How does a company help change a nation?
Abu Dhabi’s Vision 2030 is to diversify the country away from oil and gas and into a knowledge-based economy. ADQ, as the country’s sovereign wealth fund founded in 2018, has a mandate to deliver that vision. Across its 23 affiliate businesses, ADQ’s population of middle managers are the target group who will have the greatest impact on realising this vision. Yet, when Alyazia AlMazrouei, Head of Portfolio People Strategy, reviewed the businesses, it became clear that these future leaders lacked development.

ADQ partnered with London Business School (LBS), building a strong mutually supportive relationship. Together, we designed and delivered the ‘Game Changers’ programme. Between 2021 and 2023, 100 participants from 15 ADQ businesses built their skills, capabilities and mindsets through innovation and coaching bootcamps, group coaching, five modules and three discovery visits. Learning application was measured and demonstrated by module and annual assessments, individual experiments, value creation projects and a CEO challenge.

The impact was beyond ADQ’s expectations with 98/100 participants ‘graduating’, a 95% NPS score and 95% saying it was either ‘extremely’ or ‘very impactful’. Average satisfaction across modules was 4.8/5.

Now ADQ has a robust pipeline of talent: 56 Game Changers were promoted, 10 given important projects to lead and three became entrepreneurs. Through a ‘teach-back’ impact initiative 1,500+ people across ADQ’s businesses have learned from the programme.

250+ separate experiments, projects and challenges were completed, positively impacting ADQ’s businesses and, vitally, the economy of Abu Dhabi. Examples include: SEHA putting Abu Dhabi on the global clinical trials map, a recruitment platform to find roles for employees faced with redundancy across ADQ, and SunCorp – a circular economy initiative presented at COP28.

Finally, the goal of building community was achieved. Game Changers ‘alumni’ meet regularly for lifelong learning and networking. In 2024 they are as passionate about being Game Changers and transforming Abu Dhabi’s economy and society as they were in 2021.

3 years, 15 companies, 100 participants... this is the story of a programme that has already impacted 1,500 people and started to transform Abu Dhabi’s economy and society...
“I used to see my world as my department. Now it’s a theatre of opportunity.”

- ADQ Game Changers Participant