

Realizing the moral responsibility of educators to transform societies, this proposal was developed to contribute to provide a free and an open source of learning and capacity development in key areas like innovation, sustainability, and renewable energy. In brief, this proposal offers a new model of an open university and global learning for youth and displaced communities through harnessing knowledge crowd sourcing, educational innovations, and social innovation. The founding committee of the GMU believes that knowledge underpins lasting peace and it is the best tool for attaining human dignity and emancipation.

# 1. Introduction

Education is viewed as a human right and an enabler for sustainable development. Technological innovation during Covid-19 opened new windows of opportunity to transform the conventional business model of education. However, there is limited capacity for many nations to provide quality education for the poor, unemployed youth, and marginalized communities like refugees. The key challenges for lifelong education in the MENA region include the limited capacity to cope with social change, the inability of education to meet the needs of the job market and to balance local culture with globalism.

In an era of digital and knowledge economy, it is imperative to develop and co-create a new model of global education that will enable youth and refugees to acquire competences and learn basic skills to ensure a decent living. Educational institutions in MENA region face various challenges due to insufficient investment in infrastructure and regional conflicts that resulted in millions of refugees. Lifelong education is the key to absorb youth in the global marketplace and refugees in host countries like Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and EU countries.

Consequently, the concept of the Global Minds University (GMU) was conceptualized to enable unemployed youth and displaced citizens to access the job market and sustain a decent life and ensure human dignity. Addressing these issues and challenges is key for human security, economic growth, and sustainability. The value proposition for the GMU is to co-create a new education model for youth and refugees that is sustainable, relevant, and affordable. Unlocking the human capital for youth and refugees in host countries including Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and many EU countries are likely to benefit from this initiative since it will provide new talents and human competencies to nurture SMEs, startups, and the ecosystem of innovation.

It is envisioned that digital and emerging educational technologies will support new online education models that are adequate for young generation and respond to market needs. The Global Minds University (GMU) aims to offer a new paradigm of education that is characterized by the following:

- o Meeting the needs for refugees to acquire competencies and professional training.
- o Partnership with civil society, international organizations, and corporate sector to ensure financial sustainability and employability.
- o Harnessing on-line, project-based, and certified professional education focusing on green technology, sustainability, eco-innovation, and clean energy.
- o Innovative business model underpinned by crowd sourcing and trust fund (Waqf) of knowledge as an intellectual asset.

- o Internship and apprenticeship program in collaboration with corporate sector like Google and Microsoft.

Realizing the moral responsibility of educators to transform societies, this proposal was developed to contribute to provide affordable and an open source of learning and capacity development in key areas like innovation, sustainability, green building, and renewable energy. Other learning modules and competencies including languages and ICT skills will be included based on demand.

Education for all should be viewed as a human right as reflected in the targets of the SDGs. This model of global education will be augmented by a co-creation model and Waqf model where senior educators will offer their learning modules, “intellectual assets”, as an endowment for the future. The corporate sector will be a strategic partner to provide practical training and apprenticeship as part of CSR. Hosting nations for refugees can contribute to this initiative since it is in line with human and economic development. Digital platform for interactive and project-based learning will be co-created to ensure quality professional development with a certification scheme from industry and mentorship and job placement. The model of the GMU is unique in its synergy and partnerships with academia, private sector, and community to develop demand-driven professional development modules. In the long term, the financial model will be based on minimal fees, subscriptions, advertisement, and consulting services. The certification and apprenticeship scheme will ensure quality assurance measures based on international standards.

## 2. Approach and Objectives

During the last few decades, education had experienced major shifts in business model due to technology, globalization, and open-source learning. Open sources for learning are enabling learners to have access to immense amount of knowledge but education cost limit the ability for youth and refugees to harness this global knowledge. Covid-19 pandemic enabled educators to realize new models of education that will add value and transform the education. The 19<sup>th</sup> model of the university was based on silo model in which each department or discipline works in isolation from the others. The model of the GMU is underpinned by focusing on online and certified professional training that fosters competencies, critical thinking, and project-based learning.

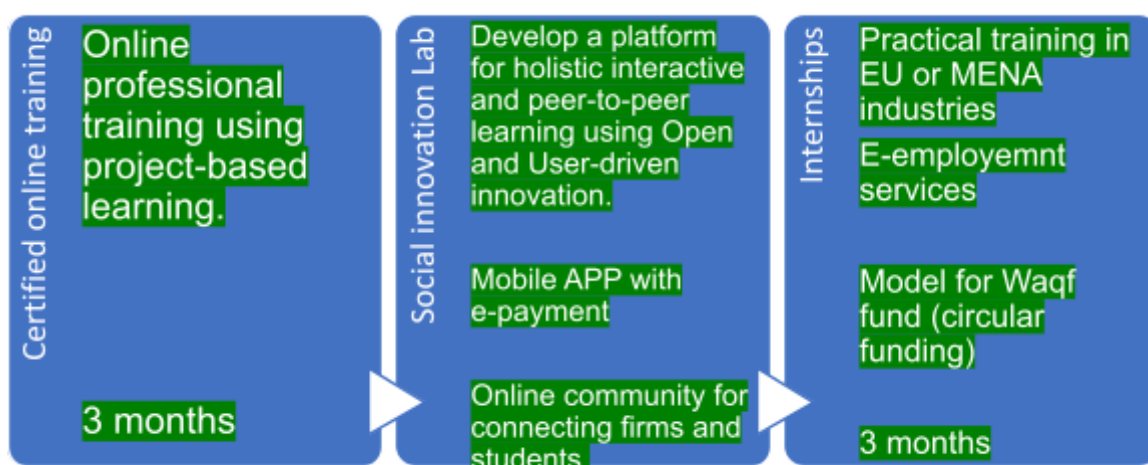
The MENA region is faced with many socio-economic challenges due to poverty, unemployment, and influx of refugees. The concept of the GMU emerged as a response to market demand and social responsibility to articulate a model of a global and responsible education that embodies the notion of education as a human right. This initiative is underpinned by a social and open innovation model to ensure sustainability and viability. Moreover, the GMU model is characterized by putting emphasis on new models of social financing, peer-to-peer learning, open-source knowledge management processes, and partnerships with industry and civil society. The rationale of this proposal is underpinned by a set of

key success including global strategy, global partnerships, appropriate digital technology, and open and user innovation.

The main objective of the GMU is to foster a model of affordable global education for both youth and refugees. The learning modules are designed by global education leaders in business to enhance social interaction, critical thinking, and action learning to promote sustainable innovation.

The significance of this initiative is to help many poor youths to be global citizens who celebrate diversity and co-existence and transform them to be part of global knowledge economy. The mission of the GMU is to provide an affordable and quality practical education based on competences. Specifically, the objectives of the GMU are outlined as follows:

- Ensure digital equity and substantiate the notion that education is a human right.
- Enable youth and refugees to access global learning space to gain competencies for life and work.
- Support MENA region and host countries in building the human capital for refugees to foster economic growth, sustainability, and entrepreneurship.
- Foster social entrepreneurship for youths by capacity building in basic business skills, green innovation and sustainable energy and green buildings. The approach is based on online focused vocational training, business skills in social innovation lab, and internships or apprenticeships that leads to employment as illustrated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1. Methodology for developing the Model Refugee Education at GMU**

### 3. Business Model

The business model for the GMU aspires to develop a global model for online professional development that is characterized by novelty, originality, and applicability and meet the following criteria as illustrated in Figure 2:

- Applying innovation in e-learning and professional development.

- Ensuring the adoption of a green business model and open innovation.
- Incorporating crowd financing and value-based funding like Waqf.
- Applying design thinking in curriculum development.
- Harnessing partnerships with civil society and private sector to build human capital.



**Figure 2. The core competencies of the Global Minds University model**

The approach proposed for the global university is founded on *offering a practical learning for youth and refugees* as a value proposition. The target group is the youths and women in host countries of refugees (Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and EU countries). Partnerships with global institutions is formed and the virtual university has a legal identity. This provides the GMU with access to certified and accredited specialized courses in key areas like sustainable innovation, renewable energy, and sustainability.

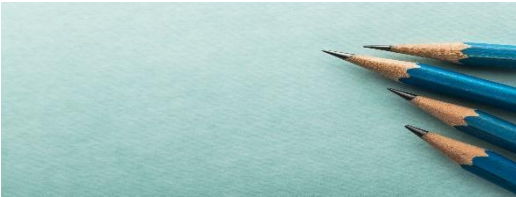




The Covid-19 inspired this initiative to frame an educational model that is underpinned by social responsibility, global leadership, human empathy, and social cohesion.

The vision of the GMU is to become one of the leading academic learning hubs for youth and refugees worldwide by providing transformative learning that catalyze the creation of qualified human capital of refugees. Besides, it aims to prepare youth and refugees to assume professional roles in host countries who are facing deep economic issues. The envisioned role of the GMU aspires to be a unique model of lifelong learning and training that instills a culture of innovation and excellence by adopting action and experiential learning and problem-based learning. This model of learning is intended to help host countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey to leapfrog and catch up with emerging technological innovations through establishing technology clusters and industrial parks.

The Board of Trustees consist of renowned professional in various disciplines supported by an international advisory board.

## 4. Learning modules and certified courses

The learning modules are outlined in Figure 3 but may evolve to new modules as demand arises.

	Learning domain
Green innovation	 <p>Focus on eco-innovation</p> <p>Fostering green business models and startups in circular and sharing economy</p>
Sustainability practices	 <p>Focus on sustainability science</p> <p>Building capacity in sustainable business, SDGs, and green SMEs</p>
Renewable energy	 <p>Build capacity in clean energy.</p> <p>Practice on vocational training, clean energy, maintenance, and quality control</p>
Green building	 <p>Focus on system re-engineering</p> <p>Practice on energy audit, process re-engineering to enhance system performance</p>
Management Science	 <p>Focus on management skills</p> <p>Developing capacity in business plan development and strategy</p>

ICT



Focus on computing

techniques.

Apply foresight using scenario planning

Figure 3. Content and courses planned for first phase of GMU