How does a company help change a nation?
Executive Summary
“I used to see my world as my department. Now it’s a theatre of opportunity.”

- ADQ Game Changers Participant
Abu Dhabi’s Vision 2030 is to diversify the country away from oil and gas and into a knowledge-based economy. ADQ, an Abu Dhabi based investment and holding company, founded in 2018, has a mandate to deliver that vision. Across its 23 a portfolio companies 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 portfolio companies 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 programme was highly successful 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 portfolio companies 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.
How does a company help change a nation?
Introduction
Introduction

Abu Dhabi’s Economic Vision 2030 is to diversify away from reliance on oil revenues by driving excellence, increasing performance and productivity across the country in non-oil sectors. ADQ is supporting this agenda and accelerating the transformation into a knowledge-based economy. This will have a profound and lasting impact on Abu Dhabi society and its economic development, securing the country’s future.

ADQ partnered with LBS to develop a three-year programme to unlock the potential of its talent and develop a highly skilled and adaptive cadre of future leaders to lead transformation in the coming decades.

About ADQ

Established in 2018, ADQ is an Abu Dhabi-based investment and holding company with a broad portfolio of major enterprises. Its investments span key sectors of the UAE’s diversified economy including energy and utilities, food and agriculture, healthcare and life sciences, and transport and logistics, amongst others. As a strategic partner of the Government of Abu Dhabi, ADQ is committed to accelerating the transformation of the Emirate into a globally competitive and knowledge-based economy.

About LBS

LBS is a leading global business school with campuses in London and Dubai. For 60 years LBS has strived to make a profound impact on the way the world does business, and the way business impacts on the world. Through its Executive Education offerings, LBS provides transformative learning journeys for organisations and their people.

Participants from around the world come to reflect, refocus and reimagine their futures for maximum and sustainable impact. Led by a world-class faculty and an ecosystem of partners, LBS creates innovative experiences where executives can grow and develop.

LBS ranks #5 in the FT’s Executive Education ranking and #8 in the FT MBA ranking.
The Challenge
The Challenge

In 2007, the Government of Abu Dhabi published its set of policies and goals to build a safe and secure society with a sustainable economy. The Economic Vision 2030 focused on reducing the country’s reliance on the oil sector. This included:

1. Building an open, efficient, effective and globally integrated business environment.
2. Driving significant improvement in labour market efficiencies.
3. Developing a sufficient and resilient infrastructure capable of supporting anticipated economic growth.
4. Developing a highly skilled, highly productive workforce.

Identifying the needs of 23 diverse businesses

Alyazia ALMazrouei was appointed as part of ADQ’s Portfolio People Strategy. To ensure that, at a corporate level, ADQ could support Vision 2030, understanding each business's talent needs and people strategy was a priority.

During 2019, ALMazrouei held discussions with the CHROs to identify the current landscape and capability gaps.
The critical need to develop future leaders

Results showed there was a lack of formal succession planning. There were programmes for graduates and senior executives, but not for middle managers. Yet, they were critical for the succession pipeline, to drive ADQ’s growth and to deliver the Vision 2030 mandate.

Addressing the gap at middle management level became a clear priority. AlMazrouei would own the programme with input and sign-off from each business.

Together with the CHROs, AlMazrouei formulated a programme proposal. To ensure participant commitment, the programme would have five modules (25 F2F days) and last three years. It would be for Emirati employees. ADQ was emphatic about real application to business role. A particular challenge for the provider was to ensure that the diverse individual development needs of participants were addressed.

Participants would have four to six years’ work experience and be nominated from each business.

Modules would cover foundational soft skills, future technologies, technical skills (functional), a trip abroad for immersive learning, and leadership skills. Critical requirements were:

- Opportunities to enhance networking across the cohort
- Support mentoring
- A group project
- Annual monitoring reports
- Assignments and annual assessments to evidence the impact of innovation to businesses
- A trip abroad to one of three locations
### Participant Companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADQ</td>
<td>An Abu Dhabi-based investment and holding company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEHA</td>
<td>The largest health services network in the UAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADNEC Group</td>
<td>Owns and operates the largest exhibition venue in the Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPCC/NMDC</td>
<td>National Petroleum Construction Co./National Marine Dredging Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agthia</td>
<td>An integrated business producing high-quality food and beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD Ports Group</td>
<td>A world-class provider of trade and logistics services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWEC</td>
<td>A supplier of power and water based in Abu Dhabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi Media</td>
<td>The official media organization of the Government of Abu Dhabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENEC</td>
<td>Specializes in the deployment, ownership and operation of nuclear power plants in Abu Dhabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAMAN</td>
<td>The largest health insurance provider in Abu Dhabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi Airports</td>
<td>Operates five commercial airports in the Emirate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etihad Aviation Group</td>
<td>The national flag carrier airline of the UAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emirates Steel Arkan</td>
<td>An ADX-listed construction and materials company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducab</td>
<td>One of the top cable suppliers in the UAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAQA</td>
<td>An international energy and water company listed on ADX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The programme would be for 50 participants and launched to coincide with the UAE’s 50th anniversary in 2021.

After input from ADQ’s Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, participation widened. The programme would now be open to all nationalities through ‘self-nomination’. The CEO did not want to miss any ‘hidden gems’. He wanted inclusion, arguing that the country had been built by diverse nationalities. The cohort size increased to 100.

A programme to address talent, strategic and societal imperatives

Participants who completed the programme would become part of a top talent pool for future roles and projects. The talent pool would be embedded in HR and wider business processes as a succession pipeline available both for promotion to key roles and for project leadership opportunities.

Programme outcomes were significant: the talent pipeline would enable ADQ’s goal of high-performing businesses by having a pool of future entrepreneurial leaders. This would deliver Vision 2030’s thriving private sector goal.
Searching for a ‘thought partner’

Given the expansive nature and critical impact requirements, AlMazrooei knew she would need the guidance and support of an expert organisation who understood the challenge of supporting participants from 23 businesses. Primarily, she wanted the organisation to act as a ‘thought partner’.
The Commitment

Looking for a trusted long-term partner responsive to ADQ’s needs, AlMazrouei approached consultancies and business schools. Engaging in multiple conversations with each prospective provider, she discounted those who offered only off-the-shelf solutions.

Co-creation and strong partnership from the beginning

LBS takes a highly collaborative co-creation approach to programme design, based on building a deep understanding of the client’s business, strategy and vision for the programme. We place great importance in designing programmes that consider cultural nuances and have significant experience in designing and delivering programmes in the Middle East and for large cohorts.

The co-creation process with ADQ started at the very beginning of the tender process. Over the five months of scoping discussions, the LBS team developed a thorough understanding of the businesses’ diverse needs, identifying both the common and different themes.

LBS’s approach to partnering:

- Collaboration and shared desire for results
- Continuous review and alignment
- Robust and customised programme team
- Long-term thought partner

When ADQ selected LBS, both sides had already forged a deep relationship built on trust and strategic understanding.

“The quality of the team, the understanding, the highly collaborative approach of London Business School – they were so invested in us, were willing to really listen, support us and take ownership of the programme by offering new elements to increase the impact for both ADQ and Abu Dhabi. LBS understood our unique challenge and the complexity we faced across 23 different businesses and created something completely customised for our needs and critically for the context of the region.”

– AlMazrouei

We demonstrated that not only did we understand what ADQ was trying to achieve but we would also challenge their thinking. We advised how to make the programme design even more impactful with additional components that:

1. Guaranteed commitment of all stakeholders, including line managers, mentors, and CHROs.
2. Enabled participants to build the capabilities and skills necessary to deliver Abu Dhabi’s Vision 2030.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Additional element</th>
<th>Expected outcome / impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CHRO and line manager briefing</td>
<td>Programme understanding/create learning transfer climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentoring workshop</td>
<td>Establish effective mentoring relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching bootcamp</td>
<td>Self-awareness, build trust and empathy, courageous conversations and feedback, active listening, develop growth mindset and curiosity in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Core study group (throughout the journey)</td>
<td>To support and challenge peers and increase accountability and ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation bootcamp</td>
<td>Supercharge innovation, entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship leading to practical individual experiments and value creation projects</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual experimentation</td>
<td>Enable application and an experimentation mindset</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach-back (throughout the journey)</td>
<td>Participants teach at least five colleagues to cascade the learning across ADQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CEO challenge</td>
<td>Participants address a business challenge and engage with their CEO – build connection and showcase capabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Agile design sprints in the face of changing circumstances**

The programme would run from 2021 to 2023 face-to-face. ADQ and LBS agreed that for such a complex programme we should be agile in the face of changing circumstances and not detail everything upfront. The first design sprint lasted two months. It focused on finalising the overview and Year 1 ready for delivery. Years 2 and 3 were designed before their launch.

Covid-19 restrictions continued to prove challenging. Year 1 had to be flipped to online delivery. This created a greater challenge as the year included the largest number of modules and interactions. Further, it was vital to build strong bonds between participants and with the long Game Changers programme in order to spark and keep up enthusiasm.
Becoming ‘One’ team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership principles</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design/delivery</td>
<td>Weekly meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress/impact reviews</td>
<td>Post-module and annual reviews to recalibrate the upcoming learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a supportive learning environment</td>
<td>Stakeholders (CHROs, line managers, mentors, business CEOs) included in parts of the programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant support</td>
<td>Regular communications and creating a safe environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Design/delivery:** weekly meetings built a strong foundation of trust that continued to deepen and strengthen the relationship between us. Faculty joined calls to discuss and adjust their session to ensure best fit to participants from the different businesses. When AlMazrouei went on maternity leave, LBS quickly onboarded and supported her stand-in.

**Reviews:** measuring impact was a serious undertaking. After each module or activity, impact measures were collected and reviewed. A detailed annual review was undertaken. Future learning interventions were recalibrated based on feedback.

**Learning environment:** LBS worked closely with ADQ to identify suitable mentors, who were not necessarily from the same company – we argued that often it’s better to have a distant, more objective perspective. A mentor/mentee workshop discussed expectations about the relationship, how mentoring should be approached, and set up the relationship for success.

**Supporting participants:** both ADQ and LBS were committed to hands-on support across the cohort. If a participant struggled due to lack of line manager support, LBS would speak to the line manager and alert the ADQ team. When a participant left the ADQ portfolio, we discussed it and ADQ decided that they could remain on the programme as it was considered they were fulfilling the mandate of benefitting the UAE economy.

**According to AlMazrouei:**

“The LBS team became part of ADQ.”
The L&D Initiative
The L&D Initiative

We launched Game Changers in 2021.

Given the size of the employee base across the 23 businesses, it was a significant undertaking to identify top talent suited to deliver the programme goals. LBS suggested that The Talent Enterprise should manage the application process.

A microsite promoted the programme to ADQ’s middle manager population, which created great excitement. More than 1,000 employees applied for the 100 places. To apply, candidates faced four steps:

1. Complete a self-nomination application form.
2. Undergo a video interview, cognitive ability tests (numerical, verbal, reasoning) and strengths/personality assessment (1 hour).
3. Short-listed candidates were invited to a case discussion and structured interview with The Talent Enterprise (1.5 hours).
4. ADQ and LBS vetted and selected the candidates.

The selected 100 participants represented 15 of ADQ’s businesses. They held a variety of roles including radio producers, cardiologists, paediatricians, sales executives, marketers, engineers across different disciplines, controllers, event organisers, and health and safety executives. This diversity powerfully enriched the cohort’s peer learning. It also challenged LBS’s Programme Director to tell an impactful story about the relevance of each learning element to every individual.
“There was a sense of coherence, appetite and commitment to learn, also commitment to each other, even when they came from very different entities. It was a programme with a purpose and participant selection was very important.”

Professor Dominic Houlder described his experiences with participants.
ADQ and LBS — How does a company help change a nation?

Participant Companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADQ</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPCC/NMDC</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENEC</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEHA</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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<td>AD Ports Group</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAQA</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Etihad Aviation Group</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducab</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emirates Steel</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>EWEC</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agthia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi Airports</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAMAN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADNEC Group</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

- Male: 68
- Female: 32

Expats/Nationals

- Expats: 43
- UAE Nationals: 57
ADQ and LBS — How does a company help change a nation?

- **External and Organisational Sense Maker**: Leverages, rather than reacts to, an increasingly complex landscape.

- **Meaning Maker**: Humanising stakeholders and colleagues.

- **Agility Enabler**: Unlocks capability and capacity, organisational intelligence and response.

- **Personal Agility, Collaboration and Innovation**
**Personalised Experiments**
Short, controlled, to test and embed new skills.

**Orientation**
Events to engage momentum and purpose.

**CEO Challenge**
Evidencing change in your organisation.

**Executive-coaching**
Group coaching to support intramodular activity.

**Peer-coaching**
Peer-support in their action-learning sets.

**Group Projects**
Authentic responses to real business challenges.

**Assessments**
Gauge progress and map next steps for the individual participant.

**Sharing Practice**
Sharing stories of progress with the cohort and wider stakeholders.

**Self-directed Learning**
Flexible learning resources available on-demand for participants.

**Personalised Learning**
Digital elective challenges to deep-dive on what is relevant to your organisational context.
Mixing learning methodologies to maximise impact

To deliver Vision 2030 requires the Game Changers to engage, excite and empower those around them to achieve extraordinary levels of performance, through building new knowledge, mindsets, behaviours and skills. Individual impact was based on three roles every participant was expected to develop during the programme: Sensemaker, meaning maker and agility enabler. Throughout the programme, different learning methodologies and touchpoints were used. These included coaching, case studies, bootcamps, personalised learning, group work, projects and assessments of knowledge transfer. We tested participants’ resilience and ability to think beyond themselves to meet the series of challenges set out in the programme.

Increasing expectations

Every year, our expectations of the Game Changers’ development grew. Projects increased in difficulty from individual experiments to cross-business value creation projects. The hardest challenge occurred in Year 3 where participants made contact with their CEO to discuss their recommendations for solving a challenge facing their business. Most participants had never met their CEO before.

Cross-fertilisation of new knowledge and insights

Game Changers would be working individually, in their core group and interchangeable groups throughout the programme. We regularly asked them to submit outputs from activities and projects to a shared online space, then review each other’s contributions and share perspectives on common (and specific) challenges, creating new insights and outcomes.

Leader as teacher: amplifying outcomes and impact

Participants were expected to ‘teach-back’ key actionable insights to at least five team members and/or colleagues to amplify impact.

Managing numbers to build community

For LBS, the most significant challenge was creating an intimate experience for 100 people both online and face-to-face and enabling them to meet each other. There were three groupings in total throughout the three years: full cohort, 50/33 people, and groups of five.

Full cohort sessions included the launch, gala dinner and celebration summit. Half cohort sessions were plenary modules and bootcamps. Every module/bootsamp the cohort was mixed up to maximise networking opportunities. 33 participants undertook one discovery visit each. Finally, participants were put into core study groups of five, fixed throughout the programme. Group members held each other accountable for delivering assessments and motivated each other despite work and family commitments.
ADQ and LBS — How does a company help change a nation?

The L&D Initiative — 26

1. Orientate and Launch
   - Mentoring Workshop
   - Module 1 and Assessment
   - Orientation/Check-in Webinar

2. Module 2 and Assessment
   - Coaching Groups
   - Innovation Bootcamp
   - Experiments Showcase
   - Module 3 – Technical Functional

3. Module 4 – General Management Value Creation Projects Introduction
   - Project Webinar
   - Module 4 – Global Experience
   - Project Follow-up Calls

End Year 1 Assessment: Business Experiment
End Year 2 Assessment: Value Creation Project

Reorientation/Check-in
Module 5 – Leading Change and Sustainability
CEO Challenge Workshop
Year 3 Assessment: CEO Challenge
Graduation
Then began the learning. **Module 1 focused on ‘soft skills’** for 21st-century leadership. In highly interactive online sessions, participants explored self-awareness, emotional intelligence, the importance of collaboration, teamwork, communication and building networks.

Professor Thomas Mussweiler explained:

> “It was a smart move to have soft skills at the beginning of the programme – people skills you need not only to lead but also to connect with other participants. Online it’s easier to elicit participation from a large group using chat and breakouts.”

In parallel, mentors and participants completed a mentoring workshop. Mentees were charged with driving the relationship but both sides were supported to build a successful relationship.

To align with the nation’s 50th anniversary, **Module 2 focused on future technologies and digital disruption**. During Covid-19, participants experienced disruption first-hand while exploring the business imperative of technologies to develop a knowledge economy. The Innovation Bootcamp included a mixture of LBS faculty and world-class leaders describing how innovation in their organisation accelerated transformation.

The bootcamp set the scene for both individual innovation experiments and group value-creating challenges. The focus was to drive an experimentation mindset which links strongly to a growth mindset and individual impact throughout one’s career. It also taught participants the value of agility in the face of changing circumstances. Experiments were supported with follow-up calls with the Programme Director. Experiment outcomes were showcased at a gala dinner in Year 2.

Finally, coaches created a psychologically safe environment to facilitate deep reflection during group coaching. For many Game Changers, it was their first experience of executive coaching. Subsequently, the coaching bootcamp laid the foundations of peer support during the programme as participants learned how to coach others.

> “This has been life-changing – it changes my self-awareness, my approach to all conversations and relationships and has made me more confident, a better listener and will help me lead more effectively in my management role and as a gamechanger.”

> “There are very few times in my life that I’ve felt safe enough to talk about things that are troubling me.”

> “I’ve applied these skills to a difficult situation at work and it’s worked – we have jointly found a solution.”

> “We were in a safe environment during our sessions with the coach. This made us feel comfortable enough to be ourselves and open up. The atmosphere that the coach provided during our sessions was greatly beneficial and enabled us to transform further, especially for an introvert like myself. They have been extremely beneficial for me.”

**Year 1: Laying foundations then supercharging development**

Year 1 went online due to Covid-19 restrictions. The virtual launch included 200+ people – participants, line managers, CEOs and CHROs of their businesses – building excitement and setting expectations. There was a **strong message of reciprocity** – giving back to ADQ and to Abu Dhabi through Vision 2030.
Year 2: Individual learning pathways and discovery visits

2022 started with a reorientation webinar and reinforced application to Game Changers businesses.

Module 1 split participants into functions for individual learning pathways – deeper dives into their roles and how they relate and align to other functions in the organisation. We focused on developing a ‘T Mindset’ and skill set with faculty teaching marketing, operations and supply chain, accounting and finance, strategic thinking and transformation.

We dialled up impact by asking participants to deliver a value creation project building on Year 1 themes of innovation and experimentation, adding critical reasoning and analytical thinking to solve problems and improve performance. The diversity of businesses gave a twist to the project. Game Changers had to identify a common challenge across their five businesses, plan how to address that challenge as a group, then individually deliver recommendations resolving the challenge in their own business. A webinar to report back on the business projects created accountability.

Module 4 challenged the LBS team to create three similar high-impact discovery visits in very different locations. Each had to include the same quality of experiences so that all groups equally benefitted.

Adam Kingl, Programme Director, explained: “Over three consecutive weeks, 33 people went to London, 33 to Singapore, 33 to Silicon Valley. The visits were culturally very different, meeting different people, but the objectives were the same – entrepreneurship, agility, leveraging your country/ region/city ecosystems. All three modules got 4.8/5 so hit a home run.”

On return, the core groups shared what they had learned and submitted a group project.

Year 3: Change, sustainability and the ultimate CEO challenge

The final module (5) focused on critical challenges facing the businesses and the country: leading change and sustainability. Game Changers learned a sustainability strategy audit, exploring the big issues of climate change, and stakeholder engagement. As ever, the challenge was for each person to understand what sustainability meant in their context.

Professor Ioannis Ioannou described the level of engagement: “I vividly remember the room of round tables and flip charts and, for every exercise, participants would go to the flip charts and you could see smoke coming out around the flip charts because they were debating so hard about risks, opportunities and where Abu Dhabi is lagging.”

The CEO challenge was the culmination of the three years and combined all the knowledge and learning Game Changers had accumulated. Their task was to identify a challenge facing their business and using new knowledge, analyse and then recommend a course of action. While developing these they were charged with talking with their mentor, line manager, fellow Game Changers, colleagues and stakeholders to inform their thinking. Once the report was written, they had to contact their CEO to discuss their report. Many had never met their CEO so this was a big undertaking. Everyone passed and many project recommendations were implemented.

Game Changers ended in July 2023 with a graduation ceremony and celebration including participants, stakeholders and senior leaders from ADQ and LBS attending.
The Impact

Teach-back – target = 500 – to date, Teach-back has reached 1,550+ people across ADQ’s businesses

Self-organised Game Changers ‘alumni’ regular lifelong learning meet-ups

95% Overall NPS
4.8/5 participant rating
95% said it was either extremely or very impactful
98% completed

“At first I thought three years was too long. However, the big picture has become clearer. It’s about understanding everything related to business, society, lifestyle, problem solving and decision making. A colleague from the programme became a close friend and we discuss improvements in our companies. Game Changers opened the door between us and enabled us to help each other effectively.”

“Game Changers has helped me to create a career path. I was working in a silo. Now I can visualise how people connect, how decisions cascade and evolve, how personal growth is linked to professional culture. I now have a vision about who I want to grow into.”
“My learning journey has been remarkable. I went from an engineer to a futurist, coach, entrepreneur and general manager.”

- ADQ Game Changers Participant
Game Changers’ had a significant impact.

The programme’s reach has, to date, touched 1,500+ (and growing) ADQ employees, who have been exposed to the frameworks, insights and behavioural learning from the programme.

250+ completed experiments, projects and challenges have contributed to increasing the performance of ADQ’s businesses and are directly supporting Vision 2030’s drive towards a thriving private sector. Since the programme ended, three Game Changers have launched their own entrepreneurial ventures, contributing to Abu Dhabi’s private sector economy.

The original impact goals at the individual level (sensemaker, meaning maker, agility enabler) and corporate level (talent, portfolio) have been achieved or, due to their systemic impact, are in the process of being achieved.

At the societal level, impact was enabled by the development of 98 highly skilled future leaders who feel confident and capable to make a lasting impact for their employers and for the country.
## Linking the impact goals to the outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic measure</th>
<th>Talent impact</th>
<th>ADQ’s strategic portfolio impact</th>
<th>Societal impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The goal</strong></td>
<td>ADQ needed to build future leaders in support of transforming the country economically, creating a thriving private sector as part of Vision 2030</td>
<td>Build sustainable high-performing businesses across its portfolio</td>
<td>Develop future leaders in support of transforming the country economically, creating a thriving private sector as part of Vision 2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The result</strong></td>
<td>A robust pipeline that functions across and within businesses</td>
<td>All projects/experiments applied programme learning to business challenges, delivering positive outcomes to increase performance through process enhancements, productivity levels and/or creating new revenue streams</td>
<td>Performance enhancements produced by Game Changers through projects and experiments as well as improvements to their own leadership capabilities have enabled ADQ to continue to deliver the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidenced by</strong></td>
<td>Game Changers promoted: 56 Game Changers given business-critical projects to lead: 10</td>
<td>250+ experiments, projects and challenges were completed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examples: ◆ New department at AD Ports for strategic consulting ◆ AD Media’s new CRM-based website ◆ SEHA reducing medication expiration through exchanging across hospitals ◆ Agthia’s new interactive P&amp;L for better decision making in its consumer division ◆ SEHA/AHS created a digital insurance claims framework</td>
<td>Additional impact: 1,500+ ADQ employees have benefitted from teach-back insights and learning, enabling them to become more effective and productive employees</td>
<td>High-profile examples: ◆ SunCorp – a circular economy new business was presented at COP28 ◆ SEHA putting Abu Dhabi on the global clinical trials map ◆ Recruitment platform to find roles for 500 employees faced with redundancy across ADQ ◆ SEHA using AI to predict type II diabetes</td>
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<td>Additional impact: Three Game Changers have launched their own entrepreneurial ventures</td>
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Personal impact:

The most profound impact was on the Game Changers themselves. Selected as ‘top talent’ from the 1,000 applicants, Game Changers have demonstrated resilience, readiness and openness to building new mindsets, skills and capabilities and ‘owning’ the responsibility for creating and growing Abu Dhabi’s private economy. Their individual impact is far deeper rooted than just skills and capabilities. In continuous feedback across the three years of the programme and beyond, many spoke of how they have been profoundly changed by the programme and its rich experiences, that they themselves have been ‘transformed’ by developing friendships with peers on the programme and the way they are leading their teams as well as interacting with friends and family beyond the programme.

Testament to the deep impact of the programme, the goal of building community was achieved. Game Changers ‘alumni’ have taken responsibility for organising a cohort-wide WhatsApp group and regularly invite speakers to create a stream of lifelong learning opportunities as well as networking events. In 2024 they are as passionate about being Game Changers and transforming Abu Dhabi’s economy and society as they were in 2021.

“It has been a catalyst for my growth, shaping my approach to leadership and contributing to the success of initiatives within my organisation. ADQ Game Changers community has become a hub for knowledge exchange and collaboration.”

“I would describe my personal learning journey as a ‘journey of resilience’. Personally, I have become more agile, engaged and collaborative while managing my interactions with different stakeholders; thus, enhancing my contributions while driving transformation, performance and cultural change within my organisation.”

“My learning journey has been remarkable. I have gone through a life-changing programme that not only impacted me professionally but personally. I acquired skills that made me resilient to change and leveraging technology. I went from an engineer to a futurist, coach, entrepreneur and general manager.”

– Mohamed Elshair, TAQA
“I’ve grown from an enthusiastic, goal-driven employee to a holistic, organisational change agent.”

- ADQ Game Changers Participant
Impact highlights:

- 93% attendance
- 96% participant rating
- 95% impact of coaching on behaviour
- 94% apply new skills very well or well
- 97% satisfaction with LBS team

Impact highlights for Discovery programs:

- Discovery London rating: 4.9/5
- Discovery Singapore rating: 4.9/5
- Discovery Silicon Valley rating: 4.8/5
Reflections

ADQ Game Changers was a unique 3-year executive education journey that demanded resilience, focus and deep reflection from participants. The motivation and engagement of the 98 participants who completed (1 left the country, 1 withdrew early due to work commitments) both inspired and amazed the ADQ and LBS teams.

Our ‘joint’ ADQ and LBS team built a strong partnership where the lines between client and supplier were almost invisible. The relationship continues not just at corporate level but also with some of the portfolio’s businesses. LBS is both honoured and proud to be part of enabling Abu Dhabi’s Vision 2030.
Appendix

Showcasing societal impact projects:

Mohamed Elshair, TAQA – SunCycle was presented at COP28 in 2024

“SunCycle” is leading to substantial societal benefits. By addressing the global challenge of responsibly disposing of end-of-life PV solar panels, SunCycle contributes to environmental sustainability and waste management on a broader scale. SunCycle promotes the circular economy by recycling valuable materials from the solar panels. This not only reduces the depletion of precious resources but also aligns with global sustainability goals. The initiative’s potential to unlock an estimated 78 million tonnes of raw materials globally by 2050, as reported by IRENA, indicates a positive contribution to resource conservation. On a local level, the establishment of a UAE branch in the project’s later phases creates a regional recycling hub. This not only addresses the specific needs of the MENA region but also positions the UAE as a pioneer in sustainable waste management practices. The project’s potential collaboration with organisations like Tadweer and Bee’ah further reinforces the societal benefits by leveraging existing waste management infrastructure and contributing to the overall environmental well-being of the community. In essence, SunCycle goes beyond organisational success, offering tangible and positive outcomes for society at large.

Hashil Zamzam, ADQ upskilling platform

“As we rightsize businesses we have taken over from the government of Abu Dhabi, we have been faced with redundancies. Expats are expected to return to their home countries but for nationals rather than make them a cost to the government, I worked on a redeployment programme. This consolidated the recruitment demand across our portfolio into a single portal. We created a funnel between talent demand and supply with anyone being made redundant due to rightsizing taking priority. The venture was run for 18 months at the ADQ corporate level before we moved it to the businesses to open up these corridors between one another for recruitment.”

Nouf AlMarzooqi, SEHA/AHS

“I have created a framework for insurance claims that could be digitised; it was improved by fellow colleagues and passed on to new ones once they joined.”

Mariam Al Harbi, SEHA

“My project has had a major impact on the Abu Dhabi life science landscape and is putting the UAE on the global map of clinical trials market.”
Showcasing organisational impact projects:

**Tom Hughes, Ducab** – “As a direct result of the programme, I initiated a project with RoboVision, who we were introduced to during the Technology Showcase.”

**Alejandro Aldamiz, AD Ports Group** – “I created a new department in Abu Dhabi Ports as a result of several experiments I conducted that explored a mix of financial and strategic aspects. This saved the company money in external consulting. Through the skills from the coaching bootcamp, I’ve become a mentor in my company and am a better manager with 20% higher scores from my team in the last 360 evaluation.”

**Walaa Al Shalabi, Abu Dhabi Media** – “From my experiment, my department has adopted my proposal for enhancing the company website and is currently initiating a project with the digital media team to convert the website into a CRM for better client experience and for data gathering purposes.”

**Mouza Alkaabi, SEHA** – “Through experimentation and learning from the programme, we share and exchange nearly expired medications with other hospitals and reuse returned medications from the wards after a proper sanitation process. Because I know how to design experiments, we produced a testing phase to check department readiness and tested the outcomes before starting a full project.”

**Asif Nawab, Agthia** – “I revamped our P&L for our consumer division and made it interactive, flexible and scalable for roll-out to the group. This was a direct result of my learning and experience on Game Changers. My manager and colleagues love this new, flexible way of analysis and its multidimensional versus static approach. It allows faster access and relevant information for decision making.”

**Abdulrahman Waleed Alsayed, Abu Dhabi Airports** – “I applied the MIND model with our project maintenance producers. Practical output quality has improved and become more efficient because we’ve saved time and effort by communicating better with stakeholders.”

**Nikhil Kumar, SEHA** – “With learning from our technology and data science modules, we are implementing an in-house AI solution to predict type II diabetes for the population of Abu Dhabi.”